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Perceived Teacher Preparation for Managing Parental Involvement in Parochial High Schools in a South Louisiana Catholic Diocese

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PERCEIVED TEACHER PREPARATION FOR MANAGING PARENTAL
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I dedicate this dissertation to my father and my Aunt Maggie who are not here to see this work come to fruition. Both believed in me unconditionally and I know they would be proud. I also dedicate this work to my two beautiful daughters, Jeanne Avery and Kate. When the world seems to be hopeless and dark, you remind me of all that is right in the world. Your spirit, character and accomplishments inspire me to continue to become a better version of myself every day. Always know that I am your biggest fan and I so appreciate you also being mine!

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to determine the perceived level of preparedness for managing parental involvement and the source of that preparation among secondary teachers in parochial high schools in a south Louisiana Catholic diocese. The target population of the study was secondary parochial school teachers in Louisiana. The accessible population was secondary parochial high school teachers in one Catholic Diocese in south Louisiana. Data were collected using a survey design. Key findings indicate that most of the participants held a bachelor's degree and that most obtained their preparation for dealing with parental involvement on their own through experience. Teachers felt generally well-prepared for managing parental involvement. However, some areas, especially Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents, Field Trip Volunteer Activities, and Classroom Volunteer Activities were exceptions.

Additionally, most teachers attributed their level of preparation to experience, with preservice preparation identified as the source of preparation least often. Consistent with these findings, years of experience and age were found to be the factors that explained overall preparedness. According to this sample, undergraduate teacher education programs may be lacking curriculum that prepares new teachers for parental involvement. This conclusion lays the foundation for the recommendation that State Departments of Education should include, as a certification requirement, content in teacher preparation curricula on how to effectively work with parents.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Rationale for the Study

Quality of education is critical for success in today's society. Decades of research exists on the topic of improving education. A search on 'improving educational outcomes' yields hundreds of studies spanning the last century. In 1940, Herrick expanded knowledge about student learning, teaching methods, and school administration and evaluation programs (Herrick, 1940). More than 40 years later, Walberg (1984) synthesized research on student, instructional and environmental factors for improving productivity in U.S. schools (Walberg, 1984). In 1998, Zellman & Waterman continued the quest for improving educational quality with a focus on school accountability (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). In 2014, Parkay, Anctil, and Hass compiled a book of readings for developing quality education addressing issues such as standards, testing and assessment and providing articles, case studies and essays to guide school leaders in planning quality educational programs (Parkay et al., 2014). These four examples demonstrate that the quest for raising the quality of education in the United States spans a large period of time, and is necessary and relevant to this day.

Researchers have studied differentiating factors around the definition of quality in education. While several factors may contribute to quality education, in one particular study the researcher concluded that among the major influences on student learning, quality of schools and teachers was a prime influence (Heyneman & Loxley, 1983). In another study, Fibkins (1985) focused on what makes a middle school excellent, and identified several contributing factors (Fibkins, 1985). Some of these factors included staff loyalty, excellent use of resources, opportunities for professional development, pride in the program and high parental involvement (Fibkins, 1985).

Teacher experience was identified by Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine (1996) as having meaningful effects on student achievement (Whitehurst, 2002). Another factor found to influence quality of education is teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness varies due to a number of factors including general intelligence, level of experience, and mastery of content (Whitehurst, 2002).

Another factor that has been found to influence teacher effectiveness is parental involvement because parental involvement in education is generally seen as a positive behavior and parents are encouraged to actively participate. Support for this assertion is found in research of the K-12 literature that reveals that parental involvement is generally recognized as essential to a student's development and education (Epstein, 1986; Jeynes, 2007; Shoup, Gonyea & Kuh, 2009). Also serving as evidence of this claim, federal, state and local funding has been allocated for parental involvement initiatives as evidenced by the No Child Left Behind Act which included requirements for funding toward programs related to parent involvement and parent partnership programs (Shoup et al., 2009). Over the last decade, marked increases in parental involvement have occurred for several reasons. Parental involvement may also reflect a characteristic of today's society where a trend of parent over-involvement and overprotection is observed. This phenomenon has been labeled "helicopter parenting," a behavior marked by a parent's over-involvement or hovering to a point that may inhibit development, and is becoming more pervasive in the family-school relationship (Shoup et al., 2009, p.3).

Berger (1991) compiled a historical view of parent involvement in education and from it one can see that since the earliest of times, it has been widely understood and accepted that parents are a child's first teachers. "Parents have always been viewed by society as occupying a central role in their children's education" (Barge & Loges, 2015, p. 140). Going all the way back

to Greek society, children were seen as the future and guardians of the culture. Plato and Aristotle described developmental attributes of children and maintained that the care given by adults had lasting impacts on the child. This perspective is like that of John Locke's representation children a tabula rasa…and the school of thought that the purpose of education in early Greek society was for the good of the state, not necessarily the family (Berger, 1991). As a society, efforts toward a common agreement regarding parental involvement and its importance during elementary and secondary school years have been attempted (Bogenschneider, 1997; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Marcon, 1998).

Since the parent has played the role of teacher since birth, when a child reaches school age, there is an inherent conflict of roles between parent and the school teacher. The dynamic between parent and teacher is one that should not be overlooked as the result could be an unnecessary power struggle instead of a productive partnership. Traditionally, power relationships within schools were organized hierarchically. Teachers and administrators typically maintain a position superior to the parent and the parent maintains a position above the child (Barge & Loges, 2003). There has been a power shift in the school system whereby parents have usurped the power traditionally held by teachers and administrators. Teachers may resist parent involvement in an effort to maintain the power shift in their favor.

