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Strengthening the Voice of African American Parents:
A Study of the College Bound San Diego Program

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

John Peter Collins

Committee in charge:

      San Diego State University
           Professor Margaret Basom, Chair
           Professor Kathleen C. Cohn

      University of California, San Diego
           Professor Janet Chrispeels

2008

The Dissertation of John Peter Collins is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and

form for publication on microfilm:

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Chair

San Diego State University

University of California, San Diego

2008

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of:

Beverly Marie LaPlante-Collins

There have been several teachers who have had a positive impact on me and many who have made a difference in my life. However, as my first and most important teacher, my mother provided me with an education in all of the most important lessons for life. Her unconditional love, inspiration, encouragement and support provided the foundation for every accomplishment I have achieved or success I have enjoyed in either my personal or professional life. I will always be indebted to her for all that she has given me. My greatest hope is that my words and actions serve as a fitting tribute to the incredible person and role model she was for all of her children.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving and supportive wife Lisa, and my incredible children Daniel, Donald, Patrick, and Virginia. Without their on-going encouragement and support, the completion of this doctoral program would never have been possible. During the past three and one half years, they have made many sacrifices to allow me to attend classes, study, and write. During the difficult moments of this journey, especially during the final few months, their understanding and patience was essential and consistent. Thank you for being my inspiration to continue my work as an educator.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the incredible people who comprise the College Bound San Diego family. Their support and involvement in this study were critical to its completion. More importantly, what these adults and students have created and accomplished is a true testament to the power of collective commitment to an important cause. Nothing is more important that ensuring that every student is given the opportunity and necessary support to reach high levels of academic success that will serve as the gateway to a rich and fulfilling life. The CBSD members can be proud of the difference their volunteer efforts have made in the lives of students both within and beyond their own membership. Acknowledgements also go to Dr. Tonika Green, San Diego State University, for sharing the data from her study of CBSD which allowed me to include the student voice in this study. Special recognition is due to my dear friend and colleague Martha Parham who has selflessly devoted herself to the success of CBSD. Her volunteer efforts since the inception of this program are a true testament to the dedicated educator she has always been. She serves as a remarkable role model for both the CBSD parents and their children.

I would also like to acknowledge the three professors who are responsible for the creation and successful implementation of the joint doctoral program: Dr. Janet Chrispeels, UCSD; Dr. Margaret Basom, SDSU; and Dr. Jennifer Jeffries, CSUSM. Jennifer Jeffries convinced me to begin this journey, provided the early motivation to complete this study, and has followed and encouraged its progress along the way. Margaret "Peg" Basom, the chair of my dissertation committee deserves special

VITA

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California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO)

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Strengthening the Voice of African American Parents:
A Study of the College Bound San Diego Program

by

John Peter Collins

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

San Diego State University, 2008
University of California, San Diego, 2008

Professor Margaret Basom, Chair

The academic achievement gap between African American and Latino students and their White and Asian peers in K-12 American schools is an educational crisis of major proportions. While achievement gaps in schools exist for various subgroups, this study focused on the gaps between African American and White students. Of particular interest was the research that indicated the achievement gaps are not only present in low-performing, high-poverty, diverse school settings, but exist even at high-performing schools with higher socio-economic status (SES) levels. This study examined a parent educational and support program in an affluent, high performing, suburban school district.

A descriptive case study design was used to study College Bound San Diego (CBSD), a community-based intervention created and operated by parents of African American children. The specific goals of the program are to close the achievement gaps for African American students, and to promote their preparedness for, and attendance at, colleges and universities. The specific goal of this study was to determine if the College

Bound San Diego (CBSD) program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience, and in what ways involvement in the program impacted students' educational experience.

The data collected supported the finding that involvement in CBSD has made a significant difference for parents and their children on a variety of factors. The seven themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data illustrate the various aspects of CBSD that parents identified as benefits of the program. These seven themes were: a) Parent knowledge; b) College expectations; c) School/district relationships; d) Parent involvement actions; e) Parent self-efficacy; f) Parent empowerment/voice; and g) Parenting beliefs and practices.

Similar to the analysis of parent data, the qualitative data gathered through student focus groups, program documents, and researcher observations provided a clear indication that involvement in CBSD had a positive impact on students. Increased college knowledge, enhanced parent involvement, and enriched cultural identity were three themes that emerged from the analysis of the student focus group data. Each of these areas has been documented through research as contributing to the success of African American students in high school and beyond, speaking to the importance of parent involvement in education.

Conclusions and recommendations for practice, implications for the case study district, and recommendations for further study are addressed at the end of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The academic achievement gap between African American and White students in

K-12 American schools is an educational crisis of major proportions. The disparity of

academic performance among racial groups has been recognized and tracked at the

national level for several years. Most notably, the National Assessment of Educational

Performance (NAEP) has for decades identified these differences in reading and math

scores within its trend data report (Campbell, Hombo, & Mazzeo, 2000). This report

clearly shows that African American and Hispanic students consistently perform well

below their White and Asian peers. In the 1970s and early 1980s, NAEP scores reflected

significant progress in the narrowing of the racial achievement gap (Bainbridge & Lasley,

2002; Hertert & Teague, 2003; Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Singham, 1998; Thernstrom &

Thernstrom, 2003). Unfortunately, recent evidence indicates that the gap widened during

the late 1980s, thus causing significant setbacks in the progress toward racial equity in

education (Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Lee, 2002; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). In

their book *No Excuses*, Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) point out that, on average,

based on the NAEP results, African American and Hispanic students in this country

graduate from high school with the equivalent of an eighth grade education when

compared to their White and Asian peers.

While the presence of an achievement gap has been recognized for many years at

the national and state level, much less attention has been given at the local district or

school level. Over the past few years, there has been increased focus on accountability for

the academic performance of all students (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002,

Special Report: Confronting the Widening Racial Scoring Gap on the SAT, 2003;

Campbell, et al., 2000). The reauthorization of the federal Title I, Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation in 2001, also known as No Child Left

Behind (NCLB), has shifted attention to the examination of student performance on

standardized tests at the individual school site level with disaggregated data reported by

student subgroups (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). No longer can schools or

districts claim to be high performing based upon aggregated data that report average

scores or the percentage of the total student population performing at proficient levels.

Instead, reports of disaggregated results for all significant subgroups are now required

(Simpson, LaCava, & Graner, 2004; Yeagley, 2003). The issue of achievement gaps is

now widely recognized at all levels and has become identified as a major obstacle to

achieving the mission of proficiency for all students (Bainbridge & Lasley, 2002; Cole,

1995; Ferguson, 2002; Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Lee, 2002). This change in

accountability represents a fundamental shift in the purpose and mission of public K-12

education from equal access for all to academic proficiency for all (Houston, 2003).

While achievement gaps in schools exist for various subgroups, this study focused

on the gaps between African American and White students. Research on the achievement

gaps between African American students and their White and Asian peers has examined a

wide variety of external and internal factors that might be contributing to or even causing

this phenomenon. Additionally, studies have documented that the achievement gaps are

not only present in low-performing, high-poverty, diverse school settings, but exist even

at high performing schools with higher socio-economic status (SES) levels (Cowley &

Meehan, 2002; Ferguson, 2002; Ogbu & Wood, 2002; Singham, 1998, 2003; Viadero & Johnston, 2000).

Studies have shown that individual schools have been successful in raising student achievement among all racial groups regardless of the school's SES levels (Bell, 2003; Downey, 2003; Haycock, 1998; Haycock & Jerald, 2002). One common factor found at these successful schools is the involvement of parents in supporting the academic success of the school and of their own child. In general, there appears to be a strong link between family engagement in schools and educational benefits to children (*Creating Partnerships with Parents to Improve Schools:A Handbook for Educators*, 1996; Ehman, 1995; Fager & Brewster, 1999; Howley, Bickel, & McDonough, 1997). To promote parent involvement, many schools and districts have initiated parent training programs that are designed to increase parents' knowledge, expectations, involvement actions, and sense of efficacy, in relation to their student's educational experience. Some of these programs have been designed for a specific ethnic or racial group and include cultural and/or second language components that meet the needs of the individual group (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, under review). Programs for specific ethnic groups have been found to be effective in enhancing parents' knowledge and in parents engaging in more advocacy and actions to support their children's learning (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, (under review); Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Myers, et al., 1992). These findings suggest that it is important to study parent education programs as a means of closing the achievement gap. However, there is little research pertaining to parental involvement programs initiated by parents. This study helps to fill that research gap by investigating how a parent-initiated program for parents of African American assisted in their children's school success.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore, through a descriptive case study design, the College Bound San Diego (CBSD) program, a community-based intervention created and operated by parents of African American children. The specific goals of the program are to close the achievement gaps for African American students, and to promote their preparedness for, and attendance at, colleges and universities. The specific goal of this study was to determine if the College Bound San Diego program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience. The study also sought to determine in what ways participation in the College Bound San Diego program contributed to students' educational experience.

Context of the Study

College Bound San Diego is an outgrowth of the Concerned Parents Alliance, Inc. (CPA). CPA is a non-profit, community-based organization that was founded in 2002 by parents of African American students who were concerned about challenges they felt their children were encountering in the Poway Unified School District (PUSD). The founders of CPA were new to the school district and had encountered situations they felt demonstrated racial bias towards students, parents, and staff members (Dodson & Willis, 2006). As they met other African American parents and discussed their perceptions, they found they shared some of the same experiences as a group, these parents called for a community meeting to share their concerns with the district's superintendent. The meeting, held at a local Baptist church, surfaced many examples of situations regarding the treatment of students of color, especially, African American students. In their book,

Empowering Parents: A Guide to Taking Control of Your Child's Educational Journey,

Dodson and Willis (2006) recounted some of the issues raised at that parent meeting:

> …we voiced our frustrations as parents, angry and upset that our children
> were being treated as insignificant. We heard examples of children being
> threatened with an 'F' in a class if they didn't play the role of a slave;
> children being suspended from school without cause; our children being
> checked for weapons and drug raids when others weren't (pg. 25).

The Concerned Parent Alliance, Inc. (CPA) was officially incorporated in 2002 as

a non-profit, community-based organization created to serve parents of the Poway

Unified School District. As described in the "Handbook for College Bound San Diego

2007-2008" (2007), "It was evident that a parent coalition needed to be formed in order

to be pro-active in developing a 'true' partnership between PUSD and parents" (pg. 3).

Membership in the organization was opened to any parent, student, faculty, staff, or

community member wishing to address issues that impact children within the educational

arena. CPA members immediately became active within the school district by attending

school board meetings, convening with district officials, and representing parents as

requested in school site meetings regarding their children. "We were going to continue to

ask questions, point out racist actions and behavior, as well as stay involved in the

decision making process" (Dodson & Willis, 2006). At one of the first Board of

Education meetings attended by CPA officers, district staff members presented the annual

State of the District Report for the 2002-2003 school year (District, 2003). For several

years prior to the mandates of the NCLB, the district had been reporting disaggregated

achievement data to the Board on an annual basis. As usual, the average test scores for

the district were impressively strong and significantly higher than county and state

averages (District, 2003). However, similar to Singham's (1998) study of the affluent

community of Shaker Heights, although the academic performance of African American students on average was higher than African American students at the national, state, and county levels, their performance lagged significantly behind their White peers in their own district (District, 2003; Singham, 2003). The CPA members in attendance that night were very concerned about the data presented, which indicated a significant achievement gap for African American and Hispanic students. They were even more concerned that no one from the public spoke out or expressed concern over the statistics.

While the district was well aware of these gaps, and had been working to address them, little progress had been made. The numbers reported that evening showed that African American students in the district were achieving at higher levels than their comparative peer groups at the county, state, and national level. However, it was also evident that there were significant gaps on all measures between African American students and their White and Asian peers in the district. On the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) the gap between African American and White students was 69 points on the verbal score and 93 points on the math score. On the a-g completion requirements, the rate for African American students was 36.8 percent compared to 52.1 percent for White students, a difference of 15.3 percent. A report of the percentage of students meeting the California State Standards at a level of proficient or better at grades two, six, and nine also showed gaps. While the charts presented that evening did not list specific percentages, it was clear that there were significant gaps between African American and White students at all grade levels (District, 2003).

In 2003, members of the CPA decided that they would take a pro-active stance to address the academic achievement gaps for African American students in the school

district. That year, they established the College Bound San Diego (CBSD) program,

which serves as the educational component of CPA. CBSD was created as a

parent/student program, designed to proactively assist children in setting and reaching

high academic goals, in order to prepare them for high school graduation and acceptance

to institutes of higher education. In its annual handbook, the program is described as

"serving students and families in offering a unique approach to college counseling,

development of study and success skills, parental involvement, community service, Black

history, cultural awareness, career exploration, and exposure to a variety of colleges and

universities" (*Handbook For College Bound San Diego 2007-2008*, 2007). In its first year

of operation, the program served thirty-two students and their parents. The school district

provided the facility for meetings, and a district administrator volunteered her time to

serve on the CPA Board of Directors and to act as a liaison between the district and CPA

and CBSD. In that first year, there were three high school seniors in the program, all of

whom were accepted to and attended four-year universities. In its five years of operation,

forty students have graduated from high school, and all of them matriculated to college

the following year. Due to the fact that the program is only in its fifth year of operation,

there is no significant data on college completion rates.

Significance of the Study

The majority of the research on culturally-sensitive parent involvement programs

designed to increase student achievement has focused on schools with high percentages

of minority students from low-income families (Chall & Jacobs 2003; Coleman, et al.

1966; English, 2002). However, studies that have been conducted at traditionally high

performing schools with limited diversity, serving students from middle and high-income

families, have found that racial and ethnic achievement gaps also exist at these schools (Ferguson, 2002; Singham, 1998). The findings emphasize the question of the impact of race on the persistence of the achievement gaps when other factors such as SES are controlled as variables. A comprehensive effort to close the achievement gaps must address the need for new and effective strategies that can promote greater academic success for African American students from all levels of the social and economic spectrum within our society.

College Bound San Diego, the educational component of the Concerned Parent Alliance, was created to address concerns that parents of African American children, in a predominantly White, affluent community, had regarding their school district's ability to successfully prepare their students for college and beyond. The program was established as a parent-initiated program designed and operated by and for parents of African American children. As mentioned earlier, there is a little or no research on programs with this unique combination of attributes.

The researcher believes that it is important to add studies to the literature that examine programs designed to actively engage parents of specific ethnic groups in their child's school experience. Based on the research that has shown a high correlation between parent involvement and student academic achievement, there exists a need to determine whether or not participation in these programs increases parents' level of involvement. Acquiring a full understanding of the CBSD program, as well as future research on similar programs, may provide ideas and strategies that can be replicated or adapted for new program efforts. If effective programs can be successfully identified and implemented, they may serve as one possible strategy for increasing the academic

achievement levels of underserved and underrepresented students and thereby provide a partial solution for narrowing the existing achievement gap.

<div align="center">Overview of Research Design</div>

A descriptive case study approach was employed in this study to examine the College Bound San Diego program through the analysis of parent surveys, parent interviews, observations, and extant data on student participants. Yin (2003) describes case studies as empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin 2003). The importance of context sensitivity was especially relevant to this study because the CBSD program is heavily influenced by the unique cultural attributes and influences of an all African American group of parents and children.

This case study drew upon both qualitative strategies of inquiry and quantitative data from surveys, documents, and other extant data sources. This approach allowed the researcher to determine in what ways the College Bound program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience.

Guiding Questions

This study focused specifically on African American students and their parents who are members of College Bound San Diego (CBSD), which is the educational component of the Concerned Parents Alliance, Inc. (CPA). The study addressed the following questions:

1. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience?

2. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program contributed to students' educational experience?

Data Collection

A survey presented to the parents in CBSD was conducted by the researcher in the fall of 2006, while in his role as Deputy Superintendent of the Poway Unified School District. For purposes of this study, this survey was used as a pre-survey.

As a part of this study, the same survey was administered at a meeting of the CBSD in the fall of 2007; this second survey was used as a post-survey.

Interviews of a purposeful sampling of nine parents were conducted in the winter of 2007-2008. The sample was designed to provide a greater understanding of the perceived value of the program from participants with different perspectives, situations, and experiences related to CBSD.

The object of this study is also embedded in a larger concurrent study being conducted by Dr. Tonika Green, San Diego State University. Dr Green is exploring how the College Bound program affects both students and parents. Her study is fully approved through the IRB process at San Diego State University. Although her study had not been completed, data collected by Dr. Green included results of student focus groups and surveys. Some of these extant data will be used in this study as approved by the IRB committee. The researcher also collected extant data from student records and historical documents from the College Bound San Diego program.

Data Analysis

Data from the two administrations of the survey were analyzed, using a matched pair t-test, and an independent sample t-test, on the ten constructs included in the survey to determine any statistically significant differences in four key areas:

a.) knowledge gains regarding the school system and college requirements;

b.) parent involvement in child's education;

c.) expectations for graduation and college attendance;

d.) sense of self-efficacy to support child's education.

A table of the average mean scores of the ten constructs included in the survey and a frequency table of the demographic information provided by participants were also created and discussed. Because of the small sample size, more sophisticated statistical analyses were not possible.

Interview and extant data were coded and qualitatively analyzed by the researcher and two doctoral students in order to provide a greater understanding of how the CBSD program has influenced participants' perceptions regarding their own efficacy, knowledge, expectations and involvement actions, as related to their children's current and future educational experience.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions of terms apply.

Achievement Gap - a consistent difference in scores on student achievement tests and other measures of academic success between and among student subgroups.

College Knowledge – the term used in this study to define an individuals' knowledge as related specifically to the requirements and processes for college

acceptance, the financial aspects of funding a college education, and other aspects related to successful transition to college and completion of a college degree.

General knowledge – parents' knowledge regarding their child's current educational experiences in the K-12 school district

Parent - an adult who has accepted responsibility for a student's social and educational development and who has agreed to participate with the student in the College Bound San Diego Program.

Parent Involvement - the interactions between the parents and schools or independent efforts of parents in planning, overseeing, and promoting the education of their children. Involvement includes activities at school, in the community, and at home.

Subgroup – a group of students based on ethnicity, poverty, English learner status, and Special Education designation. To be considered "significant," a subgroup at the school or district level must include either 100 students or less, if they represent at least 15 percent of the overall population. For California's Academic Performance Index (API), the smaller number is 30. Under the federal, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the smaller number is 50.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This chapter presents an overview of the purpose, significance, and a summary of the design of this study, while Chapter Two offers a critical review and analysis of literature related to the achievement gaps for African American students, parent involvement, and parent training and support programs. Critical Race Theory, Parent Efficacy Theory, and Social/Cultural Capital Theory will also be reviewed to provide a theoretical framework for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Beginning with an overview of the pervasive achievement gaps that exist between African American and Hispanic students and their White and Asian counterparts, in this chapter, a review of the literature is presented regarding the various aspects of the study that were introduced in Chapter One. Subsequent to this is a review of studies that have focused on the internal and external factors identified as being correlated to, and possibly contributing to, these gaps. The next section examines literature on the impact of parent involvement on student achievement and school success. Immediately following, literature on the topic of parent training and support programs is examined. Finally, the three theories that provide the theoretical framework for the study are reviewed. These include Critical Race Theory, Parent Efficacy Theory, and Social/Cultural Capital Theory.

The structure of this literature review (see, Figure 2.1) was built upon the theoretical frameworks that, when considered collectively, support the concept that:

a.) parent training and support programs have been shown to lead to greater levels of parent involvement;

b.) parent involvement for underserved and underachieving students has been shown to address and mitigate both internal and external factors related to the achievement gaps; and

c.) addressing these factors for students has been shown to have a positive impact on narrowing the academic achievement gaps.
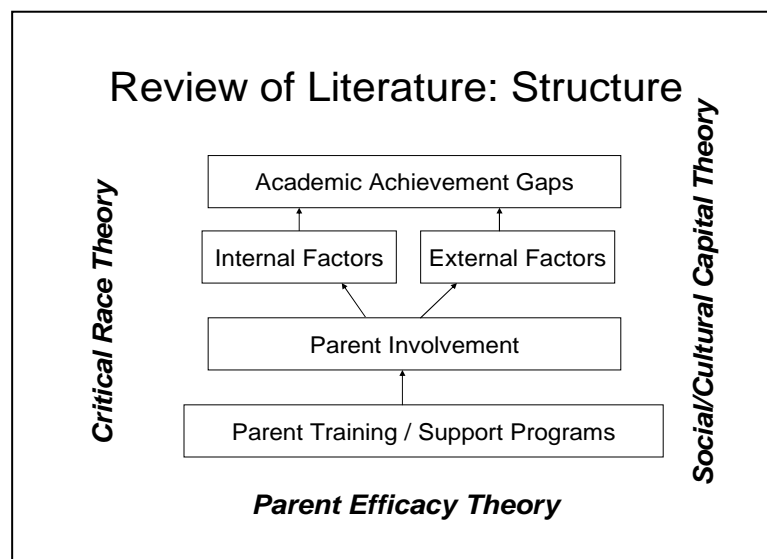
Figure 2.1: Review of Literature: Structure

Critical Race Theory, Parent Efficacy Theory, and Social/Cultural Capital Theory were appropriate theoretical frameworks for this study because of the unique characteristics of the CBSD program. Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1980; Delgado, 1989; Duncan, 2002; Lopez, 2003) is important in order to understand the motivation behind this group of parents of African American students. As described in Chapter One, these parents perceived that racial bias in the school system was negatively impacting their children's educational experience.

Parent Efficacy Theory maintains that it is one's sense of efficacy and beliefs about what can be done with the resources one possess, that is the determining factor of parental involvement (Bandura, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). It also claims that one's sense of efficacy can be increased through the acquisition of knowledge and skills one believes are necessary to possess to establish meaningful involvement with the educational institution.

Social/Cultural Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988; Lareau 1987) suggests that the level of social/cultural capital parents possess is directly related to their willingness to be actively involved with the educational institution serving their children. It further asserts that the social capital impacting a child's development does not lie solely within the family, but within the relationships parents have with the community and institutions of the community. One of the unique characteristics of the CBSD program is that it was created by and for parents of African American students who had the common objective of enhancing their children's educational experience while preparing them for acceptance to college.

The Achievement Gaps

Identifying and Quantifying the Gaps

The literature reviewed on the achievement gap provided quantitative analysis of a variety of indicators of student academic performance and additionally described the depth and breadth of the problem by asking where are the gaps, and how large are they? The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly referred to as the "Nation's Report Card," is the most widely-recognized indicator of academic achievement on a national level (Grigg, Donahue, & Dion, 2007; Lee, Grigg, & Dion, 2007; Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007; Perie, Moran, & Lutkus, 2005). Other commonly reported indicators include: results on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT); enrollment rates in honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses; high school dropout rates; college acceptance rates; and college completion rates (Kober, 2001). These quantitative analyses of the various indicators of academic success clearly establish the existence of a significant gap among different ethnic groups. Most of this research on identifying and

quantifying the gaps has been conducted by governmental agencies, educational research institutes, and professors of higher education.

As previously noted, the most widely recognized indicator of academic achievement on a national level is the NAEP (Grigg, et al., 2007; Lee, et al., 2007; Perie, et al., 2005). An earlier quantitative analysis of NAEP scores as an indicator of the achievement gaps is based on the 1999 Trend NAEP (Campbell, et al., 2000). This report showed that, in the 1980s, there were promising results that clearly demonstrated a closing of the achievement gaps in both reading and mathematics. Unfortunately, the gains in narrowing the achievement gaps for African American and Hispanic students that was seen in the 1980s had reversed in the 1990s.

For African American students, the high point in the subject of reading was reached in 1988. The average percentile scores for 17 year old African American students were: 10th percentile; 28th percentile; and 23rd percentile in 1975, 1988, and 1999 respectively. In 1992, there was a significant drop to the 18th percentile (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

For 17 year old Hispanic students, the high mark in reading scores was reached in 1990. Their average percentile scores were 16th percentile, 30th percentile, and 28th percentile in 1975, 1990, and 1999 respectively. The most significant drop in reading scores for Hispanics was in 1994, when their average percentile score fell to the 23rd percentile (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

The most recent NAEP reading scores for 17 year olds indicate that the average scale scores for all groups in 2005 had declined since 1998. The gap in average scale

scores in reading between Black/White students and Hispanic/White students have remained relatively unchanged at 26 and 21 points, respectively (Grigg, et al., 2007).

The scores in math were even more disappointing. For African American students, the scores were: 13th percentile; 24th percentile; and 14th percentile in 1978, 1990, and 1999 respectively. The dramatic drop in scores to the level seen in 1978 is most disturbing. This is especially true when one considers the increased focus on core academics that was seen in the late 1990's. For Hispanics, the math scores were: 18th percentile; 22nd percentile; and 23 percentile in 1978, 1990, and 1999 respectively. Although these scores are slightly higher than those for African American students, the math scores for Hispanics also remain unacceptably low (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

Since 1990, the 2004 NAEP average scale scores in mathematics for 17 year olds show slight increases for White and Hispanic subgroups. However, the average scale score for Blacks has dropped from 289 in 1990 to a disappointing 285 in 2004. Over this same period of time, the gap between White and Hispanic students has remained relatively unchanged at 26 points in 1990 and 24 points in 2004. For African American students, the gap has increased significantly from 21 points in 1990 to 28 points in 2004 (Perie, et al., 2005).

While the NAEP statistics for 17 year olds have shown little improvement in scores or in closing of the achievement gap, the results for 4th and 8th graders are more encouraging. The recent and long term data reported in 2007 indicates that in reading, 4th graders have shown steady increases in scores for all subgroups and a narrowing of the achievement gap from 32 points for Blacks and Hispanics to 27 and 26 points,

respectively. The reading results at the 8th grade were not as encouraging. Scores for all

subgroups, and the achievement gaps, remained relatively unchanged (Lee, et al., 2007).

The most encouraging results of all came from the 2007 NAEP mathematics test

for 4th and 8th graders. All subgroups at both grade levels reflected steady increases in

scores from 1990 to 2007. The average scale score for 4th graders has grown from 213 to

240. For 8th graders, the scores have increased from 263 to 281. The achievement gap for

Black and White students decreased from 32 points in 1990 to 26 points in 2007 at the

fourth grade level. At the eighth grade level, there was no significant change in the gap as

it only decreased from 33 points to 32 points over the same time period. While average

scores also increased steadily for Hispanic students at both grade levels, the achievement

gaps remained relatively unchanged at 21 points for 4th graders and 26 points for 8th

graders (Lee, et al., 2007).