Effective use of parental involvement can contribute quality to a child's educational growth. In the elementary and secondary education arena, it is accepted that good teacher – family relationships are strong enough to weather challenges that come with conflicts, as well as offer a platform to solve problems (Epstein, 1986). Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed (2002) reported that academic performance is influenced by involved parents who attend school activities, help with homework and stay on top of their progress. However, many teachers are not

equipped to effectively manage parental involvement. While much research exists reinforcing the essential role of parents in their child's education, pre-service programs are not generally preparing teachers for parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002). Negative teacher attitudes toward excessive and inappropriate parental involvement behaviors are "perhaps due to the fact that they have not received adequate instruction in how to foster parental involvement" (Lazar et al., 1999). Several educational scholars have expressed concerns that the potential exists for parents to exhibit behaviors of over-involvement where their child's education is concerned and this excess may have impeded student development on both academic and social levels (Epstein, 1986; Lewis & Foreman, 2002).

The parent perspective is also important to consider when evaluating this topic. Parent attitudes regarding feeling their involvement is unwelcome are likely due to lack of communication and understanding. "The less anxious parents are, the more likely they are to support their child's growth in appropriate and meaningful ways – and the less likely they are to intervene inappropriately" (Coburn, 2006, p.11). This anxiety could be mitigated with targeted parent programs regarding this issue. Parents who possess at least a basic understanding of student development tend to be more accepting of a school's philosophy of allowing a child to resolve their problems independently without contacting parents on every issue (Coburn, 2006).

There are several components to parental involvement and multiple studies have classified types of parent involvement. Common among the lists include involving the parent as teacher of their own child, classroom volunteer, co-learner, advocate, supporters of activities, decision maker and audience (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Later research conducted by Park and Holloway (2013) identified parent involvement activities specific to adolescent education including; homework involvement, school-based involvement and educational/college planning

(Park & Holloway, 2013). While teachers may be trained and equipped to teach the subject matter in their respective disciplines of study, many questions have been raised about if and where a teacher receives training in how to navigate parental involvement and effectively use it to the child's greatest benefit.

Statement of the Problem

In today's society, the issue of education and a parent's role in it has changed from what it once was just a few decades ago. Government involvement through the No Child Left Behind Act attempted to address the lack of parental involvement among some factions of US families. However, this call for involvement may have tipped the scales in the other direction for those families who were already playing a significant role in their child's education. There is a plethora of research on the need for more parent involvement among lower socioeconomic classes while there is a paucity of research to understand the same dynamic in the private school domain. Social class was found to be responsible for disparate resources among parents and their ability to fulfill teacher requests for participation (Lareau, 1987), while Hill and Taylor (2004) asserted that parents with low socioeconomic status consistently faced more obstacles to involvement due to reasons such as conflicting work schedules, lack of resources, transportation issues, elevated stress, and limited education (Hill & Taylor, 2004). There is a consistent theme in educational literature, that parental involvement is more important among the socioeconomic disadvantaged (Hango, 2007). It is often heard that teachers worry about the parents they never see, but the ones who show up faithfully present their own range of challenges. With this study, the researcher aims to add to the body of knowledge about the level of preparedness in the area of developing and managing parental involvement and the source of this preparation among high school teachers in private schools in Louisiana.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement and the source of that preparation among secondary teachers in private high schools in Louisiana.

Objectives

Several objectives will be pursued in this study:

1. To describe secondary private school teachers in Louisiana on selected personal and professional characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

2. To determine level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

3. To determine the source of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

4. To determine if a relationship exists between the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana and selected demographic characteristics including:

a. Gender;

b. Age;

c. Years of teaching experience;

d. Education level;

e. Teacher certification;

  i. Type of Certification Program;

  ii. Intent to work toward certification;

f. Subject matter taught.

5. To determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana from selected personal and professional demographic characteristics including:

a. Gender;

b. Age;

c. Years of teaching experience;

d. Education level;

e. Teacher certification;

  i. Type of Certification Program;

  ii. Intent to work toward certification;

f. Subject matter taught.

Definition of Terms

An exploration into what contributes to quality education yields several critical factors. One important factor is parental involvement in a child's education. Child development is

molded and influenced by the family, especially in the first few years (Katz & Bauch, 1999). In preparation for answering the questions regarding teacher preparation for parental involvement and discovering the sources of that preparation, parental involvement must first be defined. In the context of this study *parental involvement* is defined as participation and support from parents/families in school activities and functions producing positive results affecting their education (Epstein, 2005; Henderson, & Mapp, 2002).

The concept of parental involvement is defined and operationalized in various ways throughout the literature. While research on the topic spans several decades, the importance of parental involvement remains relatively undisputed. The most prominent researcher in the field of family-school relations, Joyce Epstein, conducted several studies in the 1980's and 1990's which provide a foundation for most of the research conducted since (Patte, 2011). Epstein developed a framework which identifies six types of parental involvement in education: "parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community" (Seitsinger, Felner, Brand, & Burns, 2008, p. 478). The operationalization of Epstein's model of family-school partnership involves parenting being a shared responsibility.

The school can provide the parent with useful information and resources regarding health, nutrition, discipline, safety, and other skills. Communication is a 2-way channel of information sharing in which the school uses various modes of communication to inform parents of school activities and student progress. Volunteering as a parental involvement activity involves the school making effective use of parent's time and talents toward improving the quality of education and student experience. Learning at home is an activity in which schools equip parents with skills necessary to better assist their child with learning activities related to the curriculum. Regarding decision making, schools solidify the partnership by soliciting parent

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input on decisions and including them on committees. Collaborating with community implies that the school facilitates connections with government, church and civic organization resources that can assist with and support student success (Epstein, 2002).

Significance of the Study

The value of this study lies in the contribution to the existing body of research in the area of education, parental involvement and teacher preparation for productive parental involvement. Specifically, the study expands the research by focusing on teachers in private high schools in Louisiana which is a demographic found to be relatively unexamined to date.

This researcher suspects that teachers are unprepared for what they face in practice related to parental involvement. If the findings of this study reveal that the teachers surveyed do indeed feel unprepared, this knowledge can inform pre-service and in-service curricula and programs to fill that void. If the findings reveal that the teachers surveyed feel prepared, perhaps more research is needed to explain the common perception from previous research that teacher education programs are not adequately preparing teachers in this area. The information yielded from this study will serve to inform program content for preservice as well as in-service teachers.

The findings will expand the body of knowledge available to interested teachers, parents, school leaders, and curriculum developers as they look for ways to improve the quality of education in the future. This issue is sure to become more prominent due to changing societal behaviors regarding parents' involvement in their children's education, making this research more relevant, not less, going forward.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Outcomes in Education

Researchers continue to uncover relationships between influencing factors on educational outcomes in an effort to guide efforts toward success. There are many metrics for educational outcomes depending on the context being evaluated. Reading and math scores are frequently used in assessing teacher effectiveness and student achievement for lower grades (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Standardized test scores are typically used as the objective metric for high school students (Dee & Jacob, 2011). Other than test scores, other outcomes serve as measures of student achievement. Among them are student achievement with indicators such as grade point average, awards and scholarships, college acceptance rates and job placement after graduation (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005).

Non-objective outcomes include graduation rates and college enrollment rates (Stronge et al., 2011). School attendance is another non-test outcome but is among the measures seen to be important for student and school success (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011). Hiatt-Michael (2001) lists several other measurable factors that researchers typically measure when assessing student and school success including promotion to next grade level, increased satisfaction levels among students and parents with the school, and reduction in negative behavior reports (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

History of Parental Involvement in Education

Since the earliest of times, education of children was traditionally seen as the responsibility of the parents but evolved as the U.S. public school system matured (Hiatt-Michael, 1994). A chronicle of parental involvement in education, compiled by Berger (1991), details the shifts in the amount of control and involvement shared by parents and schools over

time. From Egyptian civilization as early as 3787 B.C to Greek society in 347 B.C. to the Middle Ages through 400 A.D, the parents, especially the mother, served as the first educator of the child and had the strongest influence over their development and character development. In the 17th century, John Locke reinforced the importance of parents in child development. However, he introduced the idea that disadvantaged children should be placed in working schools at age 3 and later learn a trade because their parents were unable to raise them properly (Berger, 1991).

The concept of kindergarten, which included a component of parent involvement, increased in the U.S. between 1870 and 1890 as did parent education. Immigration also affected education in the U.S., and John Locke's ideas regarding education intervention where families are unable to fulfill this responsibility, re-emerged with settlement homes for immigrant children. Additional support systems formed by the 1880's, including the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Their work included the study of child education, and the first Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA) (Berger, 1991). Schlossman (1976) chronicles the history of the PTA and points out that it was the first parent-education organization of its kind. It rallied mothers around the common cause of better education for their children, while serving as a vehicle for schools to shape expectations and educate parents as well. The PTA remains one of the most viable vehicles that a school has for dissemination of important content, communication and outreach to parents to this day.

The early 1900's gave rise to increased research in universities, federal programs, and media focus on childhood education. The 1920's brought about less emphasis on immigrant mainstreaming and more parent programs that served the middle-class. PTA membership grew exponentially over the next decade. More research and writings were available on education, and more specifically parents' role in education. External environmental factors, like the financial

crash of 1929, have impacted the momentum of the parent education movement. Various agencies were created to assist families during the Depression. Another external factor with tremendous impact on parental roles in education was the war effort in the 1940's. Child care services were necessary so mothers could work. The 1950's post-war era re-emphasized the family and more guidance through writings of Benjamin Spock and Erik Erikson were available to parents on the rearing of children. The civil rights movement began in the 1950's and court decisions resulted in integrated schooling. The impact resulting from school desegregation was that power shifted from parents to school administrators. A decade later, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 further recognized and attempted to enforce equal rights and promote fairness in the U.S. Berger identifies three major changes in education at this time: the beginning of the Head Start program, a view toward cultural diversity, and a move toward support for the whole family (Berger, 1991).

One of the more significant contributions from the 1970's was Title I which required parent participation on boards as well as provided for parent education for working collaboratively with school staff. More research on this topic was conducted in the 1980's resulting in confirmation that parents are indeed important to school success (Berger, 1991). The early two thousands are marked by the accountability requirements prescribed in the No Child Left Behind Act which focused heavily on school assessment using test scores. Parent involvement remained a factor that influenced school success, among others, and research continued to offer guidance for parent-teacher collaboration and school-community partnership (Epstein, 2005).

While this chronology explains the pendulum shift over time regarding parent involvement in education, Hiatt-Michael (1994) points out that it is felt by some that parent

control has been usurped by educational institutions and has left children and families at a disadvantage. Parents are demanding that their preferences are reflected in education legislation and court rulings that establish precedent affecting changes to bureaucracy in schools (Hiatt-Michael, 1994). All signs indicate that this trend, that of parents advocating for their rights regarding their child's education through appealing to school administrators, legislators and the courts, will continue and will likely be the most successful catalyst for change.

Pros and Cons of Parental Involvement

Teachers have many relationships to master in their profession including those with students, administrators, fellow staff, as well as parents. Understandably, they have strong positions on the matter of parental involvement. Parental assistance is seen as a necessity by some and a threat by others. Epstein (1986) posits two opposing positions regarding the relations between schools and families.

One view emphasizes collaboration and cooperation between teachers and parents and encourages communication. A model of shared concern for the child's development, both socially and educationally, is promoted (Epstein, 1986). In the spirit of this philosophy, many studies have uncovered expected, perceived and/or realized benefits of parental involvement. Of the many benefits identified, increased learning by the student and assisting slower students to stay on level (Epstein & Becker, 1982), positive results for students and elevated satisfaction for teachers and parents (Epstein, 2005) are notable positive outcomes. Additional advantages noted by Patte (2011) include: an elevation in student achievement scores; growth in student attendance; a reduction of student dropouts; positive progress in student motivation, self-esteem, and behavior; resulting in increased parent and community support of the school. Patte (2011) summarized 10 positive outcomes: "1) parental involvement including higher academic

achievement, 2) student sense of well-being, 3) better student school attendance, 4) better student and parent perception of classroom and school climate, 5) positive student attitudes and behaviors, 6) student readiness to do homework, 7) increased student time spent with parents, 8) better student grades, 9) higher education aspirations among students and parents, and 10) increased parent satisfaction with teachers" (Patte, 2011, p.145).