Science scores for all student groups have been disappointingly low, and they

have been more erratic in their growth and decline trends. However, for both African

American and Hispanic students, the scores have been consistently lower than those of

their White and Asian peers (Haycock, 2001; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

In the report, *Ticket to Nowhere*, (Haycock, Barth, Mitchell, & Wilkins, 1999)

statistics related to the preparation of all high school students for success in college

admission rates, and completion rates were examined. While in this study they examine

the statistics for all students and cite concerns regarding the overall low rates, it is also

pointed out that on all measures, the problems are more serious for African American and

Hispanic students. The figures for high school students enrolled in college preparatory

course work were as follows: Asians – 56 percent, Whites – 50 percent, African

American - 43 percent, and Hispanic - 35 percent. Using statistics from 1992, they reported that only 43 percent of all high school graduates transitioned to a four-year college within two years of leaving high school. Of those 1992 college freshmen, only 56 percent graduated within six years. While college completion rates for all students are lower than ideal, the gaps between African American and Hispanic students and their White and Asian peers is alarming. The 1992 college graduation rates for Asian and White students were 66 percent and 59 percent respectively. The comparable numbers for African American and Hispanic students were 37 percent and 48 percent.

Other measures of the racial/ethnic gaps that have been documented in the research include enrollment in honors and AP courses, and SAT scores. All of these gaps in academic preparation, opportunity, and performance have been well documented over the last few decades (Barton, 2003; Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Kober, 2001; Lee, 2002; Wimberly, 2002).

Additionally, several studies, which have been conducted over the past several years, have documented that the achievement gaps are not only present in low-performing, high-poverty, and diverse school settings. There is sufficient evidence to support that even at high performing schools with higher SES levels, the gaps still exist (Cowley & Meehan, 2002; Ferguson, 2002; Ogbu & Wood, 2002; Singham, 1998, 2003; Viadero & Johnston, 2000). The well-known study of students in Shaker Heights, an affluent suburb of Cleveland, which was conducted in the late 1990s prior to NCLB, can no longer be considered an anomaly (Singham, 1998). In this case study, the achievement gap was evidenced in a variety of ways. While the percentage of African American and White students was equal in Shaker Heights, the percentage of African American

students in advanced placement and honors courses was only 10 percent, while their

enrollment in lower track courses labeled general education was 95 percent. Although the

academic performance of African American, Shaker Heights students, on average, was

higher than African American students nationally, their performance lagged significantly

behind their White peers at Shaker Heights. This same problem was present in SAT

results. While many of the external factors found in high-poverty schools may not exist at

the higher performing schools, the internal factors identified in the research must

certainly be considered.

External Factors Related to the Gaps

The review of the literature on the achievement gaps also examined external

factors that are considered to contribute to the gaps. External factors are those elements

of a student's life that are viewed as external to the school environment. Although they

are not under the direct control of the school, such external factors have been correlated

with the gap in academic performance among racial and ethnic groups and are considered

to have significant influence on students' readiness and ability to achieve academic

proficiency (Bainbridge & Lasley, 2002; Hertert & Teague, 2003), in that they represent

the life situations, experiences, attitudes, and belief systems students bring with them to

school. Social environment, culture, and language are some of the specific factors that

have been studied (Coleman, 1988; Howard, 2002; Hunter & Bartee, 2003; Lareau,

1987). When these factors are considered by society and the educational institutions as

different from that of the dominant culture, they are also seen as significant factors

correlated to lower academic performance. Research in this category is often a

quantitative analysis of student performance indicators and their correlation to the

presence of these external factors. While the collection of performance indicators is typically a quantitative process, the collection of information on the external factors is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. As with the research on identifying and quantifying the gaps, research on external factors is also conducted by governmental agencies, educational research institutes, and professors of higher education. Additionally, educational practitioners at the district and school site level are conducting research in these areas.

Socio-Economic Status (SES) has been the primary external factor that has been correlated to lack of academic achievement among African American and Hispanic students. The two common elements of SES are family income and the level of education attained by parents (Roscigno, 1998; Uhlenberg & Brown, 2002).

Low family income or poverty is the most frequently cited external factor contributing to the achievement gaps. Using results from the following NAEP assessments: reading (1998); mathematics (2000); and science (2000); Hertert and Teague (2003) indicate that the percentage of poor students scoring at the *below basic* levels is twice as high as that of higher income students. Conversely, the percentage of poor students scoring at the *proficient or above* level is about one-third that of higher income students. "Poverty is not unique to any age group, family type, race, or ethnicity. It does, however, exist in disproportionate rates among the very young, among families headed by single women, and in African American and Hispanic populations" (Hertert & Teague, 2003).

In an impassioned essay on poverty, (Berliner, 2005) makes assertions regarding the prevalence of poverty in this country and its association with low academic

performance. He contends that poverty restricts genetic talent and increases the incidence of serious medical problems, and he finds that both of these factors have a direct relationship to lower student achievement. Berliner further asserts that even small reductions in family poverty levels have a positive effect on school behavior and academic performance. He maintains that the problems of educational inequality are rooted in "… economic problems and social pathologies too deep to be overcome by school alone" (p.4). In his opinion, the accomplishments of some schools in raising the performance of low-performing students are not significant enough to be considered acceptable. Low levels of educational attainment of parents, non-traditional family structures, and dysfunctional home environments are additional external factors that have also been linked to lower levels of academic performance (Clark, 1984; Myers & Taylor, 1998).

Based on these, as well as other studies of SES and achievement, it is often concluded that SES is the greatest factor or cause of the racial achievement gap. In fact, the 1966 Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) concluded that SES was the single most important factor in predicting student success in school, and that the effects of schooling were not sufficient to offset the effects of SES. Further, the conclusion is often drawn that since these negative factors are highly correlated with poverty, and since poverty is more prevalent among African American and Hispanic students, they are the cause of the academic achievement gaps that exist between these students and their White and Asian peers. However, it is important to note that while poverty is highly correlated to low levels of academic achievement; it does not determine a child's academic capabilities (Hertert & Teague, 2003).

Another major area of research on external factors focuses on societal issues of racism, discrimination, and the resultant cultural experiences and belief systems students bring to school. Unlike the issues related to low SES, these issues are more difficult to quantify and measure, and are subject to much disagreement and controversy.

In his studies of these issues, John U. Ogbu looked at various aspects of minority students' school performance from an anthropological perspective (Ogbu, 1987, 1992; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Ogbu & Wood, 2002). In his initial work, Ogbu focused on differences in school performance between minorities and the dominant group, and concluded that the treatment of the groups by society and school systems, as well as the minorities' own perceptions created by these treatments, led to the differences in school performance, as evidenced by the achievement gaps. In the 1980s, Ogbu began studying the differences among different minority groups themselves and developed a classification system for minority groups that includes: autonomous, voluntary/immigrant; and involuntary/immigrant minorities. Based on this classification system, he developed the controversial *cultural-ecological theory* of minority school performance. This theory postulates that it is a minority group's classification that explains individuals' beliefs and behaviors, regardless of their race or ethnicity, and that these beliefs and behaviors impact their school success or failure (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

The Cultural-Ecological Theory maintains that, "It is a group's history, how and why a group became a minority, and the role of the dominant group in society in their acquisition of minority status- that determines its voluntary or involuntary status, rather than its race or ethnicity. Chinese Americans are voluntary minorities because of the

ways and reasons they came to the United States, not because of their Chinese ethnicity. Black Americans are involuntary minorities in the United States, because they were brought here as slaves against their will, not because they are Black" (p. 6).

Theories on topics of collective identity, fear of acting white, voluntary and involuntary minorities, and community forces are among the many ideas Ogbu offers as explanations regarding why some minority students succeed in school and others do not (Farkas, 2003; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1987, 1992; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). These theories have particular relevance for this study in that African American student may struggle for a sense of identity in a predominantly White school environment.

Issues related to social environment and culture are perhaps the most controversial topics being debated regarding the external factors related to the gaps. In his study, *One Giant Step Backward: Myths of Black Cultural Learning Styles,* (Frisby, 1993) rejects the theories of "cultural difference" as an explanation for the below average academic performance of African American students, and critiques the underlying assumptions of the model. The strength of his convictions in this matter is reflected in his closing statement, which cites that the proponents of the Black Cultural Learning Styles Theory "…perpetuate the same type of crude 19th century educational philosophy that would be popularly labeled as "racist" today" (p. 552). Of critical interest in this study is how a program like CBSD may be addressing issues of racism for parents and students.

Internal Factors Related to the Gaps

In the review of the literature, it was found that there is also research on the internal factors that may contribute to the achievement gaps. Internal factors refer to those things that happen at, or are under the direct control of, the local district or school.

Standards, curriculum, instructional practices, school climate, and educational culture are the traditional factors that have been studied as institutional elements related to student achievement. Significant work has also examined the interpersonal dynamics of perceptions, attitudes, expectations, and relationships among and between students, teachers, administrators, and parents (Farkas, 2003; Ferguson, 2002, 2003; Johnston & Viadero, 2000; Singham, 1998; Taylor, 2003). Together, these comprise the major internal factors found in the research. Whether negatively or positively associated with student performance, each of these factors has been repeatedly cited in the research as contributing to the widening or the narrowing of the academic achievement gaps.

Studies that address internal factors typically used mixed methods to compare and analyze statistics on student performance, with quantitative and qualitative data specific to the context of the study; the data are typically collected through observations, interviews, surveys, records, and documents. Researchers studying the internal factors include all of those mentioned above, but there is a greater representation of the practitioner/researcher in this category.

Educational literature is rich with research studies of districts, schools, or programs that have achieved success in addressing and narrowing the gaps. In contrast to Coleman's conclusion that the effects of schooling were not sufficient to offset the effects of low SES (Coleman et al., 1966), more recent research studies have demonstrated that there are several examples of schools with high percentages of low SES students that have been successful in raising student achievement among all racial groups (Barth et al., 1999; Johnson & Asera, 1999; Johnson, Ragland, & Lein, 1996; Reeves, 1999; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003).

In his book, *Accountability in Action*, Reeves (1999) discusses his 90/90/90 study of schools that shared the following student characteristics: 90% on free and reduced lunch, 90% minority, and 90% meeting or exceeding high academic standards. The common characteristics found at these high-performing schools included the following internal factors:

a.) focus on academic achievement;

b.) clear curriculum choices;

c.) frequent assessment of student progress and multiple opportunities for improvement;

d.) an emphasis on nonfiction writing; and

e.) collaborative scoring of student work.

In the report on successful schoolwide programs in Texas, Lein, et al. (1997) reported on 26 urban and rural Title I schools. All schools studied for this report had at least 60 percent free and reduced lunch (most at 75 percent), diverse student populations, and at least a 70 percent pass rate on both the reading and math sections of the 1994-1995 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). As in Reeves' study, no "magic program" or "silver bullet" was found. The 26 schools were more different than alike and utilized as assortment of varied instructional approaches and programs. But like Reeves study, the researchers also found common themes they felt contributed to the individual successes of these schools:

a.) focus on the academic success of every student;

b.) no excuses;

c.) experimentation;

d.) inclusivity – everyone is a part of the solution;

e.) sense of family;

f.) collaboration and trust; and

g.) passion for learning and growing.

The study of nine high-performing, high-poverty, urban elementary schools conducted for the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas in Austin (Johnson & Asera, 1999) found similar results to the reports mentioned above. All of these schools were in urban settings, and while they had many similarities in demographics, there were also unique differences. These differences included:

a.) grade spans;

b.) ethnic make up;

c.) district level involvement;

d.) size of enrollment;

e.) length of reform efforts; and

f.) student and teacher mobility.

Despite the differences, the schools shared the following common traits in their reform efforts, even though they used different programs or approaches to achieve improvement in student test scores:

a.) attainable and visible early goals;

b.) a collective sense of ownership and responsibility for ensuring learning for all students;

c.) clear, school-wide focus on improvement of student achievement;

d.) redirected use of time;

e.) student discipline programs that fostered students' responsibility for behavior and reduced discipline problems;

f.) aligned curriculum/instruction to standards and assessments;

g.) adequate resources and staff development;

h.) collaborative structures for teacher interaction;

i.) strong and meaningful parent partnerships;

j.) additional instructional time; and

k.) persistence during setbacks.

These three reports represent a small sample of the numerous studies that have demonstrated that despite high levels of poverty and diversity, many schools have been successful in reaching high levels of student achievement and closing the racial achievement gaps when instituting these positive internal factors (Bell, 2003; Downey, 2003; Haycock, 1998; Haycock & Jerald, 2002). As shown in the examples above, there are common traits, themes, or characteristics that can be identified among these successful schools. While they are not all exactly the same, schools with an obvious culture of high expectations, no excuses, and a focus on the academic achievement of all students can make a difference. When this type of culture is combined with clearly aligned curriculum, frequent assessment, collaborative structures, and adequate resources, achievement gaps are significantly reduced. These studies suggest that districts and schools have an important role to play in closing the gaps. The district in this case study is neither high poverty nor low performing. However, the persistence of the achievement gaps suggest the need to attend to these factors, especially in the areas of establishing partnerships with parents, and holding high expectations for every student.

Teacher quality is another internal factor that has been the focus of research on the achievement gaps (Haycock, 1998; Sanders & Horn, 1998). The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) developed by Sanders (1998) is a statistical method that has been used to measure both school and teacher effectiveness. "TVAAS uses statistical mixed-model theory and methodology to enable a multivariate, longitudinal analysis of student achievement data" (p.249). The major finding of Sanders' work was that the single most important variable related to student achievement was not poverty, race, language, or any of the other external variables mentioned earlier. The most important variable was the quality of the classroom teacher.

Haycock (1998) identified the qualities of effective teachers as:

a.) strong verbal and math skills;

b.) deep content knowledge; and

c.) teaching skill.

The last category, teaching skill, is however the most difficult to quantify and measure. "Neither education courses completed, advanced education degrees, scores on professional knowledge sections of licensure exams, nor interestingly, years of experience seem to have a clear relationship to student achievement" (p. 8). Recognizing this difficulty in measuring teaching skill, it is still clear that the first two qualities are important and should receive immediate attention (Haycock, 1998).

Other research efforts have examined internal variables such as teacher/student relationships, teacher expectations, teacher perceptions, and student perceptions. In her study of teacher expectations and its impact on student achievement, Cantor, Kessler, & Miller, (2000) found that teachers who hold high expectations for students and who treat

students with dignity and respect can improve student behavior, attendance, and achievement (Cantor, et al., 2000). Following the tenets established in the Teacher Expectation and Student Achievement program (TESA), teachers felt that they were able to have a positive impact on student learning regardless of students' academic levels, home conditions, or community influences.

In his various research studies, Ferguson consistently found that strong teacher-student relationships may be especially important resources for both African American and Hispanic students (Ferguson, 2001, 2002, 2003). One measurement cited by Ferguson is the Ed-Excel Survey of Secondary School Student Culture (Ferguson, 2002). Administered to students in grades 7-11, this sample included 7,120 African Americans, 17,562 Whites, 2,491 Hispanics, 2,448 Asians, and 4,507 mixed-race students. One interesting finding was that both African American and Hispanics were significantly more motivated by teacher encouragement or the students' desire to please or impress their teacher, than they were because the teacher demanded it. White and Asian students were much more likely to be motivated by teacher demands. These results were mostly unrelated to SES.

Other studies have also cited teacher perceptions and attitudes as an important factor in the educational experiences of minority and low-income students (Delpit, 1995; Taylor, 2003; Uhlenberg & Brown, 2002). In his review of research on racial disparities and discrimination in education, Farkas (2003) concluded that there are actions by school personnel that are most likely to involve discrimination. Listed in order of most damaging to students and most likely to be observable and measurable, those actions are:

a.) ability grouping in early elementary school;

   b.) retention in grade;

   c.) special education placement;

   d.) track placement in middle and high school;

   e.) teacher and school resources;

   f.) teachers' perceptions and expectations; and

   g.) compensatory programs.

"If such prejudices and discrimination does not show itself in overt actions, it may do so more subtly in expectations not held or encouragement not given" (p. 13).

   Another interesting perspective on internal factors related to the achievement gaps is the work done on "equity traps". In their article, "Equity Traps: A Useful Construct for Preparing Principals to Lead Schools That are Successful with Racially Diverse Students", Kathryn Bell McKenzie and James Joseph Scheurich (2004) identify four equity traps that represent identifiable, conscious, and unconscious thinking patterns and behaviors that prevent the creation of equitable schools. These four traps are labeled: a deficit view; racial erasure; avoidance and employment of the gaze; and paralogical beliefs and behaviors. For each of these traps, the authors provide strategies that principals can use to address behaviors they observe in the classroom. The article contains several compelling examples that have been gathered by the authors in their research study.

   A companion piece of literature to the article on equity traps is, "Equity Audits: A Practical Tool for Developing Equitable and Excellent Schools", (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004) In this article, the authors note that having accountability policies is not enough to ensure the broad improvements necessary to address the existing

achievement gaps. Equity audits for educational systems are a reconceptualized construct of equity audits that have historical roots in civil rights enforcement. e.g., employment rights audits, gender equity audits, and pay equity audits. The authors have identified 12 indicators that they have grouped into three areas for audit. The three areas are labeled teacher quality equity, programmatic equity, and achievement equity. The authors believe that using the tools of equity audits, school leaders can "uncover, understand, and change inequities that are internal to schools and districts..." (p. 133)

Student perceptions regarding the achievement gaps have also been studied. Taylor (2003) conducted interviews of 300 African American high school students, in an attempt to determine their perceptions regarding the reasons for the achievement gaps. The majority of the reasons cited by the students fell into five categories:

a.) 31 percent indicated that they held themselves responsible;

b.) 24 percent cited teacher behaviors;

c.) 18 percent talked about their parents' roles;

d.) 13 percent discussed schools; and

e.) 11 percent referred to their community environment (Taylor, 2003).

One of the interesting findings of the study was the embarrassment students exhibited when comparative data was shown regarding the gap in performance of African Americans, as opposed to Whites. This finding raises the question of student self-image and the potential implication it may have on school performance.

These studies on the internal factors related to the achievement gaps hold particular significance for the current study. As described in Chapter One, the parent founders of the CPA and CBSD were initially motivated by concerns of racial bias in the

school district. These concerns were expressed as being directly related to the internal

factors of curriculum, instructional practices, school climate, educational culture,

perceptions, attitudes, expectations and relationships.

<div align="center">Parent Involvement & School Success</div>

The closing of the achievement gaps is widely recognized as the major driving

force behind NCLB. In addition to its increased accountability for higher academic

standards, NCLB also has provisions for increasing parent involvement as an important

step in closing the achievement gap ("No child left behind act of 2001," 2002). Parent

communication, choice, and proactive plans for increasing parental involvement are all

called for under the new federal mandates. One solution for closing the achievement gaps

that research has shown to be beneficial is the enhancement of parent involvement with

the educational endeavors of their children (*Creating partnerships with parents to

improve schools. A handbook for educators*, 1996; Ehman, 1995; Fager & Brewster,

1999; Howley, et al.,1997). A strong link exists between educational benefits to children

and family engagement in schools. Parental involvement in schools can be defined in

various ways such as encouragement to succeed academically, volunteering at school,

support at home with things like homework, and participation in school activities and

governance structures. The educational success outcomes stemming from family

engagement in schools can be seen in the attainment of higher grades, improved test

scores, positive school attendance, higher graduation rates, positive attitudes about

school, and greater entry into postsecondary education institutions (*Parents: the missing

link in education reform. Hearing before the select committee on children, youth, and*

families. House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, first session (Indianapolis, Indiana, November 16, 1987), 1988; Carroll, 1998; Mapp, 2002).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) identified two belief systems that influence parents' motivation to become involved in their children's education: parents' role construction for involvement and their sense of self-efficacy for helping their children succeed in school. Role construction was defined as parents' belief systems about what they should do, as related to their children's education. Specifically, this construct looks at their belief systems regarding their responsibility for their children's educational outcomes and whether they should be involved in their children's education. This construct is influenced by a variety of factors including parents' beliefs about child development, effective child rearing practices, and appropriate parent assistance in the home to support student learning at school. The expectations of individuals and groups important to the parent also have an impact on their role construction. The impact of this type of social context and peer pressure on role construction indicates that it can be changed (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) used Bandura's definition of self-efficacy as "…belief in one's ability to act in ways that will produce desired outcomes" (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy, as applied to parent involvement, suggests that parents are likely to make decisions about whether to be involved based on their beliefs that they can have a positive impact on their children's academic achievement. These beliefs are influenced by their aspirations for their child, and their confidence in the child's ability to be successful in school.

A third major construct related to parents' motivation to be involved in their children's education consists of the opportunities, invitations, and demands of the school and the child (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The extent to which parents feel invited to participate in a welcoming fashion, by both their child and the school, is another factor in their decision to become involved. The specific recommendation from Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) relative to involvement efforts of the school is: "Efforts to involve parents should be grounded in the knowledge that beliefs about their roles in children's schooling and their effectiveness in helping their children succeed are the primary points of entry into increased, and increasingly effective, involvement. If schools do not take these parental contributions to involvement seriously, the likelihood of any policy or practice having significant influence on involvement practices or outcomes seems very low" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Therefore, in the current study, it was important to determine through the interviews and survey, how parents perceive the school and district in this regard, and whether or not there has been a change since the intervention of the CPA and CBSD.

<div align="center">Parent Training/Support Programs</div>

Many of the studies on parent involvement centered on specific programs designed to inform, engage, and support parents in their efforts to positively influence their students' academic experiences and achievement. Minimal family involvement is often noted by educational staff members serving low-income and minority families (Dwyer & Hecht, 1992; Erickson, 1996; Stallworth, 1982). In 2002, Mapp, a professor in education from Northeastern University, conducted a case study to identify factors that lead to successful educational partnerships between school staff and families. One of the

determining factors regarding the selection of schools to study was the identification of a site that supported low-income, minority families and had created a shift from having low parent involvement to extraordinarily high parent engagement rates. This particular qualitative case study focused on Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School in Boston, Massachusetts. This school was an urban kindergarten through fifth grade site serving 220 students of whom 67 percent were on free or reduced price lunch, 55 percent were African American, 34 percent were White, 6 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent Asian. Of the total population of students, 25 percent of them had been identified as students with special needs. From 1989 to 1995, the school had involved 90 percent of the parents in one or more home or school-based family engagement activities. During this same time period the average median percentile scores on the Massachusetts Achievement Test for grades one through five increased 18 percent in English and 31 percent in mathematics. For these reasons, the current study will explore how College Bound San Diego may have contributed to parents' involvement at the high school level.

O'Hearn's staff strategically identified increased parent involvement as their number one priority over a six-year period of time and they took five steps to actualize this goal. The first change was the appointment of a new school principal, who surveyed the staff and found the need to increase family involvement. Secondly, the teachers identified approximately ten parents from diverse backgrounds and formed the O'Hearn Family Involvement Committee. Third, this group of parents began to actively engage themselves in school governance and decided to develop a School Site Council, representing both staff and parents. The fourth step taken was securing a grant to develop the O'Hearn Family Outreach Team, thus creating a home visitation program to deliver

the message to families that they were respected and welcomed into the O'Hearn community. The key factor with the home visitation program was that it intentionally carried positive and inviting messages to families and deliberately curtailed blame and accusation towards parents. Finally, O'Hearn opened a Family Center in the school library within a community resource area that provided information on social service agencies and organizations to assist families. The Family Center was inviting and provided parents with comfortable furniture, a cozy environment, coffee, refreshments, and a friendly, welcoming atmosphere (Mapp, 2002).

Three major findings surfaced from the research Mapp conducted regarding why and how low-income parents are involved in their children's education. First, this qualitative case study found that parents, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, are intensely interested in their children's education. Parents expressed a passionate desire to help their children succeed in school. Second, parents understood that their involvement had a direct correlation to the educational development of their children. Finally, parents were involved in their children's education in ways not always recognized by a school staff that held a narrow vision of what constituted legitimate participation. For example, parents expressed that they provided verbal support and encouragement to their children regarding school importance and success. In addition, parents established environments at home conducive to completing school work.

Mapp's research found three dominant factors influenced parent involvement in schools. First, there are social factors emanating from parents' own experiences and history that influence their participation in schools with their children (Goldman & Johnson, 1996; Mapp, 2002; Stallworth & Williams, 1982). For example, if a parent had

a negative school experience as a child, then it limited his/her own interactions with the schools of their children. Second, school factors, particularly those that are relational in nature, have a major impact on parents' involvement. When school staffs engage in caring and trusting relationships with parents, they enhance parents' desire to be involved and participate in their children's educational development (Ascher, 1988; Mapp, 2002). The third major finding was that welcoming, honoring, and connecting parents to the school community were key factors in increasing family involvement. Respectful and meaningful relationships, where power is shared between school staff and family members, bond the learning community together and promote parents' involvement (Davies & Johnson, 1996; Epstein, 1992; Mapp, 2002).

The research findings on parent support and training programs cited above were all conducted at the elementary level. The documented increases in parent involvement and the subsequent gains in student achievement warrant further investigation of parent training and support programs at the secondary level. The current study of CBSD focused on parents of students in grades 9 through 12, and explains how parents at the high school level perceived opportunities for involvement.

In their study of the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), Chrispeels and Gonzalez (under review) examined a culturally-sensitive parent education program designed specifically for Latino families. Noting the research suggesting that ethnically and linguistically diverse families are typically less involved, they asserted the need to study parent involvement programs that are culturally sensitive, in order to determine their effectiveness in increasing parental involvement. Their study also was designed to test a conceptual model of a parent involvement process that was based upon a

conceptual framework of the factors that motivate parents to become involved in their children's education, (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). These studies concluded that parental role construct was the strongest predictor of parental involvement, and that self-efficacy was another key predictor. Drawing upon the findings, Chrispeels and Gonzales hypothesized that both of these factors could be influenced by new knowledge gained by parents in the PIQE program. Their study also examined several different interactions among the various factors of parental role construct, self-efficacy, knowledge, college expectations, parenting practices and parental role construct. Their findings confirmed that the PIQE program did have an impact on parent knowledge. More importantly, they confirmed their hypothesis that knowledge can mediate the effects of parental role construct and self-efficacy, the key factors identified by the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model as being the best indicators of parental involvement.