The opposing philosophy espoused by Epstein (1986) highlighted the conflict and competition between schools and families and suggested the separation of the two roles. Some teachers reported negative feelings about parental involvement including the amount of time necessary to prepare parent activities and whether it is worth the trouble, few rewards to teachers for investing time and energy with parents; skepticism about the value of parent engagement activities, issues with dependability of volunteers, low commitment, differing goals and values, parent lack of training in teaching methods and approaches, lack of parental control over children (Epstein & Becker, 1982); increased contact with parents increases teachers' responsibilities; and the expectation to develop leadership skills for working with parents (Chavkin, 1988).

Philipsen (1996) reported results from a study indicating that high levels of parent engagement did not necessarily result in positive relations between the school and community. Disgruntled, vocal parents were are often viewed as threatening by teachers and administrators, strengthening the point that parent involvement is actually shaped by parent-school relations rather than the converse (Philipsen, 1996). Epstein and Becker (1982) also noted that "differences in teachers' opinions reflect three perspectives on parent-school relations: (1) parents care but cannot do much to help the school or their children in actual learning; (2) parents care but should not help with school learning; (3) parents care and can be of great help if they are shown how to help" (Epstein & Becker, 1982, p. 111). Ogawa (1998) made a valid

observation questioning the assertion that more parental involvement is always better. He suggested that care must be taken to balance the right kinds and amount of parental involvement in order to achieve the desired outcomes (Ogawa, 1998). Negative effects are recorded when programs for parent-school relations are not designed or implemented as well as they could be (Addi-Raccah, 2000).

Ultimately, teachers have been seen and have seen themselves as the experts in education. Following the traditional model of school governance, an expected teacher attitude is that of feeling they rightfully deserve more autonomy and control in school than parents (Todd & Higgins, 1998). Many teachers perceive parental involvement as a persistent power struggle and a negative force to be reckoned with, representing extra energy and effort to maintain. This extra energy is viewed as stressful on an already taxing workload held by teachers (Epstein J. L. & Becker, 1982). Lasky (2000) juxtaposes the perspective of parents who can at times feel frustrated and demeaned by teachers to the perspective of teachers who deal with parents yelling unreasonable demands. She also points out the joy a parent can feel from a teacher who works to bring out the best in their child as well as the teacher who acknowledges the supportive parent who volunteers. All of these references serve as evidence of different perspectives among parents and teachers regarding their respective roles in the education of the child. There can clearly be an inherent struggle when teachers feel criticized about how they do their job and when parents feel they should have a voice (Lasky, 2000).

Research into why parents do not get involved with their child's school reveals a variety of reasons. Eccles & Harold (1993) posits that for working parents with busy schedules, opportunities to attend school activities may be few. Some parents feel inadequate and that they have little to contribute due to their own limited education. Simply not comprehending what is

being asked of them can also be a factor. But probably most significant is the history of negative experiences that has widened the family-school divide. If parents do not feel welcomed, they will avoid engagement and interaction (Eccles & Harold, 1993).

Conceptual Framework Regarding Parental Involvement

Positive outcomes in education are inarguably a primary goal for schools and families alike. When a child finishes high school, one expects he will be prepared for life after graduation regardless if his chosen path leads to college or the workforce. Much research is available on a variety of outcomes in the area of education. Among them are student achievement with indicators such as grade point average, test scores, awards and scholarships, college acceptance rates and job placement after graduation (Darling-Hammond,et al., 2005).

Interpretation of existing research shows that these outcomes are influenced by several factors. How prepared teachers are to achieve those results is one. Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) has contributed much to the study of teacher quality and student achievement. Her findings point to teacher preparation and certification as having a strong correlation to student achievement in math and reading. Further, in a separate study, she reports significant evidence for the argument that teachers with more preparation ultimately display more confidence and achieve more success with students as compared to teachers with little or no preparation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). It is, however, important to remember, as Cochran-Smith (2005) points out, "there are often substantial time lags between the teacher preparation period and the eventual measures of pupils' achievement or other outcomes" (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 303). She further reports several research studies proving that value added research is possible. One such study was conducted by Louisiana's Teacher Quality Initiative and it measured student

growth in achievement associating that measure to where and how teachers attained their preparation (Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Teachers need to be well-prepared for their professions in a number of important areas. They must become experts in the subject matter that they are entrusted to impart to their students. While it may be an obvious assumption that teachers should be adequately prepared in the subjects they are hired to teach, research in teacher education has not focused on the development of subject matter knowledge (Ball & McDiarmid, 1989). However, interest in the area of teacher preparation for subject matter has gained visibility due to a growing interest in increasing quality of teacher education programs (Lederman, Gess-Newsome, & Latz, 1994). As this focus increases, recommendations for improved teachers' subject matter preparation emerge. One such recommendation includes a sharper focus on which courses should be required for elementary and secondary teachers to be considered qualified. There is also a broadening of the idea of what constitutes teacher preparation. Focusing only on a teacher's university education, excludes the contribution of the 13 years of learning experienced before college and how it likely contributes to a teacher's subject matter expertise (Ball & McDiarmid, 1989).

The discussion of teacher preparation is incomplete without mentioning the fact that a shortage of teachers in this country has resulted in a growing number of unqualified teachers in the classroom, especially in low socioeconomic areas. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001attempted to address the perceived injustice that the majority of underqualified and inexperienced teachers were teaching poorer students. All teachers are expected to have a four year degree, state certification and be competent in the subject matter so that every student has access to qualified teachers so that all students are taught by high quality teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

NCLB also addressed the issue of subject matter preparation for teachers by defining highly qualified teachers by their subject matter preparation. Wiseman (2012) highlights the debate related to the function of content and pedagogy in which schools of education began focusing on subject matter preparation and assessing future teachers on content at the expense of pedagogical preparation (Wiseman, 2012). Since research was scarce related to the appropriate balance of pedagogy and content, a debate on this topic continues.