Like the study of the PIQE program, the current study of a program designed for parents of African-American children also asserts the need to study parent involvement programs that are culturally sensitive, in order to determine their effectiveness in increasing parental involvement.

Diamond and Gomez (2004) conducted a study involving working-class and middle-class African American parents and found that these parents' educational orientations were informed by the educational environments they navigated, the resources they used to negotiate the environments, and their prior social class and race-based educational experiences (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). These research results regarding African American parent involvement in their children's schooling parallel the findings

of other studies. Working-class African American parents had their children assigned to schools and, as parents, they tend to assess these schools less favorably (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000). In comparison, middle-class African American parents are more likely to select their children's schools, assess them favorably, and be supportive of them. Social class shapes parents' school selection behaviors by providing working-class and middle-class parents with differential access to stratified educational institutions.

Diamond and Gomez (2004) assert three major implications for educational policy and practice regarding African American parent involvement in schools. First, they maintain that school choice policies are likely to exacerbate inequalities, rather than reduce them, because parents with better resources are in a more strategic position to take advantage of choice options. Instead, they propose providing children with access to quality educational programs by improving facilities, enhancing teacher quality, providing challenging instruction, and raising teacher expectations of student outcomes. Secondly, all parents must have academic information about schools, teachers, and resources within schools so they can make informed choices regarding the educational placement of their children. The third study finding indicates that attention must be paid to parent involvement structures and to the relationships between parents and teachers (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Smalley & Reyes-Blanes, 2001; Thompson, 2003; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2001).

Both race and social class have consistently been linked to children's educational outcomes, wherein children of color and children from low-income households have lower achievement results. Data indicate that children from all subgroups who are from

working-class families and African American students from all levels of the economic spectrum lag behind children from middle and upper-class White families (Smalley & Reyes-Blanes, 2001; Thompson, 2003; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2001). Working-class parents reported facing the burden in their day-to-day interactions with school officials, because they need to establish their legitimacy with teacher and administrators who doubted their capacity for meaningful involvement based on social class biases. These same challenges have been reported for African American families regardless of their socio economic status (Haycock & Jerald, 2002; Porter & Soper, 2003; Schwartz, 2001). The difference in parent involvement is one way in which race and social class influence children's educational outcomes. Due to the history of racial discrimination, African American parents approach schools with criticisms and challenges rather than support and deference (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Frieman & Watson-Thompson, 1997).

These findings related specifically to African American parents are particularly relevant to the current study of the College Bound program. As noted in Chapter One, the founders of CBSD and the majority of parents participating in the program, are of higher socioeconomic status, and still perceived racial bias in the educational system.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated in the legal arena and has begun to gain recognition in the social sciences. However, it has yet to make a significant presence within the educational field. The primary purpose in employing a critical race theoretical framework for this study is that it posits that the first step on the road to racial justice is providing the oppressed with a voice to communicate their experience and realities. As

Delpit so poignantly points out, the current state of racial affairs is such that the dialogue

of people of color has been silenced (Delpit, 1988). One of the propositions upheld by

critical race theorists is that race continues to be a significant social issue in the United

States (Bell, 1987; Delpit, 1988; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn, 1999; West, 1993).

This proposition is easily documented in public education through statistical and

demographic data within the United States, which not only indicates a significant

achievement gap between African American and White students but also higher high

school dropout rates, suspension rates, incarceration rates, and poor quality of schools

and certified educators for African Americans (Hacker, 2003; Kozol, 1991).

In his early work, Woodson (1933) described the role schools have played in

structuring inequality and not motivating African American students: "The same

educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he

is everything…depresses and crushes…the spark and genius of the Negro by making him

feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of

other peoples" (Woodson, 1933). Here Woodson touches upon an imbalance in the

distribution of intellectual property between students of color and their White

counterparts (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Racism has not waned in society but rather

has transformed into subtle, hidden, invisible cues of racist acts that occur daily toward

people of color and flourishes in a society that deems this behavior as normal and

acceptable. Critical race theorists view schools as functioning within a system of

institutionalized white privilege, oppression, and racism (Bell, 1980; Delgado, 1989;

Duncan, 2002; Lopez, 2003). Racism is an endemic component of our social fabric.

Although laws stemming from the Civil Rights movement and critical legal studies have

attempted to reduce racism within our country, they have failed and have instead

reproduced and normalized racism in society. For example, antidiscrimination laws have

been ineffective and represent an ideological struggle within random winners. In the case

of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas,* with more than fifty years of

hindsight, serious shortcomings surface with this strategy, in that schools today are more

segregated than ever before (Bell, 1983; Hacker, 2003; Lopez, 2003; Orfield, 1988).

The critical race theoretical framework aims to unveil White privilege and reveal

a social order that is stratified along racial lines. Theorists within this field maintain there

are two different accounts of reality regarding racism: stories and counter stories.

Dominant White society has written a script of stories regarding the telling of a reality

that appears ordinary and normal. In juxtaposition of this dialogue are the counter stories

of people of color whose voices have been suppressed and censored. Critical race

theorists posit that racial progress cannot be made by politics and policy alone, because

racism cannot be remedied without substantially recognizing and changing White

privilege. This goal cannot be accomplished without listening to and respecting the

voices of people of color who have a story of their own realities to share.

The current study sought to understand if Critical Race Theory tenets were

perceived by the parents of CBSD as at play in their children's schools. It further sought

to understand if the CBSD program provided specific knowledge or skills to support

parents in their interactions with the educational institution.

Parent Efficacy Theory

The construct of parents' sense of efficacy was described by Hoover-Dempsey

and Sandler (1995, 1997) in their study examining why parents become involved with

their children's education. The three major constructs they defined include: parents' role construction; parents' sense of efficacy; and general invitations, demands and opportunities for involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). The construct of parent efficacy was set within the general body of literature on personal self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1997). This more general construct has to do with individuals' beliefs regarding their abilities to impact and control events that affect their lives. Applying the personal self-efficacy theory to the study of parent involvement suggests that parents' decisions to become involved in their children's education are influenced by their own sense of efficacy or their belief in their ability to affect the outcomes of the their children's education experience. The stronger the perceived sense of efficacy, the higher the goals they will set for themselves and the stronger their commitment will be to achieving those goals (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). It is an individual's perception of efficacy, rather than the actual resource or skills he or she may have that determines these goals and efforts. Therefore, even among individuals with limited education, resources, and cultural capital, it is one's sense of efficacy, one's beliefs about what can be done with the resources one possess, that is the key determining factor of parental involvement (Bandura, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). It is important to note that the level of parents' self efficacy was not significantly related to income, employment status, marital status, or other commonly perceived indicators of lack of parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992).

In 1993, Eccles and Harold (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) proposed a different definition of parents' efficacy that contained three variables:

a.) parents' confidence that they can help with school work;

b.) parents' views of their competence as their children progress to higher grades; and

c.) parents' beliefs that they can influence the school through school governance.

Based on this definition, they noted that parents' involvement decreases as students reach secondary levels of schooling, and they attribute this decrease to parents' feelings of inadequacy, as children's school work becomes more advanced. A 1994 report of Eccles and Harold (as cited in Hoover-Demsey & Sandler, 1997) discussed longitudinal data from a study of more than 1,000 predominantly White, lower, middle-class students. This study identified variables potentially related to parents' efficacy, such as: intellectual confidence; achievement motivation; and families' valuing of mastery. These variables were considered to be the most strongly related to parents' involvement.

The construct of parent self-efficacy is one of the major factors the current study sought to identify and measure among parents in the CBSD program.

Social/Cultural Capital Theory

Coleman (1988) discussed the role of social capital in family relationships and its impact on children's educational experience. Social capital exists in the relationships among individuals that facilitate action. Social capital in the family is not only based upon children's access to the physical presence of adults, but upon the attention given by the adults to the children in the family. Therefore, regardless of the levels of financial, physical, and human capital within a family, children cannot profit from either if social capital is missing. The social capital that has an impact on a child's development does not rest solely within the family; is also found in the relationships parents have within the

community and relationships that parents have with institutions of the community. In his study, Coleman found that social capital within and outside of the family was positively related to reducing the probability of dropping out of high school (Coleman, 1988).

In her qualitative study of family-school relationships, Lareau (1987) examined the role of social and cultural capital as it relates to parents' levels of involvement with their children's education. Her study suggests that the social and cultural elements of family life that facilitate compliance with teachers' requests are a form of cultural capital. It further suggests that family-school relationships carry the imprint of the larger social context.

In her study, Lareau (1987) examined the different levels of parent involvement between White working-class parents and professional middle-class parents. Her research also examined the requests from teachers and school administrators for parent participation, as well as the quality of interactions between parents and teachers on the school site at two elementary schools. One school served students from predominantly working-class parents, who were either high school graduates or dropouts and employed in skilled or semi-skilled occupations. The other school served students of predominantly professional middle-class parents, a majority of whom were college graduates. She found that request from teachers for parental involvement did not vary for working-class versus middle-class parents. At both schools, teachers promoted parent involvement and believed there was a positive correlation between parent involvement and students' academic success. All teachers encouraged parents to provide assistance with homework, especially by reading to their children daily. Additionally, the study found that parents

from both schools valued the educational success of their children, and viewed

themselves as supporting and helping their children achieve success (Lareau, 1987).

However, the findings showed that the level of parent participation was

significantly different at the two schools, as was the completion of assigned reading tasks

at home. Parents from the middle-class school were more comfortable and confident in

their interactions with the school. They participated in school activities with greater

frequency, and completed the reading at home tasks at a high level. Teachers from the

middle-class school also reported that the majority of parents read to their children on a

daily basis. Conversely, parents from the working-class school were reluctant to contact

the school and appeared uncomfortable in their interactions with the school. Parents at the

working-class school did not support the at-home reading program as well, and only 50

percent reported that they read to their child daily.

Parents from the two schools also saw the responsibilities of home and school

differently. The middle-class parents believed their role to be that of partner with the

school and wanted to be actively involved in their children's education. Working-class

parents were more inclined to see a separation of responsibilities, with the school having

the responsibility for the education of their children, while the parents assumed the

responsibility for providing for the children and ensuring that they attended school

regularly and on time.

Lareau concluded that the differences in the social, cultural, and economic

resources of the two groups of parents explained the differences in their ability and

willingness to respond to the teacher and school's request for parental involvement. The

class position and class culture of middle-class parents, "yielded a social profit not

available to working class parents" (Lareau, 1987). She suggests that if schools promoted

a different type of family–school relationship, there might not be such a distinct

difference in social profit between the two groups of parents. An understanding of the

concept of cultural capital may lead to changes in the structure of opportunities provided

by schools to involve parents in their children's educational experience.

A different perspective on social/cultural capital is represented in the work done

by the Community Involvement Network, which is now a part of the Annenberg Institute

for School Reform at Brown University. In the report, "Organized Communities,

Stronger Schools", previews of findings from research conducted on districts involved in

"community organizing for school reform" are examined (Mediratta, et al., 2008). The

concept of community organizing is described as a model for involving students, parents,

and community organizations to work with schools and districts to assist in school reform

that will result in positive student outcomes. This model suggests that the collective

capital of these combined groups can have great impact on changing and improving

educational systems.

The idea of collective efficacy is also addressed by Ream and Palardy (2008) in

their study on social class differences among parents and the educational utility of

parental social capital. This study concluded that the networking of parents from different

social classes may prove a valuable resource for producing educational utility (Ream &

Palardy, 2008).

These findings of differences by socio-economic status are particularly important

when one considers the point raised earlier in this chapter that these same challenges have

been reported for African American families regardless of their socio-economic status. (Haycock & Jerald, 2002; Porter & Soper, 2003; Schwartz, 2001)

Summary

The academic achievement gaps between African American and White students in K-12 American schools have been well-documented and represent a national crisis of major proportions. Many studies have attempted to identify both internal and external causes for these gaps. While differing opinions on the causes remain, there are documented examples of schools that have had success in closing these gaps. More research on these and other strategies is needed to accelerate the rate of change necessary to effectively narrow the gaps.

Within the literature review on the connection between parent involvement and school success, a significant body of literature exists regarding the benefits of parent involvement in their children's schooling. Culturally sensitive programs, as well as efforts designed to provide parent training and support, have been successful in raising the levels of parental knowledge and sense of efficacy, as related to their children's educational experience; these changes have resulted in increased parent involvement.

Critical race theory, parent efficacy theory, and social/cultural capital theory provide a theoretical framework for this study, as it attempts to examine the impact of a parent/student support program for African American students. The unique challenges faced by African American parents and their children in the current educational system were the impetus for creating the College Bound San Diego program. Determining whether the program has increased parent efficacy and /or has increased the social/cultural capital of African American families is an important endeavor this study

was designed to undertake. By recognizing the dynamics at play with African American parents and their relationships with schools, our educational systems must take essential steps to build the relationships with parents to promote the academic success of their children. This is especially important since many African American parents, from all socio-economic levels, feel distant from their children's school. The current study fills a gap in the literature by describing a parent education/support program that was created and run by parents themselves for parents of African American students from affluent communities who attend high performing schools. The study sought to explain how a parent initiated group has been able to build the social and cultural capital for parents and students who believe they have been disenfranchised by the school and district.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

The previous chapter reviewed the research that documented the disparity of academic performance among ethnic groups in K-12 public education. More specifically, the research on the achievement gaps between African American and White and Asian students has included the examination of a wide variety of external and internal factors that might be contributing to, or even causing, this phenomenon. Studies have documented achievement gaps that are not only present in low performing, high poverty, diverse school settings, but even at high performing schools with higher socio-economic status (SES) levels (Cowley & Meehan, 2002; Ferguson, 2002; Ogbu & Wood, 2002; Singham, 1998, 2003; Viadero, 2000). Other studies have shown that some schools have been successful in raising student achievement among all racial groups, regardless of the school's SES levels. One common factor prevalent at these successful schools is the involvement of parents in supporting the academic success of their own child and the school.

In general, there appears to be a strong link between family engagement in schools and educational benefits to children. To promote parent involvement, many schools and districts have initiated parent education programs designed to increase parents' knowledge, expectations, involvement actions, and sense of efficacy, in relation to their student's educational experience (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Chrispeels & Gonzalez, under review; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Mapp, 2002; Smalley & Reyes-Blanes, 2001; Thompson, 2003; Walker-Dalhouse

& Dalhouse, 2001). Some of these programs have been targeted for a specific ethnic or racial group and include cultural and/or second language components that meet the needs of the individual group.

Understudied in the literature on parent involvement and parent education programs are programs that are organized and conducted by the parents. This study focuses on one such parent program that has been established and led by African American parents. College Bound San Diego was specifically designed, as described in Chapter One, to help close the achievement gap of African American students attending suburban schools. The overarching purpose of this study is to explore how College Bound actively engaged parents of specific ethnic groups in their child's school experience and whether or not participation in these programs increases parents' level of involvement. As explained in Chapter Two, the research supports the concepts that:

a.) parent training and support programs have been shown to lead to greater levels of parent involvement;

b.) parent involvement for underserved and underachieving students has been shown to address and mitigate both internal and external factors related to the achievement gaps; and

c.) addressing these factors for students has been shown to have a positive impact on narrowing the academic achievement gaps.

If successful programs can be identified and replicated, they may serve as one strategy for increasing the academic achievement levels of underserved and underrepresented students and thereby may provide a partial solution for narrowing the existing achievement gap.

In this chapter, the methodology selected for this descriptive case study is presented. Four components of the methods will be discussed:

1. Context of study;

2. Research design;

3. Limitations of the study; and

4. Researcher's role and ethical considerations.

The survey questions, interview and focus group protocols, and the participant consent form are located in the appendices as indicated.

Context of the Study

This study focused specifically on parents of African American students, who are members of College Bound San Diego (CBSD), the educational component of the Concerned Parents Alliance, Inc. (CPA). CPA is a non-profit, community-based organization that was founded in 2002 by parents of African American students. These parents were concerned about racial bias and challenges they felt their children were encountering in the Poway Unified School District, a K-12 public school district serving several suburban communities in the north/eastern area of San Diego and the City of Poway. The district serves over 32,000 students at 23 elementary schools, six middle schools, four comprehensive high schools, and one continuation high school. The ethnic composition of the student population is three percent African American, 0.5 percent American Indian/Alaskan, 15 percent Asian, seven percent Filipino, 10 percent Hispanic, 0.6 percent Pacific Islander, 58 percent White, and seven percent listed as other. Approximately ten percent of the students in the district are classified as low income

based on their eligibility for the federal free and reduced lunch program. Slightly more than nine percent of the students are classified as English Language Learners.

In an effort to develop a proactive partnership between parents and the school district, the founding parents of CPA organized a large community meeting, whereby discussions were held, concerns raised, and solutions explored with the district's superintendent. The CPA has dealt directly with the school district on a variety of issues, including the achievement gap for African American students, which is reported by the district in its annual State of the District Report.

District Achievement Results

The Poway Unified School District has consistently ranked as one of the highest performing K-12 districts in California as measured by the state's Academic Performance Index (API). Test scores reported in the State of the District 2006-2007, Report (District, 2007) reveal that students in all subgroups out-perform their peers at the county, state, and national level, both in language arts and mathematics. Although there is evidence of achievement gaps closing on some measures, significant gaps continue to exist between the White and Asian students and their African American and Hispanic peers. (See, Tables 3.1 through 3.5.)

Table 3.1: CAHSEE Scores 2006 (PUSD State of the District Report, 2007, p. 25).
Modified with permission.

California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) Class of 2006, 2007, and 2008 Percentage of 10th Grade Students Passing on the First Attempt						
	English/Language Arts			Mathematics		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Poway Unified	93%	94%	94%	93%	95%	95%
African American	75%	85%	93%	74%	87%	91%
Asian	96%	94%	95%	97%	98%	97%
Filipino	91%	94%	92%	94%	97%	96%
Hispanic	79%	85%	85%	81%	89%	87%
White	95%	95%	96%	95%	96%	97%

Table 3.2: A Through G Completion Requirements by Subgroup 2002-2006 (PUSD State of the District Report, 2007, p. 53). Modified with permission.

2002-2006 A thru G Completion Requirements by Subgroup							
Ethnic Group	Poway Unified 2002	Poway Unified 2003	Poway Unified 2004	Poway Unified 2005	Poway Unified 2006	S.D. County[1] 2005	California[1] 2005
TOTALS	53.1%	54.6%	58%	58.4%	57.5%	37.2%	35.2%
African American	35.2%	38.1%	40.7%	47.1%	47.6%	23.5%	25.2%
Asian	74.5%	68.9%	76.0%	76.0%	75.1%	58.8%	58.7%
Filipino	41.6%	49.7%	64.5%	58.0%	51.9%	50.7%	46.6%
Hispanic	41.6%	39.2%	39.1%	41.5%	41.6%	22.0%	24.0%
White	51.2%	55.6%	57.7%	58.2%	57.9%	46.7%	40.9%

Shaded areas = In year four of a six-year effort, this district target has been achieved.
[1] 2005 data will be posted when it becomes available.

Table 3.3: Students enrolled in AP Courses by Ethnicity
(PUSD, 2007). Modified with permission.

Poway Unified School District Students Enrolled in AP Courses (2006)		
Total Students Enrolled (10-12): 3,092	% in PUSD	% in AP
African American	3%	2%
Asian	13%	23%
Filipino	7%	7%
Hispanic	9%	5%
White	64%	60%
Other	4%	3%

Table 3.4: 2006 SAT Mean Scale Scores by Ethnicity (PUSD State of the District Report, 2007, p. 62). Modified with permission.

SAT Mean Scale Scores by Ethnicity										
		Critical Reading			Math			Writing		
Ethnic Group	PUSD # Tested	PUSD	CA	USA	PUSD	CA	USA	PUSD	CA	USA
African American	40	**490**	435	430	**509**	426	430	**487**	434	424
Asian/Filipino	393	**542**	504	508	**603**	563	567	**546**	508	508
Hispanic	109	**503**	440	451	**524**	449	459	**508**	442	445
White	912	**540**	534	524	**561**	546	535	**543**	553	514
Other/No Response	228	**514**	497	496	**546**	515	505	**519**	501	489
Average Score		**537**	495	503	**568**	516	518	**539**	495	497

Table 3.5: College Entry Rates - 2006 (PUSD State of the District Report, 2007, p. 66). Modified with permission.

College Entry Rates 2006			
	Percentage Entering 2-Year	Percentage Entering 4-Year	2006 Total 2 yr + 4 yr
African American (38)	30%	38%	68%
Asian (230)	28%	55%	83%
Filipino (139)	42%	38%	80%
Hispanic (113)	41%	30%	71%
White (1,123)	34%	46%	80%
Other (42)	42%	28%	70%
Low SES (70)	43%	24%	67%
Students with Disabilities (88)	49%	12%	61%

Formation of College Bound San Diego

In 2003, College Bound San Diego was created as a parent/student program committed to proactively assisting students in setting and reaching high academic goals, in order to prepare them for high school graduation and acceptance to institutes of higher education. In its annual handbook, *Handbook for College Bound San Diego 2007-2008, (2007), the* program is described as "serving students and families in offering a unique approach to college counseling, development of study and success skills, parental

involvement, community service, black history, cultural awareness, career exploration, and exposure to a variety of colleges and universities" (*Handbook For College Bound San Diego 2007-2008*, 2007).

Membership in CBSD requires a small fee, and a large commitment of time, as well as demonstrated dedication to the program. Participant requirements, which include attendance, promptness, appropriate attire, fundraising, and community service participation, are all delineated in the annual handbook (*Handbook For College Bound San Diego 2007-2008*, 2007). Attendance at monthly workshops is mandatory, and excused absences are limited to conflicts with educational testing, or major family emergencies or illnesses. Participation in athletics or other extracurricular activities is not considered an excused absence.

Monthly, parents and students convene for a Saturday workshop. A typical workshop begins with a "village meeting" of all parents and students. It is here that students and parents make public commitments to high personal standards and academic success through the recitation of commitment pledges. This is also the time for practicing public speaking, celebrating individual student accomplishments, and reviewing assignments.

After the village meeting, students are separated into tracks by grade level groupings. For a subsequent duration of two hours, the groups participate in specific lessons or presentations. Topics include:

a.) Black History;

b.) Public speaking;

c.) Homework/study skills;

d.) Test taking skills;

e.) College entrance requirements; and

f.) Community service.

Time for individual tutoring and counseling is also built into each session.

The parent contingency meets at the same time to discuss a variety of topics including, but not limited to:

a.) A-G requirements;

b.) Other college entrance requirements;

c.) College application requirements;

d.) Test taking strategies;

e.) Financial aide programs;

f.) Parent/student relationships;

g.) Strategies for working successfully with their schools and teachers; and

h.) Any other topic designed to support their student's personal and academic success.

The final portion of the day is devoted to listening to student presentations or guest speakers, which take place in a village meeting setting.

In addition to the monthly workshops, two major components of CBSD are the community service projects and college tours. Each year, the program has conducted multiple college tours during school breaks. These tours are an excellent means of exposing the students to the various institutions of higher education and the experiences of campus life. The cost of the tours is paid through fund raising activities, which are organized by the CBSD program, donations, and parent contributions.

The final workshop of each year is dedicated to a formal recognition ceremony, with special emphasis on the graduating high school seniors who share their postsecondary plans. Having just completed its fourth year of operation, the program has a college acceptance rate of 100% among its graduating seniors. The district's college acceptance rate for African American students is 68% (PUSD, 2007).

Research Design

A descriptive case study approach was employed for this study in order to examine the College Bound San Diego program. The case study drew upon both qualitative strategies of inquiry, utilizing interviews and extant data from student focus groups and quantitative data from surveys, reports, and other extant data sources such as California Department of Education Data Quest. This approach allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the strengths, limitations, and accomplishments of the program, from not only the parent and student perspective, but through a review of historical student records. The study addresses the following questions:

1. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience?

2. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program contributed to students' educational experience?

Merriam (1998) defines a descriptive case study in education as a "rich and 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study," a term borrowed from the field of anthropology (p.29). It offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of importance to increase understanding of the phenomenon. Case studies "concentrate attention on the way a particular group of people confront specific

problems, taking a holistic view of the situation. They are problem-centered, small scale, entrepreneurial endeavors" (Shaw, 1978, p. 2). Thus, a case study can be defined as empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin 2003). In addition, the context bounds the case even if boundaries are sometimes blurred (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). The strength of the qualitative data is the focus on "naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings so that we have a handle on what 'real life' is like" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.10). A well-designed descriptive and exploratory case study permits a holistic and context sensitive lens, two of the major themes of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). The importance of context sensitivity is especially relevant to the proposed study because the CBSD program is heavily influenced by the unique, cultural attributes and influences of an educational support group that has been designed specifically by and for African American students and their parents.

Descriptive case studies allow the researcher to gather and present basic information thus serving as a database for future studies to use for comparison and theory building. Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that qualitative data is the best research strategy for discovery, exploring new areas, and developing hypotheses. Merriam states, "These insights can further be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research" (p. 41). The ability to discover new ideas and develop hypotheses is further justification for the use of case study methodology in this research project. Creswell (2003) further states that qualitative research is warranted if, "… a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it…" and when "the topic is new, the topic has not been addressed with a certain sample or group of people" (p. 22). Although limited research has been done on parent support programs

specifically for parents of African American students, the researcher was unable to find any studies on programs that were created and operated by parents themselves. Additionally, the researcher was unsuccessful in finding any studies on parent education/support programs for parents of African American students from affluent communities who attend high performing schools. The majority of research on the achievement gaps for African American students has focused on low socioeconomic communities and schools (Myers, Alvy, Arrington, Richardson, 1992). These unique characteristics of CBSD add a new perspective on parent involvement that is not represented in the current literature.