Teachers must also be trained in teaching methods and classroom management. Teacher education has a noted impact on how prepared teachers feel in the classroom. Teacher preparation programs formalize exposure to positive strategies for motivating students and encouraging positive participation and behavior (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Without such exposure, untrained teachers are at a disadvantage as they find their way by trial and error. Cochran, King, & DeRuiter (1991) introduces the concept of pedagogical content knowledge to explain the integration of teachers' subject matter knowledge and their pedagogical knowledge. He asserts that when teacher preparation programs can be delivered in cooperation by subject specialists, pedagogical experts and experienced teachers and evaluated accurately, the goal of best preparing teachers might be achieved (Cochran et al., 1991).

While certainly a softer skill, student motivation strategies are also an important skill that teachers must acquire through their training. Perhaps it can be attributed to being more of an art than a science, but there are certainly teachers who are able to reach and motivate students more than others. A look at the research on how and why some students are able to learn and succeed while others cannot, reveals the role of motivation (Pintrich, 2003). Teachers highly skilled in a subject matter area, but unable to reach students and solicit the needed motivational response are not as effective as trained, certified teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

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A lesser studied dimension of teacher preparedness, but one that can heavily influence outcomes when unattended, is that of teacher preparation for managing parental engagement and involvement. "Parent involvement is now recognized as one of the most critical factors influencing student achievement… inviting parent involvement is now one of the expectations for teachers, and is a primary concern for those who educate and support teachers" (Lazar, Broderick, Mastrilli, & Slostad, 1999, p.5). School-family partnership has gained attention over the past few decades as an important factor in education that cannot be ignored. The seminal study related to teacher education for parent involvement was performed by Chavkin and Williams (1988) who assert that it is widely accepted that teachers need a toolbox of skills for involving parents in their child's education, but few education curricula focus on these skills.

A fact that surfaces when exploring how teachers might acquire the necessary preparation for a productive relationship with parents, is that not all teachers are formally trained. Teacher shortages over the years have resulted in numbers of untrained teachers entering the profession via alternative pathways. Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) explored different pathways of teacher education and their findings indicate teacher education programs produced teachers who felt more prepared across many areas of teaching than those entering without preparation or through alternative programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

For the purpose of this study, attention will be placed on three particular modes of instruction; pre-service training, in-service training and life experiences. All three will apply to formally trained teachers and the latter two apply to non-formally trained teachers. While comparing the various modes of instruction, it is worthy of note that formal teacher education programs are questioned in the literature regarding whether they make a measurable contribution to student achievement. Brownell, Ross, Colon, & McCallum (2005) present both the argument

for formal teacher education, with positive influence on student achievement, and against, that they make no contribution to student achievement and discourage prospective entrants to the profession (Brownell et al, 2005). Cochran-Smith (2005) asserts that "research comparing the impact of different types of teacher education programs and pathways (4-year to 5-year programs, traditional – alternative routes) does not point to the superiority of any one path" (Cochran-Smith et al, 2005, p.302).

Knowing that teachers enter the profession by various means, pre-service training through formal teacher education programs was explored first. Pre-service training that students receive through their formal teacher education curricula in college encompasses a broad body of content. Chavkin and Williams (1988) provided a prototype for parent involvement training and identified several pre-service issues including: the preparation of content and materials, the decision whether the course will be elective or required, certification issues, and assessment of effectiveness (Chavkin & Williams, 1988).

Until the early 2000's, there were only a few pre-service teacher education programs that included standards for inclusion of courses or content for family involvement issues (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Some states were beginning to include requirements that teachers acquire skills and knowledge regarding parent and community involvement. Hiatt-Michael (2001) summarizes a relevant study sponsored by Pepperdine University in which 147 universities with teacher education programs were surveyed. An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that topics regarding parent involvement were integrated into various teacher education courses. Examples of such courses include instructional methods, early childhood education, and special education with the topic most covered being parent conferences. Parent concerns and parent newsletters also made the list. Case studies were frequently utilized among other instructional

methods such as "research studies, role playing, and conflict resolution" among others (Hiatt-Michael, 2001, p.2).

Lazar et al. (1999) expressed concern that the lack of addressing parent involvement in teacher education programs essentially communicates that it is not important. This omission leaves a void in their skillset to effectively manage parental involvement. These researchers conducted a survey to explore this question and found that only 45% of secondary teachers received information on parental involvement in their training, however, most of them did so on their own by reading available literature and asking questions of colleagues (Lazar et al., 1999).

Recommendations by prominent researchers in the field such as Hiatt-Michael provide guidance for university faculty to include use of case studies, role-playing, visits with master teachers to observe parent conferences, instruction on preparation of classroom newsletters, plus activities related to participation in a school advisory council (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Epstein (2001) asserted that, at a minimum, one course related to school-family partnerships should be included in teacher preparation programs and be regarded in similar importance to core subjects such as reading and math. Abel (2014) supports the assertion that new teachers need practical experience with parent engagement in order to be more effective using such practices long term. She further concluded that if teachers have positive attitudes regarding parental involvement, they are more likely able to be more effective with parents who are through to be harder to reach due to level of education, age, work schedules and being new to the school (Abel, 2014).

Bofferding, Kastberg, and Hoffman (2016) studied a program offered to preservice teachers in which they engaged with parents at a family mathematics night event. Interpretation of their findings indicate positive results regarding increased confidence and understanding of working with families and how that translates to a resource to positively influence their teaching

(Bofferding et al., 2016). As recent as 2017, this topic is still being explored. D'Haem and Griswold (2017) studied the opinions of teacher educators and student teachers regarding preparation for working with families and found both have concerns about working with parents and the resulting challenges from those interactions (D'Haem & Griswold, 2017).

Another way teachers become prepared for parental involvement is through in-service training programs while on the job. However, if pre-service teacher education programs are not readying new teachers before they step into the classroom, there will be few chances to obtain the necessary skills (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Some states have programs to support new teachers, but more likely, this training obligation is defaulted to the district or school level. Schools that recognize the importance of the school-family partnership are incorporating such content in their in-service programs and are seeing benefits across many dimensions of student and school achievement (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

Chavkin and Williams (1988) provide a prototype for parent involvement training and identified several in-service issues including: training plans, logistics of time and location for the training, rewards for participation, how the training will be funded, and the voluntary vs required elements of training (Chavkin & Williams, 1988).

In-service training can be provided by outside sources through workshops and other available resources as yet another means of preparation. California created the Beginning Teacher Support Activities [BTSA], and clearinghouses such as The Institute for Responsive Education at Boston University connect schools into networks of sharing development and assessment. Partnership for Family Involvement in Education is another available resource at the federal level (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

Mentoring and life experiences are also other sources of training in the area of parental involvement. Veteran teachers have learned methods and strategies through years of trial and error, discovering what does and does not work and relying on proven methods. While a novice teacher will not have the benefit of years of experience, research on mentoring indicates that much value is gained by identifying someone who can serve as a coach and sounding board during the early years in the profession.

Huling and Resta (2001) maintain that teacher mentoring has grown since the 1980's as a means for teacher retention. They note several benefits of mentoring including: professional competency of both the mentor and the protégé, a sense of renewal and commitment to the profession, psychological boost to self-esteem, rich collegial interactions, and contributions to teacher leadership (Huling & Resta, 2001).

State and Federal Regulatory Requirements and Policies

Our nation seems to be in a constant state of school reform in an effort to improve education. These efforts have highlighted parents as a critical player in the reform. As a result, parents are transitioning from outsiders to partners as attempts are made to transform our schools into more productive service providers in the hopes of yielding a quality education for students (Seitsinger et al., 2008). The blurring of the lines that have traditionally existed between teacher, parent, school and home are becoming more apparent. This transition is characterized by parents now being invited to become partners with schools on many levels. Seitsinger et al. (2008) list some of these activities which include participation in governance on boards and school improvement teams, attend and participate in school events, and actively engage in student learning at home (Epstein, 1986; Haynes et al., 1989).

"In the United States, many major initiatives woven into the fabric of our educational system at the local, state, and national level, designed to promote positive outcomes for children, focus on family-school partnerships" (Hiatt-Michael, as cited in Patte, 2011, pp. 143-144). Funding from local, state and federal sources has been allocated for initiatives related to increasing parent involvement as evidenced by the No Child Left Behind Act which requires federal funding allocated for education be spent on programs that promote participation and partnership with parents (Shoup et al., 2009).

Guilfoyle (2006) compiled a concise timeline that serves to illustrate the history of legislation that served as the foundation for the NCLB structure that existed through 2015 (Guilfoyle, 2006):

- 1965 – The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is enacted to provide money to help low-income students
- 1968 – Congress adds the Bilingual Education Act to ESEA
- 1970 – ESEA funding must supplement not supplant other education spending at the state and local levels
- 1978 – ESEA allows Title I money to be spent schoolwide when 75% of the school's students are low-income
- 1988 – ESEA requires districts to use standardized test scores to assess schools
- 1994 – ESEA is reauthorized as the Improving America's Schools Act. States must identify schools that are not making "adequate yearly progress"
- 2002 – President George W. Bush signed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) into law
  - NCLB accountability begins on the basis of 2001-2002 test scores
- 2002-2003 – Reading and math tests must be given once in each of these grade spans (3-5, 6-9, 10-12)
  - Newly hired teachers and paraprofessionals must meet NCLB requirements
  - Title I schools identified as "in need of improvement" for two consecutive years must offer students the option of transferring to a higher-performing school
  - Title I schools identified as "in need of improvement" for three consecutive years must offer supplemental services to eligible students
- 2004 – Margaret Spellings, the new U.S. Secretary of Education, promises greater flexibility for NCLB
- 2005 – Utah rules that its own state assessment system has priority over NCLB in cases of conflict

- o Some states are authorized to develop modified assessments for students in disadvantaged subgroups
  - o Texas is fined $444,282 for exempting too many students with disabilities from regular state testing
  - o The Connecticut Attorney General files a lawsuit to preserve the state's system of testing every other year.
- 2005 – 2006 – Reading and math tests must be administered annually in grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12
- 2006 – All teachers are expected to be highly qualified by June 30, 2006. Some states are granted a one-year extension
  - o With U.S. Department of Education approval, Tennessee and North Carolina take part in a growth model pilot program to measure individual student progress over time
- 2007 – ESEA is due for reauthorization
- 2007 – 2008 – Science tests must be given once in each of three grade spans (3-5, 6-9, 10-12)
- 2013 – 2014 – 100 percent of students must be proficient (p. 2)

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama. This legislation reauthorized the nation's commitment to equal opportunity for all students (Sharp, 2016).

In addition to these efforts, other initiatives provide "guidelines from professional associations like the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2003, 2005), the Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2002). These legislative initiatives and guidelines provided parents with the right to know what is happening in schools" (Henderson, Jacob, Kernan-Schloss, & Raimondo, 2004 as cited in Patte, 2011, p. 144).

Title I programs are the largest formally organized programs for parent involvement. Such programs often provide for parent coordinators, who are charged with getting more parents involved in varied and meaningful facets of school activities. Benefits of Title I programs were noted by several teachers, but an equal number said the programs were poor and wasteful (Epstein & Becker, 1982). As long as research continues to identify relationships between

parental involvement and positive educational outcomes, programs and initiatives will continue to promote such activities by providing regulatory guidelines and hopefully continued funding for such activities.

Teacher Preparation for Parental Involvement

According to Katz and Bauch (1999), the ability to include parent involvement courses in a curriculum that is already at maximum capacity with other required courses has been inhibited by the momentum at many higher education institutions for undergraduate teacher education programs to move toward requiring an academic major (Katz & Bauch, 1999). Support for such parental involvement preparation was noted by Patte (2011) who remarked in one study, "I remember thinking that if I had explored such content and competencies as an undergraduate, my first few years engaging families would have been more meaningful and productive" (Patte, 2011, p. 145). He conducted a study in which he reported on knowledge and competence of students in preservice teacher programs for effectively initiating and maintaining partnerships with families. The Patte study findings indicate an incongruence between requirements and standards from state and federal government related to accreditation. Such initiatives prescribe increased levels of activities that promote partnership between family and schools, while time and funding are limited for tackling the issue in one teacher education group (Patte, 2011).