This study of CBSD includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection, which includes surveys, interviews, observations, focus groups, documents, and student records. According to Yin (2003), the use of multiple sources of evidence allows the researcher to address a wide array of relevant issues related to the case (p. 98). No one source of data can provide sufficient information to fully describe the program being studied. Merriam (2002) agreed that case studies do not have any prescribed methods of data collection, but allow data to be gathered from a variety of methods (p.28). Additionally, the collection of data from multiple sources will allow the researcher to triangulate the findings. Patton (1992) explains that triangulation is an important way to strengthen a study. The validity and reliability of a study are increased through the triangulation of multiple data sources (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). Through the use of "converging lines of inquiry," the findings of this study enabled the researcher to provide a more complete picture by drawing on several different sources of corroboratory information (Yin, 2003, p. 98). As mentioned above, data were collected from multiple

sources including parent surveys, interviews, and observations as well as extant achievement data and other student records. The researcher triangulated these data to enhance the validity and reliability of the conclusions drawn from this study.

Participants

All parent participants were active or former members of the College Bound San Diego program. Every participant completed a voluntary consent form prior to participating in the study.

Survey participants. Parent surveys were completed by all members of the program who were willing to participate. (See, Appendix B.) Thirty-six surveys were completed in the fall of 2006, and 62 post-surveys were completed in the fall of 2007. All parent participants were parents of African American children in grades 5 through 12, with at least one child who was actively involved in CBSD during the 2006-2007 and/or 2007-2008 school years. There were no known risks to participants in this study.

Interview participants. A purposive sampling of nine parents was selected for interviews. The sample attempted to provide a greater understanding of the perceived value of the program from participants with different perspectives, situations, and experiences related to CBSD. All parents invited to participate in the study interviews readily agreed. As noted by Merriam (1998), a purposive sampling is used to find participants who will provide the greatest insight to the topic being studied (p. 61). For this study, the researcher felt it was important to include:

a.) parents who founded the program;

b.) parents who have been in the program for multiple years;

c.) parents who were just beginning the program;

d.) parents who have only one student in the program;

e.) parents who have multiple students in the program; and

f.) parents who have students who have graduated from the program.

All nine of the interviewees had children currently in the program, three of the parents interviewed were founders of the CBSD program, two were just beginning the program, seven had participated in the program for four or five years, two had only one child in the program, seven had more than one child in the program, and three had students who had graduated from the program and were currently attending college. Six mothers and three fathers were represented in this sampling. (See, Table 3.6.) This selection was representative of the various individuals involved in the program at the time of the study, and was reflective of the purpose of the study. (See, Tables 4.1 through 4.3.)

Table 3.6: Demographics of College Bound San Diego Interview Participants

Interviewee No:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Criteria									
Mother		X		X	X	X	X		X
Father	X		X					X	
Founder							X	X	X
Continuing	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
New Parent					X	X			
One Child				X		X			
Multiple Children	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Graduates							X	X	X

Instrumentation

This section describes the survey that was administered to the parents and the interview protocol that was used. The survey provided the opportunity to gain a broader perspective from participants in terms of several important parent involvement

constructs, whereas the interviews provided insights into the how and why questions of the study.

     Parent survey. The parent survey used for this study consists of eight demographic questions and 72 specific questions about parents' knowledge, expectations, beliefs and involvement actions. (See, Appendix B.) The survey was based on many items validated in previous studies that had been used to assess the constructs of interest in this study (Epstein & Becker, 1989; Hoover-Dempsey, 2000). The items used to assess the construct 'Knowledge' were developed based on a content analysis of the PIQE program (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004). The survey used three types of scales:

     a.) 6-point modified Likert scale to measure the parents' beliefs and attitudes toward involvement (e.g., strongly agree, disagree);

     b.) 6-point behavior scale to measure the frequency of parent involvement behaviors over the past year (e.g., never to regularly); and

     c.) 6-point scale to measure parents' knowledge and awareness (e.g., don't know to fully know).

     Due to the limited sample size of this study, the ten constructs identified in a previous study of a parent education model were used for the data analyses rather than running a separate factor analysis on this data set (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004). In the previous study, a factor analysis and reliability analysis were computed using pre- and post-survey data, in order to determine the factors measured by the survey and the reliability of each item. The ten constructs from the survey are defined as follows:

a.) Knowledge: Parents' knowledge and awareness of the school system, the
requirements for admission to a four year college/university, and community
resources;

b.) Expectations: Parents' expectations for their child going to college;

c.) Role: Parents' beliefs about how they should be involved in their child's
schooling;

d.) Efficacy: Parents' sense of their capability and efficacy for supporting their
child's education;

e.) Invitations: Parents' perceptions of invitations from the school for
involvement activities;

f.) Interactions: Parents' practices to support their child's socio-emotional
development;

g.) School: Parents' activities to communicate and participate at their child's
school;

h.) Home: Parents' activities for supporting their child's learning at home, and;

i.) Leadership: Parents' leadership activities at their child's school, school
district, and in the community.

Parent interviews. There were 15 questions in the interview script that were posed
to all participants, and an additional six questions that were asked of the three participants
who are founders of the program. (See, Appendix A.) Follow-up questions were added
as appropriate.

The common questions asked of all participants how their participation in CBSD
had impacted their knowledge, efficacy, involvement, and expectations as related to their

child's current educational experience and future plans for college. It also sought to understand in what ways CBSD had changed their relationship with their child, and if program had a positive impact on their child's attitude towards and performance in school. The specific questions for the founders of the program asked about their motivation for creating the program and their perceptions of the program's effectiveness in influencing district policies, procedures, and practices related to the educational needs of African American students.

Data Collection

In the fall of 2006, the survey was first administered by the researcher in his role as Deputy Superintendent of the Poway Unified School District. For purposes of this study, the survey data, collected by the district to increase its understanding of how the program works and how it might increase its support, is being considered extant data and for comparative purposes was considered as a pre-survey. The same survey was administered by the researcher at a meeting of the CBSD in the fall of 2007. This second survey was used as a post-survey.

At a meeting of College Bound San Diego in the fall of 2007, the researcher gave a short presentation regarding the purpose and proposed methods of the study to parents. The parent survey was subsequently distributed at the meeting and returned to the researcher personally or via U.S. mail. Parents who were no longer in the program but completed the pre-survey in 2006 were contacted via telephone, email, and/or U.S. mail and were also invited and encouraged to complete the survey.

Parent interviews were conducted in the winter of 2007/2008, at a time and place convenient to the participants. Interviews were conducted in the following manner:

a.) three of the interviews were conducted at the researcher's office;

b.) two were conducted by telephone;

c.) one at the site of the College Bound San Diego meeting;

d.) two at the participants' home; and

e.) one was conducted at the interviewee's place of employment.

All interviews were conducted personally by the researcher and lasted between 45 minutes and one hour in duration. All interviews were digitally recorded to provide a complete and accurate record, and were transcribed and sent to the interviewees to be reviewed for accuracy.

Data Analysis

Depending on the nature of the data collected, a variety of approaches were used to analyze the data. During and upon completion of the collection of data, it was important to apply a disciplined process that brought order and meaning to the various pieces of information (Patton, 1990). The analysis of qualitative data versus quantitative data can be especially overwhelming (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore it was important that the researcher develop methods and systems for the analysis as data was being collected.

Parent survey. The quantitative data generated by the parent survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Cross-tabulation allowed for the creation of contingency tables that display the data in a matrix format. These tables provided insight into the demographic data collected from the participants.

A total of 85 pre- and/or post-surveys were completed. Only 16 parents completed the both pre- and post-survey. A comparison of the pre- and post-survey results from

these 16 parents was conducted using a matched pair t-test. Fourteen of these 16 parents
had been members of the program for two or more years. Data was then analyzed to
determine if, after an additional year in the program, there were any statistically
significant differences in the following four key areas:

a.) knowledge gains regarding the school system and college requirements;

b.) parent involvement activities;

c.) parents' expectations for graduation and college attendance; and

d.) parents' sense of self-efficacy to support their children's education.

These key areas were used as indicators of increased parent involvement as defined in the
study question.

Additionally, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the
responses from the 18 parents who were beginning the program to the 58 parents who
had completed one or more years in the programs. For this analysis, the post-survey was
used for the 16 parents who completed both the pre- and post-survey. The results of this
comparison was analyzed to determine if there were any statistically significant
differences between the two groups in the four key areas listed above. Because of the
small sample size, more sophisticated statistical analyses were not possible.

Parent interviews. For interview data, Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend
"interweaving data collection and analysis from the start" (p. 50) as a way of both
strengthening meaning and providing a process for the management of qualitative data.
Data analysis from interviews actually began as the interviews were being conducted.
Merriam (1998) supports this approach as he believes, "…the process of data collection
and analysis is both recursive and dynamic" (p.155). Through the use of anecdotal notes

regarding statements made or behaviors observed, the researcher began the process of generating meaning from the data as interviews were being conducted. Drawing on the concepts of Marshall and Rossman (1999) and Patton (2002), during the review of the transcriptions the researcher paid close attention to language patterns, themes and common beliefs to identify salient themes and categories. These categories and themes provided a framework for coding the data. Coding allowed the researcher to organize and retrieve data. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that coding allows the researcher to "…quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct, or theme" (p.57). This data analysis strategy allowed the researcher to begin the process of drawing conclusions from the data.

The digitally recorded interviews were transcribed by an independent word processor who was supplied the digital recordings. The recordings were identified by number only and had no other identifying information on them. The researcher and two doctoral students independently read and coded the transcribed interviews. As they read the transcripts, the coders used the four elements of parent involvement identified in the literature and incorporated into the first research question as the primary categories. Then they re-read the transcripts looking for any additional themes or categories. The researcher then organized specific quotations under the commonly identified themes and categories. The data was then analyzed and interpreted by the researcher.

Limitations

Small sample size was an inherent limitation of this study. However, given the unique characteristics of this parent initiated and operated program, a descriptive case study was warranted to explain the program and to understand its key organizational and

operational components. It was also important to document the perceptions of both

students and parents as they related to the student's educational experience and academic

success. Based on the fact that this was a study of an existing group of parents, it was not

possible to obtain a pre- and post-questionnaire of all parents participating in CBSD. The

specific demographic profile of the parents participating in the program limits the

generalizability of the study findings.

<p align="center">Researcher's Role and Ethical Considerations</p>

The researcher's interest in the achievement gaps among various student

subgroups dates back to his first years as a classroom teacher at an inner city high school

in a large urban school district. It was through this experience that he first encountered

the inequities experienced by various student subgroups and the impact they had on

achievement levels. Later, as the Chapter I Coordinator for this same school, he became

much more familiar with the social, political, and economic issues facing students of

color in the public school setting.

As an administrator for the Poway Unified School District, the researcher has

been actively involved in the District's Human Relations Advisory Committee, and has

been exposed to and addressed a variety of issues related to student diversity and the

closing of achievement gaps. Through the review of literature for his doctoral

dissertation, his focus narrowed to looking at the African American student subgroup.

The researcher's interest lay in trying to determine if there were policies, practices, or

processes that could address the aforementioned external and internal factors that are

related to the achievement gaps. More specifically, he was interested in looking for ways

that educators and parents could exert positive and collective efforts that could make a difference in closing the achievement gaps for African American students.

The researcher's interest in this study emanated from his own work as a district level administrator, who has been actively supportive of the CBSD program and its attempts to make a positive difference in the academic success of African American students. His professional relationship with this program allowed him to be a participant observer (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). In this relationship, he actively interacted with the participants, but used discretion in his level of involvement in activities of the program. As the deputy superintendent for the school district, his involvement included serving as a liaison between CPA and CBSD and the superintendent and Board of Education. Often times during the parent track of the meeting, the facilitators would call on him to share updates from the district as well as to listen and respond to questions and concerns shared by the parents. When CPA and CBSD were actively involved in addressing district level policies and procedures, the researcher was able to carry input and feedback to the superintendent's cabinet and then return to the program with further updates. This collaborative and trusting relationship helped to facilitate the direct involvement of CPA and CBSD in their efforts to influence policy, procedures, and practices of the school district.

The researcher's attendance at the monthly meetings of CBSD also allowed him to observe first hand the interactions, interpersonal dynamics, and activities that transpired, to take notes to be used in the study, and to witness the various components of the program. Merriam (1998) suggests that using this method allows the researcher the ability to establish an insider's identity without participating in all the core activities of

the group. Patton (2002) reiterates the importance of balance in being a participant observer and notes, "…there is clearly an observer side to this process. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the program as an insider while describing the program for outsiders" (p. 207).

Although the College Bound program is fully endorsed by the Poway School District and is provided with free space for the parents and students to meet, College Bound San Diego is an independent organization and has an agreement with the district to use school facilities in ways similar to other non-profit organizations. The researcher is a familiar face to College Bound San Diego participants but does not have any supervisory relationship to parents or students. Therefore, there is no risk relationship for parents participating in the study. The researcher worked to bound particular favorable biases he may have toward the program in two significant ways: he recruited independent colleagues to read and code the transcripts and he used multiple data sources, especially an anonymous survey.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This chapter has provided a description of the methodology selected for this descriptive case study of the College Bound San Diego Program. The elements of context, research design, data collection and analysis, limitations of the study, and researcher's role and ethical considerations were examined. In Chapter Four, the findings of the study are presented and analyzed, in order to provide information for the discussion and recommendations advanced in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In the first three chapters, a general overview of the study, a review of the current relevant literature, and a description of the methodology of the study were provided. In this chapter, the findings of the study, including the extant data, will be presented and analyzed. The purpose of this study was to explore, through a descriptive case study design, the College Bound San Diego (CBSD) program, a community-based intervention created and run by parents of African American children. The specific goal of this study was to determine if the College Bound San Diego program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience. The study addresses the following two research questions:

1. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience?

2. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program contributed to students' educational experience.

Through the process of collecting data for this study, the researcher acquired a greater understanding of the relationship between the Concerned Parent Alliance Inc. (CPA) and College Bound San Diego (CBSD). Data gathered from the interviews of the founders of the program, the program handbook, and the publication written by the founders, provided a richer context for understanding the motivating factors that led to the creation of CPA. As discussed in Chapters One and Three, CPA evolved from concerns of African American parents regarding the racial bias they perceived their

children were encountering within the school district and its corresponding impact on the achievement gaps for African American students. Therefore, CPA was created as an advocacy organization to address the collective concerns of African American parents. CBSD was an outgrowth of CPA designed to address the individual needs of parents and students as related specifically to their educational experience and the closing of the achievement gaps. Today, the founding parents refer to CBSD as the educational component of CPA. Throughout this study, it was apparent that the two organizations are intertwined and that no distinct division exists between the two. This interrelatedness is understandable as collective advocacy to address racial bias is certainly a key component of addressing the academic achievement gaps for African American students.

This chapter will begin by addressing the first study question regarding parent involvement. The perceptions of parents regarding their involvement in their students' education will be addressed through an analysis of both the quantitative data from the parent survey and qualitative data from the parent interviews.

Following this, the extant data from student focus groups and student records will be presented and analyzed to address the second study question regarding the influence of CBSD on students' educational experiences.

Parent Perceptions of Involvement: Survey Results

This section will present the quantitative data collected from the pre- and post-administrations of the parent survey. In total, 38 pre-surveys, and 47 post-surveys were completed and collected. Each of the surveys was scanned electronically, and the data was transferred into a data base file in a data analysis software program. Combining the pre-survey and post-survey, a total of 85 surveys were completed by the parent

participants. For the purposes of analysis and comparisons, the survey response data were sorted into four sample groups. The first sample consists of a non-duplicated count of all participants that completed the pre-survey and/or the post-survey. For the 16 parents who completed both a pre- and post-survey, their post-survey results were used in this group. This sample was labeled "All Parents" and has a total count of 69 participants. This sample provides an overall picture of who participants in the CBSD program and their demographic characteristics.

The second sample group includes parents who were new to the program at the time they completed the survey. This sample includes ten parents from the pre-survey and nine parents from the post-survey for a total of 19 participants. This sample was labeled "New Parents." Grouping parents this way allowed the researcher to compare the responses of new parents with those who have been in the program one or more years.

The third sample group consists of parents who had been in the program for at least one year at the time they completed the survey. As in the first sample, post-survey results were used for the 16 parents who completed both a pre- and post-survey. This third sample was labeled "Continuing Parents." Two of the participants in this sample were new parents when they completed the pre-survey, but were counted as continuing parents by using their post-survey results. This continuing group provides a comparison group for the second group: new parents.

The fourth and final sample group of survey respondents is comprised of the 16 parents who completed both the pre- and post-survey. This sample was labeled "Matched Pair." Although this group is small, the pre- and post-survey does allow a comparison of program effects over time.

Demographics of Parent Participants

There were 69 parents represented in the non-duplicated sample group labeled "All Parents," who completed the pre-survey and/or the post-survey. Of those, 63 were African American (94 %); two were White; and two did not indicate their ethnicity. Sixteen of the participants (24 %) were fathers; 49 (73 %) were mothers; one was a guardian; and one was a grandparent. Twenty-seven parent participants (40.3 %) indicated they had some college education; 15 participants (22.4 %) held a bachelor's degree; 19 participants (28.4 %) held master's degrees; three (4.5 %) had obtained a doctorate; three marked 'other'; and two did not indicate their education level. (See, Table 4.1.) A review of the participants' occupations indicates that all are working in technical or professional level positions. (See, Table 4.2.)

Table 4.1 Non-Duplicated "All Parents" Group: Relationship,
Ethnicity, and Education Level

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Adult's Relationship to Child					
Valid	Father	16	23.2	23.9	23.9
	Mother	49	71.0	73.1	97.0
	Guardian	1	1.4	1.5	98.5
	Grandparent	1	1.4	1.5	100.0
	Total	67	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		69	100.0		
Adult's Ethnicity					
Valid	African American	63	91.3	94.0	94.4
	Latino	1	1.4	1.5	95.5
	White	3	4.3	4.5	100.0
	Total	67	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		69	100.0		
Adult's Educational Level					
Valid	Some College	27	39.1	40.3	40.3
	Bachelor	15	21.7	22.4	62.7
	Master	19	27.5	28.4	91.0
	Doctorate	3	4.3	4.5	95.5
	Other	3	4.3	4.5	100.0
	Total	67	97.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		69	100		

Table 4.2: Reported Occupations of Pre-survey Participants

Adult's	Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Response	5	13.2	13.2	13.2
	Accountant	1	2.6	2.6	15.8
	Administrative Asst.	1	2.6	2.6	18.4
	Administrator in Higher Ed	1	2.6	2.6	21.1
	Assistant Principal	1	2.6	2.6	23.7
	Banker	1	2.6	2.6	26.3
	Chief Financial Office	1	2.6	2.6	28.9
	Club Staff	1	2.6	2.6	31.6
	Counselor	1	2.6	2.6	34.2
	Credit Supervisor	1	2.6	2.6	36.8
	Dental Hygienist Dentist	1	2.6	2.6	39.5
	Director of Admissions	1	2.6	2.6	42.1
	Engineer	1	2.6	2.6	44.7
	Finance	1	2.6	2.6	47.4
	Flight Attendant Longshore Man	1	2.6	2.6	50.0
	Fund Manager	1	2.6	2.6	52.6
	Information Tech Manager	1	2.6	2.6	55.3
	Insurance Underwriter	1	2.6	2.6	57.9
	Logistics Management	1	2.6	2.6	60.5
	Manager	1	2.6	2.6	63.2
	Mortage Banking	1	2.6	2.6	65.8
	Music Producer/Writer	1	2.6	2.6	68.4
	Nurse	2	5.3	5.3	73.7
	Office Manager	1	2.6	2.6	76.3
	Probation	1	2.6	2.6	78.9
	Project Director	1	2.6	2.6	81.6
	Project Manager	1	2.6	2.6	84.2
	Real Estate Investor	1	2.6	2.6	86.8
	Realtor	1	2.6	2.6	89.5
	Secretary	1	2.6	2.6	92.1
	Self Employed	1	2.6	2.6	94.7
	Support	1	2.6	2.6	97.4
	UCSD Housing Asst.	1	2.6	2.6	100.0

Characteristics of Participants' Children

Table 4.3 shows the characteristics of the 69 participants' children. Three of the participants (4.6 %) had elementary students; thirteen (20%) had middle school students; 49 (75.4 %) had high school students; and four did not indicate their child's grade level. When describing their children's ethnicity, 67 (100 %) of the valid responses indicated the children were African American and two did not have their ethnicity identified. Of the 69 students, eight (12.1 %) qualified for the free and reduced lunch program; 58 students (87.9 %) did not; and two were not designated.

Table 4.3: Reported Data on Non-Duplicated "All Parents" Group: Children

Child's Grade Level		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	5th	3	4.3	4.6	4.6
	6th	2	2.9	3.1	7.7
	7th	5	7.2	7.7	15.4
	8th	6	8.7	9.2	24.6
	9th	9	13.0	13.8	38.5
	10th	13	18.8	20.0	58.5
	11th	12	17.4	18.5	76.9
	12th	15	21.7	23.1	100.0
	Total	65	94.2	100.0	
Missing	System	4	5.8		
Total		69	100.0		

Child's Ethnicity		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	African American	67	97.1	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	2	2.9		
Total		38	100.0		

Free & Reduced Lunch Program		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Yes	8	11.6	12.1	12.1
	No	58	84.1	87.9	100.0
	Total	66	95.7	100.0	
Missing	System	3	4.3		
Total		69	100.0		

Reviewing the demographic data for all participants, it is apparent that these parents are mostly college educated and are employed in technical or professional careers. In general, one can reasonably conclude that the sample group of CBSD participants is comprised of middle to upper-middle class parents. Only 12 % of the students qualified for the federal free/reduced lunch program. As stated in Chapter Three, the researcher was unable to find any studies on parent education/support programs for parents of African American students from affluent communities who attend high performing schools. The majority of research on the achievement gaps for African American students has focused on low socioeconomic communities and schools (Mapp, 2002; Myers, et al., 1992). The unique characteristics of CBSD add a new perspective on parent involvement that is not represented in the current literature.

Factor Analysis

Although the Parent Survey had previously been tested for validity for use in a larger study of parent involvement, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed as conducted in a similar circumstance, Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, (2003), to ensure suitability for use within this study. The 72 items of the Parent Survey were subjected to Principal Components Analysis (PCA) using SPSS[TM] Version 15. The PCA revealed the presence of 20 components with Eigen values exceeding 1. To aid in the interpretation of the 20 components, a Varimax rotation was performed that revealed a number of strong loadings in several components; however, the item loadings were different from the original instrument structure. The results of this analysis were inconsistent with the previous validation study (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004). For the purposes of this study, the researcher accepted the findings from the

previous validation studies due to the following reasons: (a) the instrument is based on sound theory; (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey & Jones, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). (b) the original structure has been repeatedly tested for validity and reliability; and (c) the original structure has been normed on a large sample group, making for a more robust sample than the small sample size in this study. Based on these reasons, the original instrument structure and factors of the Parent Survey were used in the analysis of this study.

Survey Constructs

The ten survey constructs identified in the previous study of parent involvement, (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004), were defined as follows:

a.) Knowledge: Parents' knowledge and awareness of the school system, the requirements for admission to a four year college/university, and community resources

b.) Expectations: Parents' expectations for their child going to college

c.) Role: Parents' beliefs about how they should be involved in their child's schooling

d.) Efficacy: Parents' sense of their capability and efficacy for supporting their child's education

e.) Invitations: Parents' perceptions of invitations from the school for involvement activities

f.) Interactions: Parents' practices to support their child's socio-emotional development

g.) School: Parents' activities to communicate and participate at their child's

school

h.) Home: Parents' activities for supporting their child's learning at home

i.) Leadership: Parents' leadership activities at their child's school, school

district, and in the community

j.) College: Parents' knowledge the requirements for admission to a four year

college/university

Analysis of All Parents Group

Mean scores. The first analysis conducted on the survey results was a calculation

of the mean scores on each of the ten survey constructs, for the 'all parents' group. The

highest possible score on each construct was 6.0. (See, Table 4.3.)

Table 4.4: Mean Scores of Survey Constructs for All Parents Group.

Survey Constructs	*n*	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	69	4.87	.82610	.09945
Expectations	68	5.60	.64361	.07805
Role	68	4.90	.67555	.08192
Efficacy	68	5.01	.70323	.08528
Invitations	68	4.20	1.07072	.12984
Interaction	67	5.80	.35492	.04336
School	67	4.10	1.07463	.13129
Home	67	5.20	.79531	.09716
Leadership	67	3.60	1.31069	.16013
College	67	5.00	.83793	.10237

The results on Table 4.4 indicate that on average, the participants have a strong

level of knowledge and understanding on seven of the ten constructs surveyed:

Knowledge, Expectations, Role, Efficacy, Interaction, Home, and College. The average

mean scores on these constructs range from 4.90 to 5.60. The three constructs with the

lowest mean scores are: School at 4.1; Invitations at 4.2; and Leadership at 3.6.

Matched pair t-test. The second analysis of the parent survey results was

conducted on the "Matched Pairs" sample group of 16 participants. A review of the

demographics for this group indicated this group was representative of the entire sample.

The mean scores on the ten survey constructs were also similar to those or the "All

Parents" group. (See, Table 4.5.)

Table 4.5: Group Statistics for Matched Pairs Sample

	Survey Constructs	Mean	*n*	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	KnowledgePre	4.9844	16	.79011	.19753
	KnowledgePost	5.1254	16	.67013	.16753
Pair 2	ExpectationsPre	5.4792	16	.82524	.20631
	ExpectationsPost	5.4062	16	1.09708	.27427
Pair 3	RolePre	4.5385	16	.55452	.13863
	RolePost	4.4564	16	.82611	.20653
Pair 4	EfficacyPre	5.1071	16	.50977	.12744
	EfficacyPost	5.1696	16	.40142	.10036
Pair 5	InvitationsPre	3.9260	15	1.11403	.28764
	InvitationsPost	4.0917	15	1.17969	.30459
Pair 6	InteractionPre	5.7375	16	.43646	.10912
	InteractionPost	5.7875	16	.36125	.09031
Pair 7	SchoolPre	4.0188	16	.86460	.21615
	SchoolPost	4.1925	16	1.16050	.29013
Pair 8	HomePre	5.1302	16	.96464	.24116
	HomePost	5.1708	16	.79367	.19842
Pair 9	CollegePre	5.2194	16	.61363	.15341
	CollegePost	5.2125	16	.85936	.21484
Pair 10	LeadshpPre	4.2821	13	1.38842	.38508
	LeadshpPost	4.2308	13	1.46651	.40674

A paired sample t-test was performed on the results of the pre-and post-surveys

completed by the members of the "Matched Pairs" sample. The members of this sample

group had various lengths of participation in the College Bound program at the time the post-survey was administered ranging from one to five years. This comparison sought to determine if, after one additional year in the program, there would be any statistically significant differences in the average mean scores on the ten survey constructs. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference on any of the ten constructs. (See, Table 4.6.) This finding was not surprising for two reasons. First, the sample size of the matched pair group was small. Second, 14 of the 16 members of the matched sample had been in the program for one or more years.

Table 4.6 Paired Sample T-Test on Survey Constructs for Matched Sample

Survey Constructs	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
KnowledgePre-KnowledgePost	-0.14104	0.50028	0.12507	-1.128	15	0.277
ExpectationsPre-ExpectationsPost	0.07292	0.42587	0.10647	0.685	15	0.504
RolePre-RolePost	0.08205	0.77326	0.19331	0.424	15	0.677
EfficPre-EfficPost	-0.06250	0.55443	0.13861	-0.451	15	0.659
LeadshpPre-LeadshpPost	0.05128	0.61382	0.17024	0.301	12	0.768
InvitPre-InvitPost	-0.16567	0.71613	0.18490	-0.896	14	0.385
InterPre-InterPost	-0.05000	0.61319	0.15330	-0.326	15	0.749
SchoolPre-SchoolPost	-0.17375	1.00206	0.25052	-0.694	15	0.499
HomePre - HomePost	-0.04062	0.70193	0.17548	-0.232	15	0.820
CollPre-CollPost	0.00687	0.46514	0.11629	0.059	15	0.954

Independent t-test comparing new parents to continuing parents. The third analysis conducted on the parent survey was an independent sample t-test that compared the average mean scores on each of the ten survey constructs for the "New Parent" sample group and the "Continuing Parents" sample group. The table of group statistics used for this comparison (see, Table 4.7) indicates average scores on the survey constructs that are similar to those found on the "All Parents" sample group. (See, Table 4.4.)

Table 4.7: Average Mean Scores on Survey Constructs for
"New Parents" and "Continuing Parents"

	New Parents	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	Yes	18	4.5657	.81831	.19288
	No	52	4.9967	.80632	.11182
Expectations	Yes	18	5.6204	.51705	.12187
	No	51	5.6242	.68706	.09621
Role	Yes	18	5.1190	.51450	.12127
	No	51	4.8843	.72370	.10134
Efficacy	Yes	18	4.9970	.88222	.20794
	No	51	5.0147	.63085	.08834
Invitations	Yes	18	4.4931	1.09852	.25892
	No	51	4.1011	1.04339	.14610
Interaction	Yes	18	5.8556	.32760	.07722
	No	50	5.7990	.36372	.05144
School	Yes	18	4.0444	1.29489	.30521
	No	50	4.1358	.98566	.13939
Home	Yes	18	4.9352	.89869	.21182
	No	50	5.2447	.74239	.10499
Leadership	Yes	18	3.1667	1.51679	.35751
	No	50	3.7493	1.19341	.16877
College	Yes	18	4.5333	.94558	.22287
	No	50	5.1650	.72705	.10282

However, the mean scores for the "New Parents" are slightly lower than those for the "All Parents" group on six of the constructs, and the mean scores for the "Continuing Parent" group are slightly higher than those for the "All Parent" group on the same six constructs.

The results of the independent sample t-test comparing "New Parents" to "Continuing Parents" (Table 4.8) indicate that the differences for the survey construct 'Knowledge' were approaching significance with T = -1.947 and p = .059. For the survey construct 'College' there was a statistically significant difference found with T = -2.912 and p = .005. No statistical significance was found for any of the other eight survey constructs.

Table 4.8: Independent Sample T-Test on Survey Constructs

	T-Test for Equality of Means				
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Knowledge	-1.947	68	.056	-.43099	.22133
Expectations	-.021	67	.983	-.00381	.17770
Role	1.265	67	.210	.23479	.18554
Efficacy	-.092	67	.927	-.01772	.19279
Invitations	1.352	67	.181	.39198	.28997
Interaction	.580	66	.564	.05656	.09752
School	-.272	24.462	.788	-.09136	.33553
Home	-1.433	66	.157	-.30948	.21595
Leadership	-1.650	66	.104	-.58267	.35308
College	-2.912	66	.005	-.63167	.21691

As described above, the two constructs 'Knowledge' and 'College' were related to parents' perceptions of their own knowledge levels regarding their child's current educational experience and their college knowledge.

Parent Perceptions of Involvement: Parent Interviews

As explained in Chapter Three, a purposive sampling of nine parents was selected for interviews, and all parents who were invited to participate readily agreed to do so. This response was indicative of the trust level that had been established over time between the CBSD parents and the researcher, who served as a district liaison with the organization. The sample attempted to provide a greater understanding of the perceived value of the program from participants with different perspectives, situations, and experiences related to CBSD.

The parent interview questions were developed to gain further understanding of participants' perceptions regarding the College Bound San Diego program and the impact it may have had on the elements of parent involvement identified in the literature. (See, Appendix A.) Additionally, the interview sought to understand what the parent participants thought were the greatest obstacles in securing equitable educational opportunities for all African American students in the district, and what additional changes in policies, procedures, and/or practices they would hope to see in the future.

In addition to the 12 questions asked of all interviewees, six additional questions were asked of the three founders of the Concerned Parent Alliance and College Bound San Diego. These questions first focused on the reasons that motivated the founders to establish, these programs. The questions then asked about their perceptions of the impact CPA and CBSD have had on policies, procedures, and practices at the district and school level as related to their initial concerns of racial bias. Finally, the founders were asked whether they believed the CBSD program had met its goals, and what future changes they still hoped to see within the district to better serve African American families.

The transcribed interviews were reviewed and coded by the researcher and two doctoral students. As they read the transcripts, the coders used the ten survey constructs defined above as the primary categories for coding. Then they re-read the transcripts looking for themes. Data were then organized under the following seven themes:

a. Parent Knowledge;

b. College Expectations;

c. School/District Relationships;

d. Parent Involvement Actions;

e. Parent Self-Efficacy;

f. Parent Empowerment/Voice; and

g. Parenting Beliefs and Practices.

These data were then analyzed and interpreted by the researcher. The findings from this analysis are discussed below for each theme.

Through this process, it became evident that some of the interview data coded to a specific survey construct applied to more than one of the identified themes, while others aligned more clearly under just one theme. (See, Table 4.9.)

Table 4.9: Study Themes and Corresponding Survey Constructs

Themes vs. Constructs		Themes for Study						
		Parent Knowledge	College Expectations	School/District Relationships	Parent Self-Efficacy	Parent Involvement Actions	Parenting	Empowerment/Voice
Constructs from Survey	Knowledge	x						
	College Knowledge	x						
	Efficacy			x	x			x
	Leadership			x	x	x		x
	Expectations		x				x	
	Home					x	x	
	School			x		x		
	Invitations			x		x		
	Role		x				x	x
	Interactions						x	

Parent Knowledge

The first theme identified in the parent interviews was parent knowledge. A review of the literature indicates that knowledge can have a direct impact on parents' sense of efficacy and role construct (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2006), both of which have been shown to lead to greater levels of parent involvement (Bandura, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). This theme, which emerged from both the survey and the interviews, includes both general knowledge regarding their child's current educational experiences in the K-12 school district and college knowledge.

General Knowledge

Data collected in the survey on the construct of knowledge described which information parents' possessed regarding a variety of actions of school involvement including the following:

a.) Knowing how to contact school and community leaders;

b.) Knowing the roles of school and district personnel;

c.) Understanding their child's academic levels and the expected academic standards;

d.) Knowing the resource available to assist their child's learning, and;;

e.) Understanding their role in advocating for their child, helping their child at home, and ensuring their child attends school regularly.

The analysis of the quantitative data on this construct indicated that all parents perceive their knowledge to be strong, as evidenced in the mean scores for all parents. (See, Table 4.4.) The construct 'Knowledge' approached statistical significance with p = .056 when the mean score for new parents was compared to the mean score for continuing parents. (See, Table 4.8.)

These quantitative findings were supported by the observations of the researcher who witnessed the level of emphasis the CBSD facilitators placed on providing extensive information on the current educational system and strategies for parents to use in advocating for their children. The qualitative data collected in the parent interviews also supported these findings. Increased knowledge was noted by all interviewees as a major outcome of their involvement in CBSD. As noted by one parent, the first and most important learning was about the achievement gaps that exist for African American

students: "First and foremost, it was really becoming aware, intimately aware, of a deep

understanding of the achievement gap with African American students, not just the

school district, but particularly their schools."

Analysis of the interview data indicated that through attendance and participation

at the College Bound meetings, parents also increased their knowledge levels about their

children's current experiences in the public school setting. As one mother stated,

"...when I look at my knowledge base in regards to my children's education and the

educational system in general compared to what it was when I started, it is like I've

grown and been blessed by leaps and bounds."

The majority of interviewees mentioned repeatedly that understanding the

policies, procedures, and practices of the school and district, and how to effectively

operate within them to support their children was a major benefit of their involvement in

CBSD. A response from one mother is representative of this sentiment "Yes, I think I've

learned a lot compared to when I used to go to school."

Three parent responses addressed increased knowledge regarding their children's

daily experiences. One parent shared that through her involvement in CBSD and her discussions

with other parents in the program, she has increased knowledge regarding the types of

experiences her children encountered as African American students in a predominantly White

environment,

> I learned that some of the stories that our sons were telling were true.
> Initially, most times when the teacher said something, it was right. I've
> learned what my son said was a racial incident, really was. And I said
> maybe your exaggerating really wasn't an exaggeration.

This response again explains the importance of a culturally based program for parents

of African American children. A father of two high school students explained how CBSD

had made a difference in his knowledge of his children's daily experiences and the importance of his involvement:

> So with College Bound, I think what I've come to realize, and being so hands-on with them daily, is every aspect of their educational lives in the school, including the environment, I've been much more aware of everything that's taking place. And it's because I interact with them and I get so involved with their day-to-day school lives. I'm a lot more aware of and it's a lot more important to be hands-on daily because I look at the whole educational experience, particularly at high school, totally different as a result of College Bound. And that means I monitor everything from what they're doing in their classrooms educationally and then the environment.

College Knowledge

While most parents expressed increased general knowledge of the current educational experiences of their children, by far the most commonly noted increase of knowledge was in the area of knowledge about college. College knowledge, as defined in Chapter One, is the term used in this study to define an individual's knowledge as related specifically to the requirements and processes for college acceptance, the financial aspects of funding a college education, and other aspects related to successful transition to college and completion of a college degree. In the independent sample t-test comparing new parents to continuing parents, there was a statistically significant difference for the construct 'College' at $p = .005$. Again, this finding is not surprising as the dissemination of college knowledge is the primary focus of CBSD. There were many examples of this aspect of the program observed by the researcher at the parent track meetings. Not only did the program facilitators share extensive information, but the participating parents were actively engaged in sharing their personal experiences and learnings from having worked with their own children in their efforts to apply and be accepted to college. These findings were also strongly supported by the qualitative interview data. The high level of

increased college knowledge expressed by all interviewees is best captured in the

following statement made by one of the mothers, who strongly asserted,

> College Bound has definitely doubled whatever I thought. ... just
> understanding the process ahead of time, instead of waiting until senior
> year and then trying to make up or back pedal to try to get there. So, as far
> as their requirements and processes, it is definitely educated me double
> fold from what I thought I knew.

In the interviews, parents noted several specific types of knowledge about the

college admission process that they found particularly helpful. These included knowing

specific a-g high school course requirements and the levels of proficiency required,

entrance exams, information about financial aid and scholarships, planning ahead for

college before the senior year, and other elements important for beginning college life. A

comment from one parent captures the sentiments expressed by many, "I can't say

enough. Just the little bits and pieces we got today. There is just so much that we don't

know. And not knowing could hurt you."

The most frequently cited new knowledge gained was an awareness and

understanding of the 'a-g' course requirements that are required by both the University of

California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) systems. Although these

requirements have been in place for decades with the UC system, they weren't adopted

by the CSU system until school year 2003-04. Parents' knowledge gains regarding this

requirement ranged from "personally, I did not have any clue to the a-g requirements" to

the following statement made by one of the parents who holds a doctorate degree and has

extensive experience working in both the UC and CSU systems,

> Even though I had the knowledge, I didn't have it memorized. It has
> definitely reinforced what I do and complimented the information I have

and made it so that I could apply it to my own child. He has to fulfill the a-g requirements. I really had to learn the a-g requirements.

Understanding the financial aspects of attending a four year institution, was another area that many parents expressed as a significant growth area in their college knowledge. While it is not unusual to hear of parents from low economic levels struggling to understand the complexities of college finances, student loans, and scholarships, it is also not uncommon for college educated, middle class parents to face the same challenges. In its efforts to help parents gain an understanding of the realities of the financial costs of college and the many resources available to all parents, the CBSD program devotes significant time to this topic during the parent track of the monthly meetings. As one mother shared, "It has given me more knowledge and more resources of where to go in our research in looking for scholarships, finding out college information, finding the possibility of going on tours and that's something that she and I can do together."

In their book, *Empowering Parents*, (Dodson & Willis, 2006) the authors, two of the founders of CBSD, addressed the importance of the financial aspects of college by asserting that, "Paying for a college education can be very expensive, but it's a great investment in our future" (p.39). The book also describes a banner from one of the CBSD college tours that read, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance" (p.39).

Other elements of college knowledge gained through the CBSD program were expressed through comments made regarding the need for their children to be involved in extracurricular activities and community service. Several parents also commented on the writing skills needed for preparing biographical essays for college applications.

Knowledge of the various types of universities and the programs they offer and career opportunities for college graduates was another import topic that parents mentioned. Even some of the more mundane, but practical aspects of college life such as health insurance, housing, equipment and supplies, and even Internet and cellular phone service were also seen as helpful to parents. As one mother expressed:

> Let alone, once she's there, what she should do. For instance, when she gets ready to go off and her cell phone – this may sound trivial, but we're going to do a two-year contract commitment and her area code might change and we weren't thinking of that, her health plan. Putting her on as a dependent if she goes out of state and changing her area network so that she can go somewhere without being charged. These are the many things I can do personally up front.

In summary, one parent's statement about the importance of the college knowledge gained through participation in CBSD seems to capture the beliefs expressed throughout the interviews, "The formula for success is really just the knowledge. Breaking down where you go from graduating from high school to getting them in college."

College Expectations

The College Bound San Diego program is designed specifically to assist parents in preparing their children to be ready for acceptance to college upon completion of high school. As described above, the construct "expectations" on the parent survey was designed to measure parents' expectations that their children would be attending college upon completion of high school. The analysis of the data on this construct showed that for both the "All Parents" and the "New Parents" sample groups the mean scores were 5.6 on the six point scale. There was also no significant difference on this construct in either the matched sample t-test or the independent t-test for new and continuing parents.

In fact, this construct had the smallest mean difference at -.0038. (See, Table 4.7.)

Similarly, the data from the parent interviews indicated strong levels of college

expectations among all of the interview participants. All interviewees shared that they

had always held the expectation that their child would attend a four year college after

high school. The following statement by one mother was representative of what each

parent shared:

> We've always made college part of the natural progression from high
> school since they were little. All three, I have a younger son, so he's heard
> about it. So they've known all along that's the natural progression. When
> you ask even my nine year old, what he is going to do after high school, he
> will, without hesitation, say I'm going to college. They will all say I'm
> going to college. It's not like I don't know if I'm going. They're all going.

In fact, many shared that they were attracted to the program because of the

opportunity to have their children interact with other students whose parents held the

same expectations. Many comments such as the following were made about the positive

impact the program has had on their children, and their own goals and expectations to

attend college:

> It has created a positive peer pressure. Our children want to be in College
> Bound. They want to be able to brag about it. It has created a positive
> impression. Their belief system came from us, at home, but I think it has
> been reinforced by College Bound. I think that information is shared. It
> first started at home. I would like to believe College Bound has helped
> shape their beliefs.
> Despite the parents' long-held belief that their child would attend college, most of

them also shared that they had been unaware of the specific requirements and processes

necessary for acceptance at a four-year institution. CBSD has helped parents reach a

more realistic understanding of what is required to meet their long-held expectations of

college for their children. While expectations for college may not have changed, through

increased knowledge, CBSD has increased parents' expectations for their students'

current educational experience. This increased focus of parents' expectations was

illustrated in the following two quotes:

> The bar is set high. My oldest told me the other day, your expectations are too high. I said no, they're not. They're the same as they've always been. . So the relationship has gotten a little more strained because there is something other than regular school that I'm also talking about and making a very integral part of their education. Most of all, I think it's so important the discussions that we have now because of College Bound, that we would not have talked about before.

> But I can say that I'm perhaps more diligent about what is happening with her academically because at this point I'm more concerned about college and her success, that she's going in the right direction and taking the things she needs to take. Because I know that some kids can take classes and get through high school, but not take the right things they need to be successful.

Commonly held expectations among the CBSD parents is another characteristic of

the membership that make this sample population unique.

Parent Self-Efficacy

Parent self-efficacy was a major construct discussed in the literature on parent

involvement (Chrispeels & Gonzales, under review; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler ,1995,

1997). Bandura's (1986, 1987) model of self-efficacy, as applied to parent involvement,

suggests that parents are likely to make decisions about whether to be involved based on

their beliefs that they can have a positive impact on their children's academic

achievement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

In this study, the parent survey construct on efficacy had strong mean scores of

4.99 or higher for each of sample groups, but showed no statistically significant

difference in either of the two t-tests performed. (See, Tables 4.4 through 4.8.) However,

this finding was not supported by the data gathered through the parent interviews. All parents made statements that indicated they felt more efficacious in supporting their children's current and future educational endeavors as a result of their involvement in CBSD. One mother spoke of her increased ability to seek information necessary to prepare her daughter for college, "Being in College Bound, we are also aware that we can do additional things and go ahead and do them on our own; research, if you will, to enhance her decisions, even on just deciding where she wants to go to college." As explained in Table 4.9, the study theme of parent self-efficacy also includes participants' perceptions of their role as parents. As expressed in the literature, role construction was defined as parents' belief systems about what they should do, as related to their children's education. Specifically, this construct looks at their belief systems regarding their responsibility for their children's educational outcomes and whether they should be involved in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Increases in parental role construct was seen in the following statement from one of the parents, "I feel that College Bound has helped me find better ways to meet those problems or to just empower me to become a better parent in dealing with some of the issues our children face at school on a daily basis."

In his role as an observer and an active participant representing the school district, the researcher witnessed several examples of parents' expression of increased self-efficacy. On many occasions, the parents engaged the researcher in conversations regarding concerns or suggestions they had regarding their child's experience at school. In one instance, a father of a middle school student sought specific advice on how to best approach an upcoming meeting he had scheduled with his son's principal regarding a

disciplinary matter that had not been resolved to his satisfaction. This interaction between

the researcher and the parent was one example of how parents felt increased efficacy in

approaching school administrators and in asking district level administration for support

and advice on matters of concern.

Combining the survey findings on the constructs of self-efficacy and role with the

data gathered from the interview responses, the study theme of parent self-efficacy

indicated that the parents in this study held strong perceptions of their own efficacy upon

entering the program. Furthermore, the data collected through interviews and researcher

observations indicate that parents felt the CBSD program increased their sense of

responsibility to be actively involved in their children's education and their perceptions

of their ability to do so effectively.

Parent Involvement Actions

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two identified studies that verified a strong

link between educational benefits to children and family engagement in schools (Ehman,

1995; Fager & Brewster, 1999; Howley, Bickel, & McDonough, 1997). These various

studies also made it clear that parental involvement in schools can be defined in various

ways such as encouragement to succeed academically, volunteering at school, support at

home with things like homework, and participation in school activities and governance

structures. Each of these forms of involvement actions were measured in the parent

survey under the constructs of 'Leadership,' 'Home,' "School,' and 'Invitations.' The

mean scores for these constructs in the sample group "All Parents" were as follows:

    a.) Leadership: 3.6;

    b.) Home: 5.2;

c.) School: 4.1; and

d.) Invitations: 4.2.

Collectively, while these mean scores are strong, with the exception of the construct 'Home' they were not as strong as those constructs pertaining to the study themes parent knowledge, college expectations, and self-efficacy. (See, Table 4.4.)

The data from the parent interviews, however, indicate that involvement activities were an important aspect of what the CBSD wanted its members to understand and something that is encouraged and promoted by the program. As expressed by one parent:

> ... it's taught me to be pro-active with that, not just make sure that their homework is done and that they have a good breakfast and they make it to school on time and look at and sign a report card, but make an effort to meet the teacher, meet the principal, meet the counselor. See what I can do to become involved with the school to make it a better place. It's made me become a pro-active parent.

Even the parents who have been actively involved in their children's education for many years commented that they believe their participation in CBSD has reinforced for them the importance of their involvement. This was especially true as it related to their efforts to ensure college readiness for their child. The sentiments of two parents illustrate this belief:

> I do not see myself more involved than I would have been. I tend to be involved as a volunteer, participated in school activities, through reading groups in middle school. So I wouldn't say that I am more involved, but as involved. But I can say that I'm perhaps more diligent about what is happening with her academically because at this point I'm more concerned about college and her success, that she's going in the right direction and taking the things she needs to take. Because I know that some kids can take classes and get through high school, but not take the right things they need to be successful.

> So I would say definitely College Bound San Diego has made me be engaged by, I'm not going to say 100%, but I just understand the

importance more than I did even when I was growing up. I remember my mom being there in a heartbeat. But as a child you don't really realize how important that is to the staff to have a parent that will show up at any time.

The importance of parental involvement was cited repeatedly in the literature review. Several research studies on improving academic performance of students and closing the achievement gaps have indicated that attention must be paid to parent involvement structures and to the relationships between parents and teachers (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Smalley & Reyes-Blanes, 2001; Thompson, 2003; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2001).

The interviewees in this study also pointed out that being a member of CBSD has helped them to overcome past perceived barriers to school involvement. As one mother explained, "it's allowed me to be more engaged with administrators, with the teachers, aware of the importance of back-to-school night and all the things that go on that bring a parent to campus to break down those barriers that I felt before College Bound." A father expressed similar thoughts, "You send your kid off to school, and it's like, you're done. College Bound has brought about an awareness of all the factors associated with that, and I think if more parents were to look at it from that standpoint, it gives you a heightened priority to be intimately involved on the campus." In the interviews, parents also discussed a more knowledgeable understanding of the difference between involvement and engagement. Through observations, the researcher witnessed several discussions on this distinction during the parent track of the CBSD meetings. The following quote speaks directly to that distinction, "It's taught me not to take anything for granted. Not to

be involved but be engaged and there is a difference. Be more engaged, asking more open ended questions. I learned that from College Bound."

Parenting Beliefs and Practices

Another important theme that emerged from the analysis of the study data was related to participant's beliefs regarding their role as parents and the practices they have in place to carry out that role with their children. As discussed earlier, and illustrated in Table 4.9, this study theme looked at four of the survey constructs as being directly related to parenting beliefs and practices. Each of those survey constructs had high mean scores in the "All Parents" sample group (see, Table 4.4) as indicated below:

a.) Expectations: 5.60;

b.) Role: 4.90;

c.) Interactions: 5.8; and

d.) Home: 5.2.

However, neither of the two t-test reported any statistically significant difference on these four constructs. Once again, the data gathered through the interviews is contradictory to those findings. While the parents all gave responses that indicated they had strong skills in each of these areas prior to their involvement in CBSD, each of them also shared that their participation in the program had an impact on their parenting beliefs and practices to some extent. The first commonly mentioned impact that CBSD has had on parenting was the increased communications and improved relationships between parents and their children. As expressed by one father, "We're a lot closer. I think it's more positive for me than them maybe in their perspective because Dad's a lot more hands-on. They know they can't turn around without me being there." Similarly a mother

shared how her relationship with her daughter had been enhanced, "One of the biggest things is to allow us to have that mother/daughter relationship as far as being able to talk to one another about her college experience."

Several parents also mentioned that involvement in CBSD, with its focus on college preparation, has given them a new topic of shared interest that has increased communications with their children. One mother talked about how the discussions at the CBSD meetings on a variety of topics has led to increased dialogue with her children,

> We can talk more on an educational level now. When they go to these
> other schools and see what they like we can discuss those things. They
> come to me with things now they probably never would have in the past.
> They ask me questions now about college and different things.

Another aspect of parenting that was shared by many of the interviewees was the relationships they have formed with other parents in the program. They now feel a strong network of support among the group members. As one of the program founders explained:

> We've gone on parent conferences with other parents, we've had what
> CPA calls 'come to Jesus meeting' both at our house and other parents
> homes if their kids are not doing the right thing or not performing
> academically to their potential. We actually say the same thing their
> parents would say. But when it comes from someone other than their
> parent the kids seem to take it in.

Common parenting beliefs and practices was another perceived value of the CBSD program. Parents expressed how helpful it was to have their children in an environment with other students whose parents held similar values and expectations. This perception of a supportive network of likeminded parents was described by one parent who shared,

> In College Bound they say we believe in mean parenting, and you have to parent and you have to keep the kids focused, and discipline them in the right direction, that we're the guides. And I appreciate that, because I believe that too. And it has been very helpful to have that support coming from someplace else.

The comments of one mother captured the beliefs of many parents regarding how

CBSD has changed the parenting relationship for both parents and children,

> So I think that it's helped our relationship, it's like I'm walking the walk not just talking about it. I'm not just telling them that education is important and that you have to sacrifice. I'm showing that it's important to me. That's why I'm involved, and that's why I'm doing it.

Empowerment/Voice

As previously discussed, CBSD began as an outgrowth of the Concerned Parent

Alliance, Inc., an advocacy group that was created by African American parents

concerned about racial bias and challenges their children were facing at school.

Therefore, to gain a deep understanding of the CBSD, it was important to gain insight

into the motivation behind its creation and whether or not the parent members felt that

they had been successful in bringing about changes within their schools and the district.