Several studies concluded that teacher preparation for parent involvement is important enough to warrant inclusion in a teacher preparation curriculum. Looking how teachers are prepared to initiate engagement with families, it was reported that teachers "rarely do well in what they are not well-prepared to do" (Katz & Bauch, 1999, pg. 186) and teachers who had expanded their confidence and proficiencies in parent engagement activities were more likely to proactively engage parents (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987).

However, despite these efforts to establish more parental involvement as well as an abundance of evidence documenting the positive outcomes related to such activities, Patte (2011) summarizes research that suggests that the majority of formal teacher education programs lack content that prepares teachers to understand the importance of and how to establish relationships with parents. Few formal teacher education programs offer relevant and significant coursework or projects with a connection to issues relating to parent-teacher relationships or partnerships. Special education and courses in early childhood education sometimes include content on involving parents (Epstein, 2001; Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

Research up to 1982 suggests that due to a lack of research on the impacts of parental involvement, teachers couldn't be convinced that certain practices would result in "improved student skills, improved parent-child exchanges, or improved parent-teacher relations" (Epstein & Becker, 1982, p. 111). Even by 2008, Seitsinger et al. report that few studies have concentrated on the efforts of teachers and schools to involve parents in school events and educational initiatives (Epstein & Becker, 1982; Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002). "Fewer still have sought to link these examinations of teacher practices to reports on actual student and parent engagement with each other and in communication with the schools as well as with and the outcomes of concern" (Seitsinger et al., 2008, p. 479).

In a summary offered by Patte (2011), teacher preparation programs are not where they need to be in order to equip teachers with the skills and tools necessary for novice teachers to appropriately foster school-family partnerships and do so with confidence (Baum & McMurray-Schwarz, 2004). Further, preservice teacher preparation has not been successful in preparing student teachers to translate effectively into practice the content they have learned about including parents into the broader plan for educating their children both inside and out of the

classroom (Patte, 2011). Ferrara and Ferrara (2005) point out that graduates give favorable

reviews of their courses taken, they "unanimously agree that they needed more training in

classroom management techniques, parent communication, and parent involvement in the

classroom strategies" (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005, p.77).

There is a limitation in our knowledge of the best methods for preparing teachers on

effective practices to include and engage parents in meaningful ways (Seitsinger et al., 2008).

This study seeks to explore current levels and sources of teacher preparation in an effort

to inform future preservice and in-service courses and training programs.

Parent Education and Parent Involvement Programs

If the case is made there is agreement that parental involvement contributes to positive

outcomes for student success, it is also reasonable to argue that parent education is necessary for

productive parent involvement to exist. DiCamillo (2001) lays the foundation for the idea that

effective parent education programs generally assess parent and student needs, attract and retain

parents through their outreach efforts and foster respect and affirmation.

The PTA has continued to thrive for more than 100 years in its mission which

specifically calls out assisting parents with developing parenting skills and promoting parent

involvement in schools. PTA organizations offer parent education in a variety of ways, including

meetings, online resources, training sessions and workshops (DiCamillo, 2001). Joining a PTA

is one of the most convenient options parents have for getting involved at school. Utilizing the

PTA as a communication channel for parent education is also a prime opportunity for teachers

and administrators to share important information and shape expectations.

There are several notable benefits of parent education programs. Better relationships

between parents and schools are formed. Teachers are better positioned to customize programs

tailored to specific needs by the close interaction with the family of their students. General school climate tends to improve resulting in greater job satisfaction among teachers and administrators (DiCamillo, 2001).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement and the source of that preparation among secondary teachers in private high schools in Louisiana.

Objectives

Several objectives were formulated to guide this study:

1. To describe secondary private school teachers in Louisiana on selected personal and professional characteristics including:

   a. Gender;

   b. Age;

   c. Years of teaching experience;

   d. Education level;

   e. Teacher certification;

      i. Type of Certification Program;

      ii. Intent to work toward certification;

   f. Subject matter taught;

2. To determine level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

3. To determine the source of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

4. To determine if a relationship exists between the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana and selected demographic characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

5. To determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana from selected personal and professional demographic characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

Population and Sample

The target population of the study was secondary private school teachers in Louisiana. The accessible population was secondary private school teachers in one Diocese in Louisiana. The minimum required sample size was determined using the following calculations:

Cochran's Sample Size Formula:

$$n_0 = \frac{(t^2)\,(s^2)}{(d^2)} \qquad n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2\,(.667)^2}{(.125)^2} \qquad n_0 = \frac{(3.8416)(.445)}{(.0156)}$$

$$n_0 = 110$$

Cochran's Small Population Correction Formula:

$$n = \frac{N_0}{1+\dfrac{n_0}{N}} \qquad n = \frac{110}{1+\dfrac{110}{275}}$$

$$n = 79$$

Assumptions:

- The level of significance is $\alpha = .05$
- $t^2 =$ the t value associated with the .05 alpha level
- $s^2 =$ an estimate of the variance in the population
- $d^2 =$ the acceptable margin of error in the measurements (2.5%)

The sample included the 275 secondary teachers employed at the 11 high schools in the Diocese of Lafayette. The sampling plan involved the identification and selection of 100% of the teachers currently employed at the 11 schools.

Instrumentation

A researcher-designed survey instrument was used to collect information from the participants. Fourteen items related to parental involvement were identified and an anchored

scale with five levels of response was used. The response options included: poorly prepared, slightly prepared, somewhat prepared, well-prepared, and very well-prepared. In addition, respondents were asked to identify the source of the preparation for each of the 14 items. The sources provided as response options were: pre-service teacher education, in-service (school), in-service (other workshops), On-Own - Experience, and Other. Demographic data were collected including: gender, age, years of teaching experience, education level, certification, and subject matter taught.