In analyzing the responses to questions about these issues, a theme of parent

empowerment/voice emerged. Although this theme is similar to parent self-efficacy in

many ways, empowerment/voice is different in that it speaks more to the collective sense

of efficacy among this parent group. In the literature review, Critical Race Theory was

examined as a theoretical framework for this study. Critical race theorists view schools as

functioning within a system of institutionalized white privilege, oppression, and racism

(Bell, 1980; Delgado, 1989; Duncan, 2002; Lopez, 2003). Furthermore, they assert that

racial progress cannot be made without listening to and respecting the voices of people of

color who have a story of their own realities to share. The survey constructs that align with this theme are efficacy, leadership, and role. As discussed earlier, each of these constructs had high mean scores in the "All Parent" sample group, but there was no statistically significant differences found on either of the two t-tests conducted. (See, Tables 4.4 through 4.8.) But, once again, the qualitative data from the interviews clearly demonstrate that parents felt CBSD has had a significant impact for them in each of these areas. Throughout the interviews, the concepts of empowerment and voice emerged repeatedly.

  Reasons for starting CPA and CBSD. Understanding the reasons behind the founding parents' motivation for establishing an organization to advocate on behalf of African American families was important to this study. In their book *Empowering Parents*, (Dodson & Willis, 2006) the authors explained that they first became actively involved at the district level when the only African American counselor in the district announced that he would be resigning his position to avoid having his contract terminated. Irrespective of the particular facts of this situation, the incident led to many conversations with other African American parents who began to share examples of their own frustrations regarding racial bias and the challenges their children were encountering at their respective schools. "The more we talked, the more it was revealed that students of color, particularly, African-American children, were being treated differently" (Dodson & Willis, 2006, p. 25). At a community meeting called to discuss these issues with the district superintendent, examples were shared by "... parents, angry and upset that our children were being treated as insignificant. We heard examples of children being threatened with an 'F' in a class if they didn't play the role of a slave; children being

suspended from school without cause; our children being checked for weapons and drugs

raids when others weren't" (Dodson & Willis, 2006, p. 25).

These same descriptions of the incidents behind the establishment of CPA were shared by

the founders in their interviews:

> Initially, we first had the concern about a counselor being fired. Maybe 5
> or 7 people showed up and then we had another meeting at the school and
> a lot of people showed up. We just rallied around the topic of someone
> being fired, we had an interest in what was going on. So we realized when
> we came together, we came together with one voice and we heard a little
> bit more than individually. So we worked our way into, okay we're all
> here, we're all meeting, it looks like a group and we formalized it and
> came up with a Board.

Another founding member shared more detail about the initial concerns,

"It was disparity of dispensing disciplinary actions, disparity in number of Blacks

(faculty) at the middle school. There was one kid asked to play a slave in a play,

there was one kid suspended for fighting. The White kid was the bully on

campus."

At the community meeting where these concerns were raised, the district

superintendent made a public commitment to address all of these specific parent concerns

as well as the African American achievement gap, However, rather than waiting for the

school district to act , the newly established board of CPA decided to create CBSD as the

educational component of CPA. The board felt that there were educational issues for their

children that needed the immediate and direct involvement of parents of African

American children. "We initially accepted (the superintendent's) answer but after

contemplating the impact of that answer, decided that it was not in our best interest. We

thanked them for their efforts and said we would do it ourselves while simultaneously

holding the district accountable" (Dodson & Willis, 2006, p. 25). Thus, CBSD was

created. One of the parents summarized her motivation for joining CBSD as,

> I wanted my kids and other kids to be treated fairly and to have an
> advocate for them to make sure they were college bound... the fact that my
> children are African American in a predominately White community; I
> knew it would be a good, positive thing.

> *Establishing networks.* As with earlier themes, the importance of networking with

other parents also related to the empowerment/voice. The following quotes are illustrative

of this belief:

> As a parent I wanted to network with other parents and understand the
> school system and the logistics for my daughter getting ready to go into
> high school and information, documents, and resources that might be
> readily available that I might not come across that will assist her in her
> future college applications and process.

Another parent shared:

> I feel like I'm not alone. I feel I could pick up the phone and call any of
> those parents or teachers or contacts we've made and I'd have them
> behind me. Before College Bound, I thought it was an uphill battle, now
> we have a team of people that see what I see.

> The importance of networks, particularly for African American parents, was

explained by another parent, who had experienced frustration when trying to connect

with others in her community as she expressed in the following response:

> But when you start to get into sensitive topics such as college, politics, and
> background, sometimes there is a wall that goes up so that I try to engage
> with my peers at work or in my community that are Caucasian or other
> ethnic backgrounds, there seems to be a wall go up so the information
> does not seem to be a free flowing. That's what I find. College Bound has
> given me a forum that I can go to with like-minded persons, like-minded
> backgrounds looking for the same information, and feel in an
> environments where they can fully disclose why I'm looking for it, how
> I'm looking for it, and even if it gets a little personal and private it's not
> being held against you.

Another mother shared that she has also gained an understanding of the importance of also networking with the individuals at the school, and the positive impact it can have for her child:

> I didn't realize the importance of even simply meeting the teacher and how important that was for them, and then getting to know the principal. There's a lot of people that don't know those people, they don't know the principal. And if the principal doesn't know you and the teacher doesn't know you, they're just not as apt to be 100% engaged with your child. They don't really see that other person. But if they see that image, and see that this parent is involved, they might be coming up here, but it's a good thing. Then they might be paying a bit more attention.

Increased knowledge and confidence. The strong network connections were just one of the reasons leading parents to feeling a new sense of empowerment and voice. Many of the parents attributed their feelings of empowerment and voice to their increased levels of knowledge on an array of topics ranging from an increased understanding of the educational system, to ideas for proactive parenting, as well as strategies for advocating for their children within the educational system. For many this has led to increased levels of confidence in their ability to proactively participate in the educational system. Several quotes spoke directly to these issues: "It has definitely increased as far as understanding the issues that go on at school and then understanding where you can take your voice. Where your voice can be heard." Another parent expressed how her increased knowledge of the educational system has empowered her to better help her child:

> I think that it has helped me feel and become more confident in that I have a deeper understanding of how the school systems and the school work. And I understand the ins and the out's, the positive and the negatives, and understanding them, finding positive ways to either help to institute change or to contact the organization to help empower me to work with whatever I need to do to ensure that.

The link between increased confidence and a sense of voice was evident in another parent's response, "I think it build people's confidence. You feel supportive and like somebody's listening. You have different people to bounce ideas off of. So I do think it does give a voice to parents and students."

In light of the Critical Race Theory framework for this study, it is important to note how often the topic of 'voice' was shared through the interviews. As African American parents operating within a predominately White community and educational system, the sense of having a voice within the system held special importance for many parents: "I feel more empowered as an African American parent. So I'm not just one person, this one minority." Another parent explained that her voice could now be heard on a variety of levels:

> It could be attending the Board meeting, that I wasn't attending before, with my volunteer efforts, and just understanding my rights as a parent, and my voice to be heard when I might have an issue with my child on where to go and who to talk to instead of trying to figure all that out.

As one of the founders of CBSD explained her perceptions of voice:

> There really was not an African American voice until College Bound came. I think College Bound has created the African American voice. And then, within that creation, I guess we do strengthen if for those who come along.

School District Relationships

The final theme identified in this study is 'School/District Relationships.' As explained in Table 4.9, this theme was addressed in the parent survey under the constructs of 'Efficacy,' 'Leadership,' 'School,' and 'Invitations.' As noted previously, the quantitative data reported by the "All Parents" sample group indicated various levels of strength as shown in the mean scores. (See, Table 4.4.) Additionally, once again the

mean scores on these survey constructs did not show significant gains on either of the

two t-tests performed. However, given the reasons behind the establishment of CPA and

CBSD, it was important to understand the founders' perceptions of the impact these

programs have had on the school district. Each of the three founders, and several of the

other interviewees, expressed that they had definitely seen a difference and improvement

in their relationships with their children's schools and the district. The founders

expressed their beliefs that CPA and CBSD have both had a positive impact on

relationships between the African American community and the school district. One

founder shared:

> Our goal originally was to make sure there was a level playing field. I
> think the playing field now is about as level as you can get. I do believe
> that the district, as well as the site, has made a change for the better. And I
> think it's a direct result of CPA being involved. . I think the district and
> CPA has a good working relationship, an open door policy with the
> Superintendent and when there is a concern we are heard and the issue
> dealt with.

A second founding member expressed the improved relationship similarly, and

validated the role that the researcher played in working with CBSD:

> College Bound has already had a very positive influence on the district.
> With the support and involvement of the superintendent and you, (the
> researcher) we have built a strong working relationship between College
> Bound and the district. This relationship has given us a vehicle for
> providing input and addressing concerns, and our opinions on various
> matters have been solicited by the district.

In addition to improved relationships, the founding members identified specific

areas of policy and procedures where they felt CPA and CBSD played a significant role.

One founder cited changes to the district policy related to grade reporting requirements

for college prep courses, a concern brought directly to a board meeting by representatives

of CBSD: "I think on some levels, we've been influential. When we came about the "C"

grade and the progress report, I would like to think we were instrumental in getting that

procedure corrected." This change in Board Policy, relating to the notification of parents

when a student is earning a grade of C or below in an a-g course, had a direct impact on

all high school students in the district. (See, Appendix C.)

Unfortunately, during the 2007-08 school year, the school district experienced

several serious racial incidents at three of its four high schools. These incidents included

the hanging of nooses, the wearing of a "ghost" costume on Halloween that was more

representative of a KKK outfit, and the appearance of graffiti in the form of swastikas.

One of the noose incidents appeared to be targeted towards a student member of CBSD.

This student had challenged a decision that she would not be able to play the role of a

specific character in her high school play because it was "not appropriate for an African

American." After she successfully obtained a role that she wanted in the play, she found a

noose hanging on the set where her scene was to take place. When this incident was

reported, the district immediately moved to take appropriate action. However, it quickly

became apparent that the policy and procedures in place needed to be revised and

strengthened to address these egregious situations. (See, Appendix D.) As the

superintendent's cabinet worked on these changes, they sought input from many

stakeholders, including CPA.

While it is deeply troubling and discouraging that these types of hate behavior

continue, the quote below from one of the founding members of CPA talked about

changes in how concerns are registered and procedures are implemented. His statement

provides encouraging evidence that, through the positive working relationship that has

been established between CPA and the school district, there is a collaborative and

proactive mechanism in place for addressing these issues:

> I think that the procedures have been enforced more across the board when
> it comes to lodging complaints. I understand the Superintendent requested
> staff try to resolve any issues we bring them on a site level. The policy for
> race concern earlier this year; I think we had an instrumental role in
> getting the change to the Board and to the staff. I think that we voiced our
> concerns and the principles involved in getting the policy changed.

This was another instance when the researcher played an active role at the

CBSD meetings, and served as the liaison between CPA and the district. Input

was solicited from the CPA board members, and drafts of the proposed revisions

to policy were shared and questions were answered by the researcher at a CBSD

parent meeting.

Without minimizing these positive results, the third founding member provided an

important reminder that while there have been improvements, the issues which originally

motivated parents to form CPA and CBSD will require on-going attention: "Personally, I

have definitely seen some changes and, not to negate those changes, but there's always

room for improvement. It's still not communicated to me, not enough where I see it's

consistent."

<center>Extant Data from Student Records</center>

In addition to presenting the findings from the collection of data from parent participants,

this chapter also addresses the second question through the presentation of extant student

data. Study question number two asked: In what ways has participation in the College

Bound San Diego program contributed to students' educational experience? To answer

this question, the researcher attempted to gather extant data on the children of the parents

who agreed to participate in the study and gave consent to access their children's records. The data needed for this analysis was contained in the students' official district records. Unfortunately, due to the fact that many of the parent participants had children attending schools in districts other than the Poway Unified School District, a limited number of records were available to the researcher for review. Furthermore, because of the types of records reviewed, only ninth grade students through graduates were included. In total, 23 students' records were analyzed. Because of this limitation and small sample size, no significance can be assumed from any of the student record data reported below. With this understanding, the available data was still analyzed for purposes of responding to study question number two. Specifically, the following student data was examined:

1. Credit completion towards high school graduation;

2. Performance on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE);

3. Cumulative grade point averages;

4. Scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT);

5. College Prep and Advanced Placement courses taken;

6. The a-g course requirements completed; and

7. College acceptance and attendance.

As the available data from student records cuts across grade levels and is not complete for every student, the data was organized by first year participants, 9th graders, 10th graders, 11th graders, 12th graders, and graduates of CBSD. This was done in an attempt to simplify the display of data at each level. (See, Tables 4.10 through 4.15.) Some of the findings below draw from each of the tables, while others are only relevant for the data contained in one of the tables. For example, the findings on CAHSEE pass

rates was only relevant to 11th and 12th graders since the first opportunity to take this test does not occur until the spring semester of students' sophomore year.

Table 4.10: Student Records for First Year Participants

						Student Records for First Year Participants												
Current Grade	Years in CBSD	Previous Grade	Pre GPA	Current GPA	GPA Gain/Loss	Exit Exam ELA 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam 11th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	9th Grade Credits	11th Grade Credits	12th Credits	College Prep Courses Taken	# of AP Classes	SAT Score	% A-G Met
9	1	8	2.69	2.43	-0.26							40.0			4			
9	1	8	2.93	3.33	0.40							40.0			3			
11	1	10	1.80	2.23	0.43	341	N	332	N	360	P		140.0		16			43%
NG*	1	11	1.73	1.88	0.15	363	P			379	P			207.5	19		1150	
			Mean	Mean	Mean							Mean			Mean			
			2.29	2.47	0.18							40.0			11			

* NG = Non-grad

Table 4.11: Student Records for 9th Grade Students

Student Records for 9th Grade Students							
Current Grade	Years in CBSD	Previous Grade	Pre GPA	Current GPA	GPA Gain/ Loss	9th Grade Credits	College Prep Courses Taken
9	2	7	1.90	1.00	-0.90	15.0	0
9	4	5		1.86		40.0	5
9	4	5		2.60		32.5	5
				Mean		Mean	Mean
				1.82		29.2	3

Table 4.12: Student Records for 10th Grade Students

Student Records for 10th Grade Students								
Current Grade	Years in CBSD	Previous Grade	Pre GPA	Current GPA	GPA Gain/ Loss	10th Grade Credits	College Prep Courses Taken	% A-G Met
10	3	7	3.71	3.24	-0.47	95.0	10	47%
10	n/a	8	2.06	1.80	-0.26	85.0		30%
			Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean		Mean
			2.88	2.52	-0.37	90.0		385

Table 4.13: Student Records for 11th Grade Students

Student Records for 11th Grade Students																		
Current Grade	Years in CBSD	Previous Grade	Pre GPA	Current GPA	GPA Gain/Loss	Exit Exam ELA 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam ELA 11th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam Math 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam Math 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	11th Grade Credits	College Prep Courses Taken	# of AP Classes	SAT Score	% A-G Met
11	2	9	2.45	2.52	0.06	370	P			372	P			165.0	14	1		77%
11	3	9	2.17	2.25	0.08	325	N	356	P	340	N	369	P	186.3	14			43%
11	4	7	3.00	2.94	-0.06	379	P			385	P			190.0	14	2		80%
11	4	7	3.80	4.00	0.20									190.0	3			0%
11	n/a	9	3.15	2.74	-0.41	399	P			418	P			190.0	17		1330	80%
			Mean	Mean	Mean					Mean				Mean	Mean			Mean
			2.92	2.89	-0.03	368.25				378.8				184.3	12			56%

Table 4.14: Student Records for 12th Grade Students

Student Records for 12th Grade Students

Current Grade	Years in CBSD	Previous Grade	Pre GPA	Current GPA	GPA Gain/Loss	Exit Exam ELA 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam Math 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam Math 11th Grade	Pass/Fail	12th Grade Credits	College Prep Courses Taken	# of AP Classes	SAT Score	% A-G Met
12	4	8		2.14		403	P	398	P			200.0	20		1450	80%
12	4	8	1.94	2.53	0.59	361	P	340	N	353	P	225.0	10			23%
12	4	8	2.35	2.83	0.48	359	P	379	P			210.0	18	1		97%
12	4	8		3.15		419	P	393	P			240.0	21	2	1650	97%
12	4	8	2.95	3.44	0.50	415	P	424	P			250.0	17	3	1660	97%
12	4	8	3.60	3.62	0.02	415	P	401	P			225.0	18	2	1660	97%
12	4	8	3.31	4.12	0.81	424	P	449	P			232.5	11	7	1690	93%
12	n/a	10	2.23	2.24	0.01	374	P	348	N	368	P	212.5	18			77%
12	n/a	11	2.39	2.60	0.21	361	P	401	P			245.0	19		1660	83%
			Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean		Mean		Mean		Mean	Mean		Mean	Mean
			2.90	3.20	0.31	392		393		361		226.7	17		1628	83%

Table 4.15: Student Records for Graduates

Student Records for Graduates																
Year Graduated	Current Grade	Years in CBSD	Previous Grade	Pre GPA	Current GPA	GPA Gain/Loss	Exit Exam 10th Grade	Pass/Fail	Exit Exam Math 11th Grade	Pass/Fail	12th Grade Credits	College Prep Courses Taken	# of AP Classes	SAT Score	2 year/4 year College	Enrolled in College Within 1 year
2007	Grad	2	10		2.48		411	P	394	P					4	Yes
2007	Grad	3	9	2.54	2.71	0.17	407	P	371	P	245.0	30	1	1400	4	Yes
2005	Grad	4	8		2.53		376	P	287	N	295.0	22		850	2,4	Yes
2007	Grad	4	8	3.78	3.60	-0.19	377	P	394	P	270.0	18	2		4	Yes
				Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean		Mean		Mean	Mean		Mean		
				3.16	2.83	-0.01	392.8		361.5		270.0	23		1125		

An analysis of these data resulted in the following findings. Twenty-two of the twenty-three students (96%) had completed enough high school credits to be considered on track for graduation. All 10th, 11th and 12th grade students are on track for graduation. This number is consistent with the statistics for all students in the district. Among the current students who had taken the CAHSEE, 13 of 15 (86%) passed the English language arts portion on their first attempt in 10th grade. The data on the math portion of the exam show that 12 of 15 students (80%) passed on their first attempt. Overall, 73% of the current CBSD students successfully passed both portions of the test on their first attempt.

These results were compared to the most recent district data from 2006 for the graduating classes of 2006 through 2008. (See, Table 3.1.) This analysis indicated that the percentage of CBSD students passing the CAHSEE on their first attempt was lower than the district average (94%), the African American subgroup average (93%), and the White subgroup average (96%) for the class of 2008. However, after multiple attempts, 100% of the 11th and 12th graders had passed the exit exam. (See, Tables 4.13 and 4.14.)

A review of the cumulative grade point averages (GPA) of the CBSD students found that the average GPA among all CBSD students for whom data was available, was 2.69. The average GPA reported by grade level were:

a.) 9th grade: 2.24;

b.) 10th grade: 2.52 ;

c.) 11th grade: 2.78; and

d.) 12th grade: 3.20.

These averages show an increase at each subsequent grade level. The 20 students in this sample, who had been in CBSD for three or four years, had a higher average GPA of 3.07. (See, Tables 4.10 through 4.14.)

Student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) were reported on only two 11th graders and six 12th graders. The average scores at each grade level were 1240 for 11th graders and 1628 for seniors. (See, Tables 4.13 and 4.14.) It should be noted that students have the opportunity to take this test more than once and only the highest score is reported. Therefore, it is common to see higher scores among high school seniors. The average district score reported for the entire school district in 2006 was 1644. By subgroups, the average score for African American students was 1486 and for White students it was 1644. (See, Table 3.4.) It is interesting to note that the SAT scores for CBSD seniors is higher than the district average for the African American subgroup by 142 points, and is approaching the average scores reported in 2006 for both the district as a whole and the White subgroup.

Another finding from the review of records is related to the courses taken by CBSD students. The average number of college prep courses completed by the nine 12th graders at the end of the first semester of their senior year is 17, which is the expected number at this point to be on track for college admission upon graduation. Among the 12th grade students, 77% had completed 17 or more college prep courses. Statistics on Advanced Placement (AP) course enrollment indicate that 41% of the CBSD 10th through 12th graders had completed one or more AP classes. This enrollment rate is equal to the district-wide average. (See, Table 3.3.) Another AP statistic for the CBSD students

shows that for the five 12th graders who had completed an AP course, the average number of AP courses taken by these students is three. However, this number is skewed by the fact that one of the students completed seven AP courses. (See, Table 4.14.) The average number among the other four seniors is only two. The school district does not report the average number of course taken by those students enrolled in AP courses; therefore, it was not possible to conduct a comparison of these findings.

The a-g requirements for admission to the University of California and California State University systems is an even more important target for students in California who are planning to attend a four-year institution upon high school graduation. As noted throughout this study, it is also a major focus of CBSD. The nine seniors for whom records were available have completed between 23% and 97% of these requirements. These data were gathered prior to their final 12th grade semester, and the information indicates that 55% of these students are on track to complete 100% of the requirements prior to the end of their senior year. The district average for a-g completion rates in 2006 was 57.5% and 47.6% for African American students. While these averages are lower than one would hope, they exceed the San Diego County average of 37.2% and California State average of 35.2%. (See, Table 3.2.)

The last finding gathered from the district's student records is related to the four CBSD graduates for whom the researcher was able to access records. These records indicate that four of these graduates were accepted to college and were enrolled within one year of their high school graduation. However, as indicated earlier, the records from CBSD indicate that over the past four years, of the approximately 40 students who have

graduated from the program, 100% of them were accepted to college. This far exceeds the district rate for African Americans which is 68%, and is in fact higher than any subgroup or the district total.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, given the smaller number of student records available for analysis, it is not possible to draw any significant conclusions. However, in Chapter Five, a discussion of these findings will attempt to find any relevance that exists between this information and the second question of this study.

<div align="center">Extant Data from Student Focus Group Interviews</div>

As explained in Chapter Three, the object of this study is also embedded in a larger concurrent study being conducted by Dr. Tonika Green, San Diego State University. Although her study had not been completed, data collected by Dr. Green included results of student focus groups. As was done with the data from the parent interviews, the transcribed interviews from the student focus group were reviewed and coded by the researcher and two doctoral students. Then they re-read the transcripts looking for themes. Data were then organized under the following themes:

a.) College Preparation;

b.) Parent Involvement; and

c.) Cultural Identity.

These data were then analyzed and interpreted by the researcher. The findings from this analysis are discussed below for each theme.

College Preparation

As was found with the data analysis of the parent interviews, students also expressed that their greatest benefit from involvement in CBSD was their increased college knowledge, as related specifically to the requirements and processes for college acceptance, the financial aspects of funding a college education, and other aspects related to successful transition to college. Understanding the high school requirements that must be satisfied to be considered for college acceptance was mentioned by several of the students. Parents received this information from the adult leaders of CBSD during the "parent track" at the monthly meetings. However, the students gained their knowledge during the "student track" when they were divided into smaller groups by grade level. During this time, they were under the direction of volunteer teachers, most of whom were current college students. In this smaller group setting, 9th through 11th grade students received information on a variety of topics regarding college preparation including a-g and other course requirements, community service, and extra-curricular activities. They also received general information about the college selection and application processes, financial aid and scholarships, and creating college portfolios. High school seniors met separately and received one-on-one assistance with college research, application writing, developing personal statements, and researching financial aid and scholarships. In addition, all high school students received direct instruction on writing skills, resume preparation, public speaking, and tutorial assistance. All of these experiences at the monthly meetings were noted by the students as providing a new level of awareness regarding the types of courses and activities they needed to be involved in during high

school to prepare for college. One high school junior described the impact of this

component of CBSD by stating:

> I think college bound has been amazing. This is also my first year and
> since I've been here, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. And then
> talking to people they're like "well you need to wake up and you need to
> realize since you are junior, you know, one more year left, you really need
> to start looking and join this program and get to know what you want to do
> and look more into it. And I feel that's just pushing me and it's made me
> realize like, yeah I really do only have one more year left and there's not
> much time. It's like their looking out for you and your parents are too. It's
> like they are helping you.

Speaking specifically about the college requirements that need to be accomplished

in high school, one student noted that while he had heard of the requirements during

school, his participation in CBSD gave him a more in-depth understanding of the

expectations; "...college bound just shows me like how to, and I didn't know about A-G

and everything and it's been talked about (at school) but it hasn't been explained in depth

like it has been in college bound." Another student agreed with this statement adding,

"Well, before college bound I didn't know about the a-g requirements. So I learned them

last year and I was like okay well I have to get my stuff together." One young lady

reinforced the idea that being in CBSD had created a stronger motivation to attend

college and a clearer sense of purpose for her current academic studies: "It helped me to

really focus and make me want to get to college. Like, I am doing this because I want to

go to college. It helps you think about it." Another student explained his increased

awareness about the linkage between high school success and college acceptance very

succinctly in his statement, "If you do this then you can get into there."

The college tours organized and operated by the parents in CBSD were also mentioned repeatedly as having an impact on the students. While most of the students had grown up assuming they would go college when they graduated from high school, the tour made the abstract idea of going to college more concrete for them. Actually being on the campuses, touring the facilities, and meeting senior administrators and faculty excited and motivated many of the students. As two of the students shared:

> I think it encourages you by them showing you and going on all the tours of what you could be doing and what you could be experiencing rather than not going to school and not pursuing your life and whatever you want to do.

> I wasn't really motivated to go to college and when I went on the college tours, you know, it kind of made me like open my eyes a little bit and see what is out there.

The community service component of CBSD was the element of CBSD that was not uniformly endorsed by the student and received mixed reviews during the focus groups. It appeared they all understood the need to have this experience as part of the total package for their college profile and application: "I think I understand as to that it looks good on our application but 100 hours that's ... and I work and I go to school and I pay bills so...." There were very different opinions regarding the actual value of the experience. Others spoke of what they perceived as too large a commitment of time given all of their other activities. As one young man expressed it,

> I'm going to be truthful too. What they want from us is too much like, they want 100 hours from high school but they don't consider the fact that some of us actually have a life, we are actually doing something. Like I play sports throughout the whole year so it takes up the majority of my time.

Several students agreed that the amount of community service hours required by CBSD was excessive. But, others shared that when they reflect on their actual experiences they realized that while the activity itself may not have been much fun, they had gained a certain level of personal fulfillment:

> Well, I feel good about afterwards. It's just, it's tedious and time consuming.

> I think when you help a community, like, you think that making people happy, it makes you feel good. It's like you achieved so much happiness. Like, you gave that to them.
> As this conversation continued, and students reflected more on this topic,

some of them who had been the strongest opponents of the community service requirement began to express a different perspective. In particular, the young man quoted above as being concerned about the excessive time commitment later went on to explain his particular service project in detail:

> You know I spent most of my time in the teen center down by my house and over the years, they've been losing people just because of the way it looks. But you know, since I've been helping out, ...you know it's been looking a lot better and they have concerts, they do something almost every week of the year. So I just, I enjoy helping them out because they deserve people doing it for them.

All of the components of CBSD described above, even those who did not find enjoyable, were recognized by students as important and adding to their understanding of the expectations for preparing for their future college experience.

Parent Involvement

As the construct of 'Parent Involvement' is the underlying theme of this study, it was helpful to gain an understanding of the students' perspective regarding their parents' involvement levels and whether they perceive a difference since being involved in

CBSD. As one would expect after hearing the data from the parent survey and interview

data, the students explained that they felt their parents had been involved prior to joining

CBSD. Yet, they also confirmed the finding from the parent data that indicated more

involvement and/or a greater focus on the students' academic performance since joining

CBSD.

> My mom has always been in my life, like in every aspect. But when it
> comes to my academics, if I slip like a little, she's mad if I get a B. So
> she's very strict in that but she, she joined because she heard about this and
> all of our parents said that they didn't learn about this when they were kids
> so I think that is why they joined. To learn with the parent component, to
> learn about what is going on in with our lives so they can help us. All of
> our parents, you know, that they want to be a part of our lives unless they
> are just bad parents. But you know, they put us in the program so
> obviously...

The student responses regarding parent involvement were prompted by the

question that asked why they believed their parents had joined CBSD. Most students

explained that their parents joined the program because of their hopes of ensuring a better

future for their children through the obtainment of a college education: "I think my

parents joined because they wanted me to have a better life after college." The students'

responses then went on to explain how their parents have become more involved in their

current educational experience as a means of assuring their college preparedness. For one

young man, the level of increased involvement by his father was expressed in a way that

indicated his appreciation:

> ...you hit college bound they get involved more, and my dad being as busy
> as he is, he actually finds the time to actually be with me, like with
> everything I do and I thank him for that. And my mom, she would be there
> too but she is going to school right now but yeah, it's helped out a lot.

Not surprisingly, the increased involvement of parents was not always viewed positively by the students, "I am already in AVID, which is a college prep program ... so once it helped to motivate me with my grades and my mom is now even more on me about my grades...she emails...and she is like 'oh, I talked to your teacher today.' She is definitely involved."

Cultural Identity

The primary goal of CBSD is to close the achievement gaps by helping parents to ensure their children are prepared for college upon graduation from high school. Because this program was created as a component of a parent advocacy group, CPA, and because it was created by and for parents of African American children, one of the theoretical frameworks for this study was Critical Race Theory. As discussed in the literature review, this theory proposes that racism has not waned in society but rather has transformed into subtle, hidden, invisible cues of racist acts that occur daily toward people of color and flourishes in a society that deems this behavior as normal and acceptable. Critical race theorists view schools as functioning within a system of institutionalized white privilege, oppression, and racism (Bell, 1980; Delgado, 1989; Duncan, 2002; Lopez, 2003). Theories on topics of collective identity and the fear of acting white are among the many ideas anthropologist Johnathan Ogbu offered as explanations regarding why some minority students succeed in school and others do not (Farkas, 2003; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1987, 1992, 2004; Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

It is because of these issues and challenges faced by African Americans that CBSD built into the program a strong component on Black History. As part of the student

track, much time is devoted to learning about the contributions of African Americans to the successes and social fabric of our society. The data from the student focus groups indicates that this aspect of CBSD was viewed by students as extremely important and enjoyable. When explaining why this was so, one student responded, "Because learning new things about my people, I find it interesting knowing my background and stuff that we don't learn in school." The sentiment that the Black History information is important to the students, but not addressed in the regular school curriculum was reinforced by a similar comment made by another student, "I like the Black history component. It's not really covered during school hours." Even when the topic of Black history is covered in the regular school program, students felt that it was not addressed with the seriousness and the depth it deserves,

> It's important because like she said it is kind of being sugar coated and they like briefly touch on it and they provide it from just like an overlooking versus how, like we would have felt in that situation. Or and just see how far we've come since then. And it still goes on today like racism.

In addition to the formal Black history component, several students mentioned that one unique aspect of membership in CBSD was that it gave them an opportunity to interact with peers who shared the same ethnic and cultural background. Most of the students in CBSD live and attend schools in predominantly White communities and many rarely have this opportunity. These students often find themselves as the only African American in one or more of their classes during the school day. This is also true as they interact in their communities in clubs, sports, or other activities. Therefore, CBSD provides an opportunity for them that they do not have on a regular basis. When asked to

share what they saw as the best thing about CBSD, one student simply stated, "Getting to know people that look more like you." Some of the students mentioned the importance of the relationships they have built with other students in the program, and the importance of networking, another topic covered in the student track,

> I mean you can do it on your own if you chose to, but you have family, you have friends. Like if you have friends, it's all networking really. It's what we have been taught also. So just keeping connections and staying true to what you say.

Lastly, through observations and both formal and informal conversations with both parents and students, the researcher has learned that students place a high value on having a place where they can both hear about and discuss racial issues that they encounter in their personal lives. These elements combined under the theme of cultural identity represent important aspects of CBSD that contribute positively to the social-emotional development of these students.

Summary

This chapter has presented an analysis of the findings from the various data collected for this study. Parent survey data, parent interview data, student records, and student focus group data were all presented and discussed in an attempt to provide a descriptive representation of the College Bound San Diego Program, and to address the purpose of the study which was to determine if the program contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience. The information presented in this chapter will also be helpful in addressing the two study questions proposed in Chapter Three. Collectively, the information presented in Chapter One through Chapter Four will

provide a framework for the discussion and recommendations that will be presented in

Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the research study, a discussion of findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

As presented in Chapter One, the academic achievement gap between African American and White students in K-12 American schools is an educational crisis of major proportions. While achievement gaps in schools exist for various subgroups, this study focused on the gaps between African American and White students. Of particular interest was the research that indicated the achievement gaps are not only present in low-performing, high-poverty, diverse school settings, but exist even at high-performing schools with higher socio-economic status (SES) levels (Cowley & Meehan, 2002; Ferguson, 2002; Ogbu & Wood, 2002; Singham, 1998, 2003; Viadero, 2000). The subject of this study was a parent educational and support program created in an affluent, suburban school district to specifically enhance the college going rate of African American students. While performance data in this district revealed that on all traditional measures, student subgroups out-perform their peers at the county, state, and national level, significant gaps continued to exist between the White and Asian students and their African American peers (District, 2007).

Several studies indicate that one beneficial solution for closing the achievement gaps is the enhancement of parent involvement with the educational endeavors of their children (Ehman, 1995; Fager & Brewster, 1999; Howley, Bickel, & McDonough, 1997). The research on this solution indicates a strong link between educational benefits to

children and family engagement in schools. Understudied in the literature on parent

involvement and parent education programs are programs that are organized and

conducted by the parents. This study focused on one such parent program that has been

established and led by African American parents. College Bound San Diego (CBSD) was

specifically designed, as described in Chapter One, to help close the achievement gaps

between African American students and their White peers attending affluent, high

performing, suburban schools. Two major research questions guided this study.

Research Approach and Guiding Questions

In this study, CBSD was examined through a descriptive case study. This

approach allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of the strengths, limitations,

and accomplishments of the program, not only from the parent and student perspective,

but through observations and a review of student records. The study addressed the

following questions:

1. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program

   contributed to parents' involvement in their student's educational experience?

2. In what ways has participation in the College Bound San Diego program

   contributed to students' educational experience?

Limitations of Findings

Several limitations of the study may have contributed to the small number of

significant findings from the quantitative data. First, the majority of parents who

completed the survey, 74%, had already completed at least one year in CBSD at the time

they first completed the survey. Many of these had been involved in the program for three

or four years and thus had learned considerable knowledge about the educational system in general, how to support their students, and college information in particular. Secondly, as explained earlier, the demographic characteristics of this sample group is representative of a parent population that is typically more knowledgeable about and engaged in the educational experiences of their children prior to, or regardless of, participation in a parent education/support program. Third, the survey itself, which measures fairly basic levels of parent engagement and knowledge, lacks the subtlety to assess more sophisticated shifts in the constructs, especially when parents are already involved in typical ways in their child's education and schooling experiences.

Parent Involvement Constructs

The study's parent survey provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain a broader perspective on several important parent involvement constructs (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2007). The ten constructs identified from the Chrispeels and Gonzalez study were used and included: a) Parent Knowledge; b) College Expectations; c) Parental Role Construct; d) Sense of Self-Efficacy; e) Invitations to Participate at School; f) Parental Interactions with Children; g) School Involvement; h) Home Involvement; i) Leadership Activities, and; j) College Knowledge. Although these constructs framed the analysis of the survey data, for the qualitative study a grounded approach allowed the researcher to search for additional themes in the qualitative data.

The parent interview data overwhelmingly supported the fact that involvement in CBSD has made a significant difference for parents and their children on a variety of factors. The seven themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data illustrate

the various aspects of CBSD that parents identified as benefits of the program. As explained in Chapter Four, these seven themes were: a) Parent knowledge; b) College expectations; c) School/district relationships; d) Parent involvement actions; e) Parent self-efficacy; f) Parent empowerment/voice; and g) Parenting beliefs and practices.

Student Findings

Extant student records were collected and analyzed specifically for the purpose of addressing the second study question. The analysis of extant data from student records was limited due to small sample size, accessibility of records, and incomplete records. In designing the study, the researcher did not anticipate the amount of difficulty involved in gathering longitudinal data on the student participants. Because of the small number of records collected, no statistical significance can be assumed from any of the student record data.

Similar to the analysis of parent data, the qualitative data gathered through student focus groups, program documents, and researcher observations provided a clear indication that involvement in CBSD had a positive impact on students. Increased college knowledge, enhanced parent involvement, and enriched cultural identity were three themes that emerged from the analysis of the student focus group data.

Discussion of Findings

In Chapter Two, a figure was presented to depict the structure that was used for the review of the literature, and that figure is now repeated below to help bring meaning to, and frame the discussion about the study findings. (See, Figure 5.1.) This structure

includes the three research theories that provided a conceptual framework for this study, as well as the following concepts related to parental involvement that were indicated in the literature review:

a.) Parent education and support programs have been shown to lead to greater levels of parent involvement;

b.) Parent involvement for underserved and underachieving students has been shown to address and mitigate both internal and external factors related to the achievement gaps; and

c.) Addressing the internal and external factors related to the academic achievement gaps discussed in the literature review has been shown to have a positive impact on narrowing these gaps.
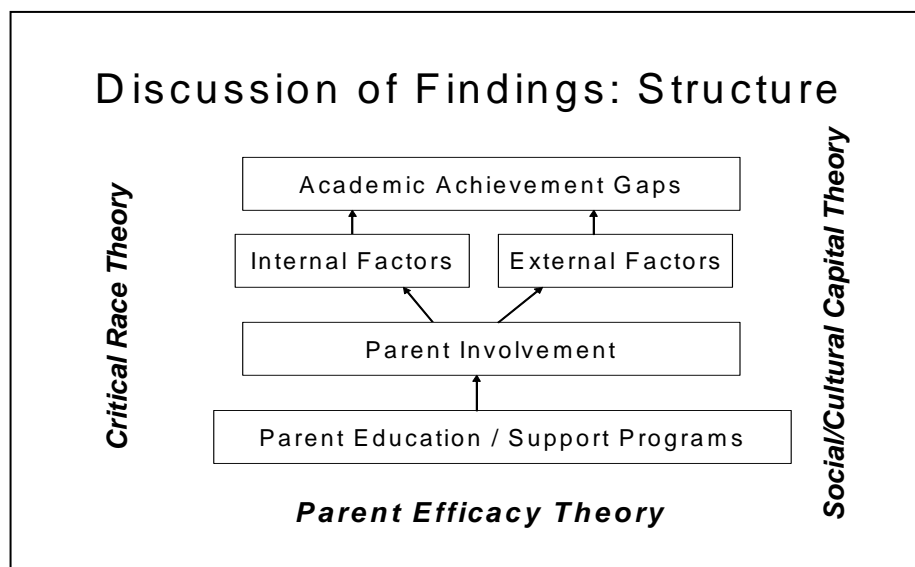

Figure 5.1: Discussion of Findings Structure

Theoretical Frameworks

Parent Efficacy Theory has been used as a theoretical framework in a previous study of parent education/support program designed to promote and increase parent involvement in their children's education (Chrispeels & Gonazalez, under review). Critical Race Theory and Social/Cultural Capital Theory are also being used in this study because of the circumstances that led to the creation of CPA and CBSD, and the uniqueness of the fact that the program was created independently by and for parents of African American students in an affluent, high performing, suburban school district.

Parent Efficacy Theory

At a conceptual level, the major tenet of the Parent Efficacy Theory is that it is one's sense of efficacy and beliefs about what can be done with the resources one possess, that is the determining factor of parental involvement (Bandura, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). The literature on parent involvement reviewed in Chapter Two, indicated that parents' willingness to be involved with their children's schools was directly related to their own sense of self-efficacy and role construct. The literature denotes that it is an individual's beliefs that they should be involved and his/her perception of efficacy, rather than his/her actual resource or skills that determines these goals and efforts. Therefore, it is one's sense of efficacy, one's beliefs about what can be done with the resources one possess, that is the key determining factor of parental involvement (Bandura, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Building on this theory, Chrispeels and Gonzalez, (under review) concluded that parental role construct was the strongest predictor of parental

involvement, and that self-efficacy was a secondary key predictor. This study found that parents in CBSD have a strong sense of personal efficacy as related to their child's educational experience and suggested that increased knowledge leads to greater perceptions of self-efficacy. Chrispeels and Gonzalez (under review) also determined that that both of these factors could be influenced by new knowledge gained by parents in a parent education program. Applying this theory to the CBSD program, one might assume that through their increased knowledge, parents would have a stronger role construct and feel more efficacious in their involvement efforts at home and school. This assumption was validated by the interview responses, through observations of the CBSD meetings conducted by the researcher and by data from the student focus groups.

This study confirmed the findings of Chrispeels and Gonzalez (under review) that increasing parents' knowledge influences parent role construct and efficacy. As shown in the data, although the parents perceived and indicated they were actively involved prior to the program, they gave examples of increased levels of involvement after participating in the program. These perceptions were also confirmed by the student focus group interviews. The qualitative data consistently suggested that both general knowledge and college knowledge gains among the parent participants were a result of participation in CBSD. The findings suggest that the parents' role construct of both being involved and how to be involved was strengthened through the program and engagement with other parents. The program also seemed to have increased their resources (efficacy) to be involved through working with and supporting other parents and through the knowledge

they gained. For example, efficacy to monitor course enrollment increased once they understood the a-g college admission requirements.

This finding not only has a direct relationship to the parent efficacy theory, but it also supports the concept proposed in this study that parent education and support programs can lead to higher levels of parent involvement (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Chrispeels & González, under review; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Mapp, 2002; Smalley & Reyes-Blanes, 2001; Thompson, 2003; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2001).

Social/Cultural Capital Theory

As discussed in Chapter Two, Social/Cultural Capital Theory suggests that it is the degree to which parents or community members have trust among each other, understand the norms and codes of the society and have access to channels of information that give them access to valued societal goods and resources (Coleman, 1988). The theory suggests that the level of social/cultural capital parents possess is directly related to their willingness to be actively involved with the educational institution serving their children. It further asserts that the social capital impacting a child's development does not lie solely within the family, but within the relationships parents have with the community and institutions of the community (Coleman, 1988; Lareau 1987). The descriptive statistics from this study demonstrate that the parent participants have a demographic profile that would indicate relatively high levels of social/cultural capital as defined by the literature.

The data indicated that this parent group consisted of middle to upper-middle class families. Fewer than 12% of the participants reported that their child qualified for the federal, Free and Reduced Lunch Program. All but three of the parents reported having at least some college experience, and 53.5% had earned a bachelor degree or higher. All of the participants' reported occupations that were technical or professional in nature. This finding confirmed the fact that CBSD serves a more affluent and well educated group of parents than those that are typically found in the literature on studies of the African American achievement gap and parent involvement.

However, the interview data indicate that in some aspects these middle class African American families did not enjoy the same level of social capital as might be expected of White middle class families. For example, several indicated that individually they did not feel able to have their concerns addressed. In other words, they did not enjoy access to key information channels or did not feel the same level of trust in meeting with school officials (Coleman, 1988). An important role that CBSD seemed to be playing was enhancing parents' social capital by facilitating their access to information channels, informing them of important norms and expectations, such as monitoring their student's course taking requirements, and building a trusting community among the African American parents.

The results of the parent survey indicated that of the ten parent involvement constructs measured, the "All Parents" sample group had high mean scores on the following seven: Knowledge, Expectations, Role, Efficacy, Interaction, Home, and College. These findings indicate that the parents perceived themselves as being

knowledgeable about both the K-12 and the college educational systems, and that they held high expectations for their children to attend college upon completion of high school. These findings are consistent with a recent study published by Ream and Palardy (2008), that social class status was a stronger determinant of expectations and knowledge than ethnicity. Furthermore, the scores indicated that these parents understood their parental role as related to their child's education, felt they had the knowledge and skills to effectively participate in the educational process, and that they took appropriate actions to support their child's education at home. The three constructs with the lowest mean scores were: School, Invitations, and Leadership.

It is interesting to note that these three constructs were all related to parents' interactions with their child's school and their perceptions of invitations to participate from teachers and other school personnel. As discussed in Chapter Two, Lareau (1987) examined the different levels of parent involvement between White working class parents and professional middle-class parents. The findings showed that the level of parent participation was significantly different. Middle-class parents were more comfortable and confident in their interactions with the school, and participated in school activities at a greater level than did the working class parents. Although both the quantitative and qualitative data indicated that the parents had high levels of involvement, it was highest in terms of home activities supporting their students' education, interactions with their children, and involvement in outside activities such as CBSD. The data showed lower mean scores on involvement constructs related to perceived invitations for participation at their child's school, actual involvement at school activities, and participation in

leadership roles at both the school and district level. These findings seem inconsistent with the social/cultural capital theory, which would suggest that the study participants would indicate high levels of willingness to be actively engaged with the educational institution. Other studies of African American parent involvement at school have revealed mixed results, with some studies finding positive effects while others showed African American students were less likely to benefits from parent contacts with the school (McNeal, 1999; Park & Palardy, 2004)

Given the demographics of the study participants and their strong mean scores on the other constructs, one might have expected higher scores on these involvement constructs as well. However, studies have shown that African American parents face burdens in their day-to-day interactions with school officials, because they perceive a need to establish their legitimacy with teachers and administrators who they believe doubt their capacity for meaningful involvement based on racial biases. These challenges have been reported for African American families regardless of their socioeconomic status (Haycock & Jerald, 2002; Porter & Soper, 2003; Schwartz, 2001). The difference in parent involvement is one way in which race and social class influence children's educational outcomes, and therefore may be a contributing factor to the academic achievement gaps.

A matched pair t-test was conducted on the parent involvement constructs to determine if there were any significant differences after one additional year in CBSD. Unfortunately, there were only 16 matched pair samples that could be used in this analysis. The findings from the matched pair t-test indicated that there was no statistically

significant difference on any of the constructs. This result was not surprising as only two of the participants were new to the program at the time they completed the pre-survey. The remaining 88% of members, of the matched pair sample had been in the program for three or more years, and one would not expect to see significant gains after just one additional year.

Perhaps the most meaningful quantitative results were those that compared new parents to continuing parents. The results of the independent sample t-test indicated the difference in the construct 'knowledge' was approaching significance, and that statistical significance was found on the difference for the 'college' construct. As explained in Chapter Four, the construct' knowledge' is defined as the general knowledge a parents may possess regarding their child's current educational experience. The construct 'college' relates to knowledge regarding the requirements for admission to college and other factors related to a successful transition to a four-year institution. As defined in Chapter One, this construct is often referred to as "college knowledge" in educational literature and practices. This finding was interesting even though small sample size was again a limitation with only 19 participants in the new parents group. Since the primary goal of CBSD is helping parents to prepare their students for acceptance at four-year institutions, it is not surprising that these two constructs showed the greatest differences when comparing new parents to those who had been in the program for a year or more.

As the data presented in Chapter Four illustrates, parents felt strongly that their general knowledge of their children's current educational experience, as well as their college knowledge, had been increased significantly. This was true even though they may

have previously believed they had sufficient knowledge in these areas. The saying,

"Sometimes you don't know, what you don't know" seems to appropriately describe

what these parents experienced on many of the CBSD topics.

In the interviews, parents consistently shared that knowledge gains were their

primary reason for joining CBSD and the most important added value of the program.

These findings are consistent with other studies of parent involvement programs, which

indicate increased knowledge is often the greatest benefit for parents (Bolivar,

Chrispeels, González, & Rodarte, 2008; Cheng Gorman & Balter, 1997; Chrispeels &

Rivero, 2001; Chrispeels & González, under review; Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1980; Delgado, 1989; Duncan, 2002; Lopez, 2003)

provides important information necessary to understand the motivation that led to the

establishment of the parent advocacy group, Concerned Parents Alliance, Inc. (CPA), and

to the decision to create CBSD, the educational component designed to serve African

American families. Furthermore, it may help to explain the aforementioned reluctance of

these parents to be as actively involved at their children's schools and in leadership

activities at both the school and district level

The qualitative data from the parent interviews repeatedly suggested that parents

perceived issues of racism confronting them and their children at both the school and

district level. The examples shared provided a glimpse into the proposition of Critical

Race Theory (CRT), which defines a system of White privilege and a social order that is

stratified along racial lines. The theme of empowerment/voice that emerged from the

analysis of the parent interview data may also be directly related to the defining

constructs of CRT. Parents consistently shared that involvement in CBSD has

empowered them and strengthened their voice within the educational system. This was

attributed to both increased knowledge and to the relationships and support they receive

from CBSD and CPA. The participants particularly valued the networks they have

established with other parents in the group and recognized them an important resource to

them as they attempt to proactively navigate the educational institution (Ream & Palardy,

2008). The sense of community and family among the CBSD members is also an

important element of the organization that was shared by many of the participants. With

the increased empowerment and strengthened sense of voice, parents shared that they

have established stronger, more positive relationships with both their child's school and

the school district. It was interesting to note that their strengthened sense of

empowerment and voice were seen as having resulted in tangible changes in policies,

procedures, and practices of the educational systems. The concept of voice is very

consistent with CRT, which posits that the first step on the road to racial justice is

providing the oppressed with a voice to communicate their experience and realities. As

Delpit (1988) so poignantly pointed out, the current state of racial affairs is such that the

dialogue of people of color has been silenced.

Although the primary purpose of CBSD was to enhance parents' knowledge of

the educational system, and preparation for college going and admission, the CPA parent

organization also gave parents a political voice. This study is unique in showing the

potential value of both an educational and an advocacy component to parent involvement

for African-American children and their families and supports findings that Delgado-Gaitan (2001) noted for Latino families. As the qualitative data showed, parents gained a sense of power and learned that they could influence policy at both the school and district level. These findings are supported by recent studies of community organizing in seven major U.S. cities (Mediratta, et al., 2008). In all the cities, those schools supported by parents and students who had organized externally from the district often showed increased school capacity to provide successful learning environments, higher student outcomes (decreased dropouts, higher graduation rates) and influence on district and state policies (pp. 6-7, 12).

As the interview data indicated, the exercise of power and influence in advocating on behalf of their children, and on the decision-making processes within the educational institution gave parents a sense of empowerment/voice. This was a powerful aspect of CBSD that many parents felt made a positive difference for themselves and their children. While this theme was not specifically addressed in the parent survey, several of the survey constructs appear to closely related to empowerment/voice and provide supporting data regarding this theme.

Because of the many issues and challenges faced by African Americans students living in a predominantly White community, the founders of CBSD built a strong component on Black History into the program. This was seen as one way to help students built a sense of cultural identity, to strengthen their self-image, and to better prepare them for dealing with the challenges they encounter. Many students expressed that Black History information is important to them, but is not addressed in the regular school

curriculum. The data from the student focus groups indicates that this aspect of CBSD was viewed as extremely important and enjoyable. Similar to the findings in this study, Mediratta, et al, 2008) also found that "Young people reported that because of their involvement in organizing, they knew more about what they needed to do to succeed in school and felt greater motivation to finish high school and go to college" (p. 16). CBSD has tended to focus on knowledge enhancement for students, but given the findings of the Annenberg initiative to organize communities (Mediratta, et al., 2008), it may want to consider ways in which students collectively can be more proactively involved as opposed to the individual community service component, which received only modest student endorsement.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This study identified two important indicators of student success that participants in CBSD have successfully attained. The student record data reported that CBSD students have been successful in meeting college requirements and being accepted and admitted to higher education at rates higher than any subgroup or the district total. This finding suggests that a thorough understanding of the requirements and practices necessary for acceptance at institutions of higher education, when combined with proactive parental involvement and community support, can be a strong predictor of a student's chances for acceptance into college. However, significant gaps still exist, even for the CBSD students, on grade point averages, enrollment rates in advanced courses, achievement scores, and college placement exams.

As educational systems struggle with the challenge of closing the achievement gaps, it is important that the educational research and literature continue to search for both causes and solutions to this serious problem that has reached epidemic proportions. While this study has discussed both external and internal factors related to the gaps, it is extremely important that future research focus on the internal factors that are under the control of school district personnel. Research of this nature could provide meaningful feedback to both parents and school districts as they continue to work collaboratively towards closing the achievement gaps for African American students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study that have resulted in recommendations for practice.

Conclusion one. Results of the parent survey data, showed lower mean scores on involvement constructs related to perceived invitations for participation at their child's school, actual involvement at school activities, and participation in leadership roles at both the school and district level. These findings suggest that the CBSD parents, who appear to be actively involved in their children's education as measured by the other involvement constructs, do not feel as strongly about invitations and opportunities for involvement at their children's school. School leaders should be aware that many parents of children from underrepresented and underserved student subgroups often perceive disparate treatment in terms of invitations and opportunities for their involvement with the school. This study suggests that this is true even when parents possess high levels of social/cultural capital.

Recommendation one. School leaders should be aware of these issues, and should proactively seek opportunities to change these perceptions among parents. There should be on-going efforts to provide specific communications, programs, and/or activities to build positive relationships between these parents and their children's school.

Conclusion two. Participation in CBSD led to increased knowledge and sense of self-efficacy for parents that resulted in greater levels of involvement related to their children's educational experience. The literature has consistently reported that differences in parent involvement is one way in which race and social class influence children's educational outcomes, and therefore may be a contributing factor to the academic achievement gaps.

As schools and districts seek answers to address the disparity of academic achievement for underrepresented and underserved students, it is important to recognize the need for solutions that focus on both the external and internal factors related to the achievement gaps. One way to establish this bridge between internal and external forces is for schools and districts to recognize and value the power that parent involvement can bring to bear on the problem.

Recommendation two: District and school leaders should proactively seek opportunities to encourage and support the creation of parent education/support programs for parents of children from underrepresented and underserved student subgroups. District leaders should encourage and support programs such as College Bound San Diego, to increase parent involvement and help parents become advocates for their children.

Conclusion three. Even though the parents in CBSD believed they possessed strong levels of general knowledge and college knowledge prior to joining the program, the data suggest that through participation in the program their knowledge levels in these two topics were the greatest areas of growth. The parents also indicated that knowledge gains were their primary reason for joining CBSD and the most important added value of the program.

Recommendation three. When developing parent education/support programs, particular attention should be paid to providing both general knowledge about the educational system and specific information regarding college knowledge. Focusing on these two topics may provide the largest gains and benefits for parents seeking to enhance their children's educational experience and opportunities for post secondary education.

Conclusion four. The qualitative data from the parent interviews repeatedly suggested that parents perceived issues of racism confronting them and their children at both the school and district level. In addition to parent education and support programs, parent advocacy groups can play an important role in providing a voice for families of underrepresented and underserved student subgroups. These parent advocacy groups can provide important insights into the challenges families may face in dealing with the educational institution. With the increased empowerment and strengthened sense of voice that can be achieved through an independent organization, parents can establish stronger, more positive relationships with both their child's school and the school district. Through these relationships, important issues and concerns can be addressed that may directly

impact the daily experiences of students in a way that lead to more positive learning environments and stronger adult/student relationships.

Recommendation four. School district leaders should actively encourage, support, and engage independent advocacy groups for parents of underrepresented and underserved children from these student subgroups. Organizations such as the Concerned Parent Alliance can lead to positive, working alliances and prevent adversarial relationships that often occur when challenges arise.

Conclusion five. Because of the many issues and challenges faced by African Americans students living in a predominantly White community, there is a need to help students built a sense of cultural identity, to strengthen their self-image, and to better prepare them for dealing with the challenges they encounter. Many students expressed that Black History information is important to them, but is not addressed in the regular school curriculum.

Recommendation five. School and district leaders should conduct audits to determine if perspectives of various cultures and culturally diverse literature are appropriately represented in the regular curriculum experienced by all students. If not, changes to curriculum and instructional materials should be adopted and implemented. Additionally, schools should ensure that teachers receive appropriate staff development related to these changes to ensure they are properly incorporated into classroom instruction.

Implications for the Case Study District

In addition to the conclusions and recommendations for practice discussed above, the findings of this study also suggest several implications specific to the case study district.

Implication one. The case study district has identified the achievement gap as a major obstacle to achieving its goal of "college readiness" for every student. Achievement growth targets have been set and are measured and reported annually for all student subgroups. Given the persistence of the achievement gaps, the district should consider formally identifying the closing of the achievement gaps as a major, district wide initiative, and should identify a staff member who has this work as his/her primary assignment. Additionally, the appropriate resources for conducting research, audits, developing and implementing staff development, and monitoring and reporting progress should be allocated to this effort.

Implication two. The study district is already engaged in diversity audits of its curriculum and literature resources to ensure perspectives of various cultures and diverse literature are appropriately represented in the regular curriculum. In addition to these efforts it should consider a deeper level of inquiry through the use of equity audits as recommended in the research literature. In the article, "Equity Audits: A Practical Tool for Developing Equitable and Excellent Schools", (Skrla, et al., 2004) the authors note that having accountability policies is not enough to ensure the broad improvements necessary to address the existing achievement gaps. Equity audits for educational systems are a reconceptualized construct of equity audits that have historical roots in civil rights

enforcement. e.g., employment rights audits, gender equity audits, and pay equity audits. The authors have identified 12 indicators that they have grouped into three areas for audit. The three areas are labeled teacher quality equity, programmatic equity, and achievement equity. This model of equity audits would provide additional information to both teachers and administrators as they seek to eliminate inequities at their school.

Implication three. In its on-going efforts to provide staff development related to issues of diversity and equity, the district should find or develop training programs that specifically identify and address the conscious and unconscious thinking patterns and behaviors that prevent the creation of equitable schools.

Implication four. In its efforts to increase student achievement and close the existing achievement gaps , the case study district should consider the concept of community organizing for school reform that was dicussed in chapter two (Mediratta, et al., 2008). While the concept of community organizing has been focused on large, inner-city school districts, the case study district should explore how this concept could work in its affluent suburban setting. The involvement of CPA and CBSD have provided evidence that collaborative efforts between the district and independent community organizations can have a positive impact on policies, procedures, and practices that influence equity issues and student achievement.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this study suggest two areas that warrant further research:

1. There is a need for additional research on parent education/support programs for parents of African American students from affluent communities who attend high performing schools.

2. A targeted subject for future research could be a more in-depth study of the College Bound San Diego program to determine the specific impact this program may have on parent involvement, student achievement, and closing the achievement gaps for African American students. The limitations of this study did not allow for the collection of longitudinal data on the impact of the program over time. A study that can obtain both pre- and post- participation data will allow for more quantitative data to be collected and analyzed regarding the effects of CBSD on both parents and students.

Appendix A

University of California, San Diego
Interview Questions
College Bound San Diego Study

1. How long have you been involved in the CBSD program?

2. What grade level is your child?

(Go to questions below for founders of the program, and then continue with question #4)

3. Why did you decide to become involved with College Bound San Diego?

4. In what ways has your involvement in the CBSD program increased your knowledge about your child's current educational experience?

5. In what ways has your involvement with CBSD helped you to be more involved with your child's educational experiences than you think you might have been?

6. In what ways has CBSD helped you to feel more confident in your interactions with your child's school?

7. How has CBSD helped you and your child to work in a White majority environment?

8. How have you worked with other CBSD parents to support your child?

9. How has CBSD changed your child's *behaviors* related to his or her educational experience?   How has it changed your child's *beliefs* related to his or her educational experience?

10. In what ways has your involvement in CBSD changed your relationship with your child?

11. In what ways has your involvement in CBSD increased your knowledge about the requirements and processes for your child to apply to and be accepted to college?

12. What components of the CBSD program have had the greatest impact for you? For your child?

13. How has your involvement in CBSD changed your ability to influence district policies and procedures? School level? Classroom level? With counselors?

14. If you had three wishes that could support African-American student achievement in your school, what would they be?

15. What other changes do you hope to see within the district as related to serving African American families?

FOUNDERS QUESTIONS

1. What were the major issues/reasons that prompted you to establish the CPA? The CBSD?

2. How have CPA and CBSD influenced district policies and procedures? School level? Classroom level? With counselors?

3. In what ways has CBSD achieved its goals?

4. What factors have helped CBSD achieve its goals,

5. What is the biggest hurdle facing CBSD in securing equitable achievement for all African-American students in the district?

6. What other changes do you hope to see within the district as related to serving African American families?

Appendix B

University of California, San Diego
College Bound San Diego Study - Parent Survey

PARENT SURVEY

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Please fill out this form about **your oldest child** who is currently studying at this school. Please **use a black pen** to fill in the circle that most closely matches your response. Your responses will be confidential. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. We just want to know what you think or know at this moment. All responses are **confidential**.

Please tell us how much you know about the following:

	I don't know	I know a little	I know some	I know a lot	I know most of it	I know fully
1. I know how to contact school and community leaders.	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. I know the roles of school and district personnel.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. I know what financial aid is available for attending a university.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. I know it is my responsibility to be an advocate for my child (e.g., contact the school, request a program).	O	O	O	O	O	O

	I don't know	I know a little	I know some	I know a lot	I know most of it	I know fully
1. I know my child's reading and math level.	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. I know what to do at home to help my child learn.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. I know it is my responsibility to contact the school if I have a concern about my child.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. I know what academic standards my child will learn this year.	O	O	O	O	O	O

	I don't know	I know a little	I know some	I know a lot	I know most of it	I know fully
1. I know what programs are available at school to support my child's learning.	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. I know the course requirements my child must complete in high school to be eligible for university admission.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. I know there are resources available in my community to help my child.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. I know it is my responsibility to ensure my child attends school when she/he is not sick.	O	O	O	O	O	O

PARENT SURVEY (page 2)

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I expect my child to enroll in courses that meet requirements for university admission (a-g such as English, Algebra, Geometry, Physics).	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	My child's success requires my supervision and help with homework.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	I feel successful in my efforts to help my child learn.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	This school invites me to regularly participate in school activities.	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.	My child's success in school depends on the teacher, not me.	O	O	O	O	O	O

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I believe that a university degree will ensure a better life for my child.	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	I believe I must make the first contact with my child's teachers.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	I feel comfortable talking with my child's teachers.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	This school has an open-door policy for parents the office staff welcomes and helps me).	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.	I feel comfortable asking the principal about the school budget at a school meeting.	O	O	O	O	O	O

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I expect my child to be involved in extracurricular activities to make him/her more competitive for university admission (e.g., sports, clubs, community service).	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.	My participation in school events or in the class is necessary for my child's success at school.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.	I can help my child get good grades at school.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4.	My child's teachers ask me to help out or volunteer in the classroom.	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.	The principal welcomes all parents at school.	O	O	O	O	O	O
6.	I expect my child to enroll in advanced courses to make him/her more competitive for university admission (e.g., Honors, AP, college level)	O	O	O	O	O	O

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PARENT SURVEY (page 3)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I expect my child to take the SAT or ACT assessments for university admission.	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. Children's success in school depends on my serving on school committees.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. I feel comfortable participating in school board meetings.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. My child's teachers invite me to meet with them to discuss my child's progress (e.g., conferences).	O	O	O	O	O	O
5. I feel comfortable joining a community group to improve the school.	O	O	O	O	O	O
6. My child's teachers regularly keep me informed about my child's academic performance.	O	O	O	O	O	O

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I believe that my child has the ability to study at a university.	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. It is the teacher's responsibility to contact me if my child is having difficulty learning at school.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. I feel comfortable contacting the school district if there is something I am unable to resolve at school.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. The school keeps me well informed about my rights and responsibilities.	O	O	O	O	O	O
5. I believe I have to participate in community or civic activities to improve our children's opportunities for success.	O	O	O	O	O	O
6. My child's teachers ask me to help my child with schoolwork.	O	O	O	O	O	O

How often have done the following activities during <u>the past year?</u>

	Never	Once	2-3 times	4-5 times	6-8 times	Regularly
1. I have talked with my child about our family's values and goals.	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. I have communicated with my child's teachers.	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. I have supervised or helped my child with homework.	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. I have served as a member of school committees.	O	O	O	O	O	O
5. I have visited colleges or universities with my child.	O	O	O	O	O	O

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PARENT SURVEY (page 5)

	Never	Once	2-3 times	4-5 times	6-8 times	Regularly
1. I have visited my child's classroom for at least 20 minutes.	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I have attended educational or cultural events with my child (e.g., arts, theater, concert, festival, ballet folklorico).	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. I have participated in activities in my community (townhall meetings, neighborhood associations, religious groups).	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. I have talked with teachers or counselor about my child's progress.	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I have met with the principal when I had a concern about my child or the school.	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. I assisted school staff with special activities (e.g., fieldtrips, fundraising).	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please complete the following information. Your responses will be <u>confidential</u>.

About the child:

1. What is the child's grade level?

○ K   ○ 1   ○ 2   ○ 3   ○ 4   ○ 5   ○ 6   ○ 7   ○ 8   ○ 9   ○ 10   ○ 11   ○ 12

2. What is your child's ethnicity?   ○ African-American   ○ Asian   ○ Latino   ○ White   ○ Other_____

3. Does the child receive free or reduced-price lunch at school?   ○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

4. What is the highest educational level you expect the child to achieve (Mark one only)?

○ Elementary School
○ Middle/Jr. High School
○ High School

○ Some post-secondary classes
○ Vocational training (e.g., mechanic, cosmetology)
○ Associate degree (community college)
○ Professional school (e.g., law, medicine, dentistry)

○ Bachelor's Degree (University)
○ Master's Degree
○ Doctorate

About you:

5. What is your relationship with the child?   ○ Father   ○ Mother   ○ Guardian   ○ Grandparent   ○ Other_____

6. What is your ethnicity?   ○ African-American   ○ Asian   ○ Latino   ○ White   ○ Other_____

7. What is your education level?
○ K-5 grade   ○ 6-8 grade   ○ 9-12 grade   ○ Some College   ○ Bachelor   ○ Master   ○ Doctorate   ○ Other_____

8. What is your current occupation? _____

Poway Unified School District Administrative Procedure 3.6.3
Copied with permission. Emphasis added.

POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**	**Originator:** Associate Superintendent **Issue No:** 12 **Date:** 12/15/06 **Page:** 1 of 3 **Reference:** EC 49066(b), 49067

ARTICLE: 3.0   EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
 	
         3.6   HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION
                      REQUIREMENTS	

SECTION 3.6.3   Grading

GPA Courses

1. Academic GPA courses will include all courses except Physical Education, Marching PE, School Services, Planning and Leadership (ASB), and Work Experience. Courses in the Regional Occupational Program will be included in GPA.

2. Eligibility GPA includes all courses.

3. Unweighted Academic GPA is calculated on a 4.0 scale for all courses except Physical Education, Marching PE, School Services, Planning and Leadership (ASB), and Work Experience. Unweighted Academic GPA includes Honors and Advanced Placement courses.

Pass/Fail

In order to allow students to take courses to enrich their high school experience without endangering their GPA, individual students may elect to take courses on a pass/fail basis. Each student may opt for only one pass/fail academic class per semester. Students must complete all pass/fail requests during the first **five** (5) school days of the semester. Students cannot apply for pass/fail for any courses on the a-g list of approved courses for the CSU/University of California. In summer session, requests must be completed during the first three (3) days of the session. A Pass grade will not be calculated in the student's GPA; however, an F will be calculated.

Incompletes

A student will be required to make up an incomplete within five (5) weeks after the receipt of the incomplete grade. If this incomplete is not removed within the time limit, the student will receive a grade as indicated by the teacher.

"W" on Course History

Withdrawal from a course made during the first twenty (20) school days of a semester, or the first ten (10) days of a term on a 4x4 schedule, will not appear on the report card or course history. Any withdrawal from a course initiated after the first twenty (20) school days of a semester will be designated by a WF. Exception to this procedure may occur only after review by the principal. If the principal concurs that a waiver should be granted, a grade of WP will be issued without unit credit. The principal's or designee's waiver shall only be exercised in cases where extreme circumstances appear to have been beyond the control of the student. A WF will be computed in the student's GPA.

Withdrawal from classes meeting two days per week must be made by the same twenty (20) school day date, not after 20/10 class meetings. Withdrawal from summer classes will not appear on the transcript.

Level Changes

In sequential courses, such as mathematics and foreign language, it is sometimes necessary for a student to be transferred to the next higher course or to the preceding course. These level changes should be made during the first twenty (20) school days of the semester, or the first ten (10) school days of a term at a 4x4 school. It is the responsibility of the teacher to diagnose students' capabilities and recommend changes when appropriate.

Grades to Leaving

When students transfer out of the school, teachers will assign "grades to leaving" which will be entered on the transcript as such.

Progress Notices

Because a "C" grade or better is needed for credit in terms of admission to college level work upon graduation, high schools will send progress reports to all students with a grade of C or lower at progress reporting times (generally after the first and second thirds of a semester). In addition, high schools will include the following statement to all students when sending progress reports and semester grades:

> "A student must have a grade of C or better in academic courses at the semester to meet college entrance requirements."

Parents of any student who is in danger of receiving an F grade shall be notified either in writing or through a documented conference whenever it becomes evident to the teacher that the pupil is in danger of failing a course. Such notification must be made to the parent long enough before the end of the semester so that the student has adequate time to achieve a passing grade in the course. A "D" grade or "in danger of failing" comment on the six-week and/or twelve-week report card serves as notification to parents that a student is in danger of receiving an F grade.

Grading of Advanced Placement and Honors Courses

The District wishes to encourage students to take demanding advanced academic courses in all fields; therefore, the grades in Advanced Placement taken at any grade level and designated courses will be counted on a scale of:

$$A = 5$$
$$B = 4$$
$$C = 3$$

In accordance with policies set by universities, a D grade will remain one and an F grade will be zero.

The classes to which this will apply are as follows:

AP Art History	AP Environmental Science 1-2
AP Biology 3-4	AP European History 1-2
AP Calculus AB 1-2	AP French 7-8, 9-10
AP Calculus BC 1-2	AP German 7-8, 9-10
AP Chemistry 3-4	AP Music Theory
AP Computer Science A 1-2	AP Physics B 1-2
AP Computer Science AB 1-2	AP Physics C 1A-1B
AP English Language 1-2	AP Physics C 2A-2B
AP English Literature 1-2	AP Psychology 1-2

AP Spanish 7-8, 9-10	AP Studio Art Drawing 1-2
AP Statistics	AP U.S. History 1-2
AP Studio Art 2D Design 1-2	AP US Government and Politics 1-2
AP Studio Art 3D Design 1-2	Honors Survey of American Literature 1-2

The 5-point scale will be awarded to transfer students in accordance with Administrative Procedure Section 3.7.1.

All other classes, including honors classes, will be graded on a 4-point scale. The classes which will be designated on student transcripts as honors classes include the following:

Honors Algebra 3-4	Honors Pre-Calculus 3-4
Honors French 7-8 (WHS)	Honors Spanish 3-4
Honors Geometry 1-2	Honors Spanish 5-6
Honors High School English 1-2	Honors Spanish 7-8 (WHS)
Honors Humanities 1-2	Honors World History 1-2 (WHS)

Grade Changes

In accordance with Education Code 49066(b), the grade given for any course shall be determined by the teacher and that grade, in the absence of clerical and mechanical mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency, shall be final.

The principal or designee shall not order a student's grade to be changed unless the teacher who determined the grade is, to the extent practicable, given an opportunity to state orally, or in writing, or both, the reasons for which the grade was given and is included, to the extent practicable, in all discussions relating to the changing of the grade.

Repeat Courses

Students may repeat the identical course to improve knowledge or grade; however, credit may only be earned for a course once, with the exception of those noted as repeatable (Administrative Procedure 3.6.2). The effect of the lower grade will be removed from the cumulative GPA. The higher grade will be calculated for GPA. All grades will remain on the transcript.

Poway Unified School District Board Policy 5.28 and Administrative Procedure 5.28.1
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POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD POLICY

Originator: Asst. Superintendent, LSS
Issue No: 2
Date: 2/11/08
Page: 1 of 1
Reference: EC 200 *et seq.*, 48900.3;
Article 1, Section 28(c)
California Constitution

ARTICLE: 5.0   STUDENT PERSONNEL

SECTION   5.28   HATE HARASSMENT AND HATE BEHAVIOR

The Governing Board affirms the right of every student to learn in an environment free from harassment and hate-motivated behavior. It is the commitment of the District to provide a safe and harmonious learning environment for our students. Behavior or statements that degrade, intimidate, harass, and/or harm an individual or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, physical/mental attributes, or religious beliefs or practices will not be tolerated.

Pursuant to Education Code 200 *et seq.*, schools have an affirmative obligation to combat bias as well as a responsibility to provide equal educational opportunity that supports human dignity and equality. The California Department of Education defines hate-motivated behavior as an act, or attempted act, motivated by hostility toward a victim's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, immigrant status, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, or any other physical or cultural characteristic. Some hate-motivated behavior may also be a crime as defined in state or federal law.

Any student who feels that he/she is a victim of harassment or hate-motivated behavior shall report it to a teacher, administrator, or other school district adult. If the student believes that the situation has not been remedied, he/she may file a complaint in accordance with district complaint procedures.

Staff who receive notice of hate-motivated behavior, or personally observe such behavior, shall notify the principal or supervisor. The principal, principal's designee, or supervisor shall report this to law enforcement.

Students demonstrating harassment or hate-motivated behavior shall be subject to discipline in accordance with Board policy and administrative procedure.

Elements of this policy and its administrative procedure will be integrated into existing school plans, such as the school safety and staff development plans. The administrative procedures address training for students and staff and other elements to support this policy.

POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	Originator: Asst. Superintendent, LSS
	Issue No: 3
	Date: 2/11/08
ARTICLE: 5.0 STUDENT PERSONNEL	Page: 1 of 3
	Reference: EC 200 *et seq.*; PC 422.55;
5.28 HATE HARASSMENT AND HATE BEHAVIOR	Article 1, Section 28(c) California Constitution

SECTION 5.28.1 Hate Harassment and Hate Behavior

Scope

This Administrative Procedure applies to all allegations of hate-motivated behaviors and criminal actions toward any student in the academic environment of Poway Unified School District, including allegations relating to school sponsored activities. Any student, or person on behalf of any student, who believes a student has been the victim of hate-motivated behavior should be referred to this administrative procedure.

Definition of Hate-Motivated Behavior

Poway Unified School District Board Policy, supported by the California statute, defines hate-motivated behavior as an act, or attempted act, motivated by hostility toward a victim's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, immigrant status, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, or any other physical or cultural characteristic. Hate-motivated behavior is elevated to a criminal act, defined as hate violence by the California Education Code Section 200.3 and section 422.55 of the California Penal Code.

Disciplinary Actions Involving Hate-Motivated Harassment and Behavior

Factors to Consider

The determination of hate-motivated behavior is assessed from the point of view of a reasonable person of the alleged victim's position and takes into account the totality of circumstances.

Factors to consider in all cases may include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Nature and seriousness of the incident

b. Frequency of the offensive conduct

c. Age of the perpetrator

d. Physically threatening or humiliating conduct

e. Context in which the incident occurred

f. Relationship between the parties

g. Impact on victim

Hate violence as defined in California Education Code 200.3 and California Penal Code Section 422.55

For incidents involving hate violence as defined in California Education Code 200.3 and California Penal Code Section 422.55, suspension or expulsion will be imposed upon the first offense.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

▪ Assault, threatened assault, battery, or bodily injury.

Issue 2: 7/28/97

- Activities historically associated with threats of hostility toward an individual's actual or perceived protected characteristics (e.g., burning crosses, nooses, wearing or posting swastikas, wearing white sheets, hanging effigies, defacing symbols or images associated with a protected status).
- Racial slurs, name calling, and bigoted epithets used in association with an intention to inflict injury and or damage.
- The presence of organized group literature and/or posters which reference an organized hate group with an intention to present a threatening message or hostile educational environment.

Hate-motivated intimidation, harassment, remarks, and actions that create a hostile learning environment, absent of physical threat or criminal action

For incidents involving hate-motivated intimidation, harassment, remarks, and actions that create a hostile learning environment, absent of physical threat, and/or criminal act, suspension may be imposed upon the first offense.

Expulsion may be imposed when (1) other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct, or (2) it is determined the student's presence causes a danger to persons or property or threatens to disrupt the instructional process.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Name calling, racial slurs, or bigoted epithets (in absence of a physical threat).
- The posting and circulation of demeaning jokes, or caricatures based on negative stereotypes of persons.
- Harassment based upon an actual or perceived protected status which degrades an individual or negatively affects the individual's learning environment.
- The presence of drawings or words considered offensive, such as graffiti, slurs, paintings, or printed clothing.
- The defacing, removal, or destruction of posted materials, meeting places, memorials, etc.
- Repeated insensitive or inappropriate remarks which continue after corrective or disciplinary action have been implemented by the school.

Insensitive or inappropriate remarks and behavior

For incidents involving insensitive or inappropriate remarks which are absent of hostility or malice, schools will provide guidance and/or appropriate support services to the victim, as well as take appropriate corrective or disciplinary action for students exhibiting inappropriate behavior.

Suspension may be imposed when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Demeaning statements or degrading language stated between students in a manner wholly without malice.

Dissemination, Reporting, and Response Procedures

1. Annually, each school will provide students with age-appropriate instruction as to the definitions and examples of hate behavior and the steps to be taken to report such behaviors, whether directed at them or observed toward others. A well-publicized and accessible process for reporting hate behavior will be available to students.

2.   Annually, each school will provide parents with a copy of the Board Policy and Administrative Procedure regarding Hate Harassment and Hate Behavior.

3.   Staff will be provided training regarding identifying, reporting, and responding to hate-motivated behavior. This will include the need to report to their supervisor or principal all instances which have been reported to them or observed.

4.   Supervisors and principals are required to report incidents involving suspension or recommended expulsion for hate-motivated behavior to the district office and to law enforcement.

5.   The response to reports of hate-behavior shall include timely investigation, assurance of protection for the victim, notification of the victim's parents or guardians, and, as appropriate, disciplinary action for the perpetrator.

6.   If the victim believes that the situation has not been remedied, he/she may file a complaint in accordance with district complaint procedures for discrimination or sexual harassment.

Educational and Other Programs

1.   The district shall create and support programs for students and staff which are designed to promote understanding and appreciation of diversity, to instill the principles of justice and a comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship and the meaning of equality and human dignity, including promotion of harmonious relations. These programs will also focus on fostering an environment that encourages pupils to realize their full potential, creates a school environment that is free from discriminatory attitudes, practices, or events, and prevents acts of hate behavior, hate-related harassment, and hate violence.

2.   The district shall create and foster an environment that is free from discriminatory attitudes and activities in order to prevent acts of hate violence.

3.   The district shall adopt instructional materials which reflect diversity and discourage hate violence.

4.   Each school shall undertake activities that address and discourage hate behavior and harassment.

5.   The district shall provide appropriate support services to the victims of hate behavior. Additionally, along with appropriate disciplinary consequences, the district shall provide appropriate support services and training for students exhibiting hate-motivated behavior.

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