Content validity was established using a panel of experts that included four teacher educators and six high school teachers not included in the sample. Feedback was taken into consideration and modifications to the instrument were made where warranted. Some modifications were related to ease of use in the survey layout, while others were related to clarity of wording and content.

Data Collection

The superintendent of the Diocese of Lafayette was contacted for permission to include its high school teachers in the study. Upon commencement of the study, the superintendent emailed principals of participant schools introducing the study and encouraging teacher participation.

The survey was administered online using Qualtrics. A link was generated that the researcher provided to the superintendent for distribution to the schools in the diocese. The researcher controlled settings within Qualtrics to ensure multiple responses from the same participant were not allowed. A one week response period was allocated for data collection. After the one week period, a reminder email was sent to contacts at each school, allowing 3 additional days for response. A second follow-up email was sent allowing another 3 additional

days for response. Once the grace period expired, the survey was closed and no further responses were collected.

A total of 79 usable responses were obtained out of the 275 teachers in the Diocese for a 29% response rate. Due to this response rate, findings of this study should be generalized only to the members of the responding sample. Generalization is also limited to those who responded.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to determine teachers' perceptions of their level of preparedness for managing parental involvement and the source of that preparation among secondary teachers in private high schools in Louisiana. The dependent variable in this study was the level of preparedness that participants reported across a number of parent involvement activities.

The following specific objectives were formulated to guide this study:

1. To describe secondary private school teachers in Louisiana on selected personal and professional characteristics including:

      a. Gender;

      b. Age;

      c. Years of teaching experience;

      d. Education level;

      e. Teacher certification;

         i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

      f. Subject matter taught;

2. To determine level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

3. To determine the source of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

4. To determine if a relationship exists between the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana and selected demographic characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

5. To determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana from selected personal and professional demographic characteristics including:

    g. Gender;

    h. Age;

    i. Years of teaching experience;

    j. Education level;

    k. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    l. Subject matter taught.

Objective One Results

The first objective of this study was to describe secondary private school teachers in Louisiana on selected personal and professional characteristics including:

a. Gender;

b. Age;

c. Years of teaching experience;

d. Education level;

e. Teacher certification;

      i. Type of Certification Program;

      ii. Intent to work toward certification;

f. Subject matter taught.

There were 79 usable responses to the questionnaire submitted by secondary private school teachers. The following are the results for each of these variables:

Gender

The first variable on which the participants were described was gender. Of the 79 respondents, 64 (81.0%) were identified as female and 15 (19.0%) were identified as male.

Age

Age was the second variable on which participants were described. The six response options included the following age categories: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; and 65 or older. All age categories were well-represented except for the 18-24 group (n=2). The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25-54 (n = 57, 72.2%). One-fourth of respondents were over 55 years old (n = 20, 25.4%). (See Table 1).

Table 1 Age of Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Age Category	Frequency	Percent
18-24	2	2.5
25-34	21	26.6
35-44	19	24.1
45-54	17	21.5
55-64	10	12.7
65+	10	12.7
Total	79	100.0

Years of Teaching Experience

Another variable on which the respondents were described was years of teaching

experience. The four response options included: 0-3 years; 4-10 years; 10-20 years; and 20 or

more years. The largest group of respondents had taught for more than 20 years with 26

individuals (32.9%), and the smallest group of 8 individuals (10.1%) had taught for 0-3 years.

(See Table 2).

Table 2 Years of Teaching Experience of Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Yrs of Exp Category	Frequency	Percent
0-3 years	8	10.1
4-10 years	25	31.6
10-20 years	20	25.3
20+ years	26	32.9
Total	79	100

Education Level

The fourth variable on which the participants were described was education level. There

were five response options including: Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Ed Specialist;

Doctorate; and Other (please specify). The majority (n = 54, 69.2%) of respondents reported

having a bachelor's degree. Only 1.3% (n = 1) of respondents indicated that they had an Ed

Specialist degree. (See Table 3).

Table 3   Education Level of Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Years of Experience Category	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's degree	54	69.2
Master's degree	19	24.4
Ed Specialist	1	1.3
Doctorate	2	2.6
Other[a]	2	2.6
Total	78[b]	100

[a] 2 respondents selected Other; Other responses included: LPC, NBCC (n=1); and Two other degrees (n=1)
[b] 1 respondent did not indicate their level of education

Teacher Certification

Whether or not the respondent was a certified teacher was the fifth variable on which participants were described. Respondents had options of yes or no for this item on the questionnaire. The majority (86.1%) of respondents indicated that they were certified teachers while 13.9% (n = 11) were not certified.

Type of Certification Program

Individuals who were certified were asked to indicate the type of certification program they completed. The possible responses included: "4 year teacher education program:" "5 year teacher education program"; "Alternate post-baccalaureate certification program"; and "Other (please specify)." The majority, 56.7% (n = 38) of respondents reported having completed a four year teacher education program. Two respondents (3.0%) indicated "Other" with one reporting having completed a Master Catechist certification and the other reporting Master Catechist certification, 15 years teaching at university, Master's degree from College of Human Resources with minor in extension education. (See Table 4).

Table 4   Type of Certification Program Completed by Certified Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Years of Experience Category	Frequency[a]	Percent
4 year teacher education program	38	56.7
Alternate post-baccalaureate program	24	35.8
5 year teacher education program	3	4.5
Other[b]	2	3.0
Total	67[c]	100

[a] Includes only the 68 participants who indicated that they were a certified teacher.
[b] 2 participants selected Other; Other responses included Master catechist (n=1) and Master catechist certification (n= 1), 15 years teaching at university, Master's degree from College of Human Resources with minor in extension education (n=1).
[c] 1 participant did not respond to this item.

Working Toward Certification

The seventh variable on which participants were described was whether or not they were working toward certification if the respondent reported they were not certified. Of the 11 teachers who reported that they were not certified, 5 (49.5%) indicated that they were working toward certification and 6 (54.5%) reported that they were not working toward certification.

Subject Matter Taught

The eighth variable on which participants were described was subject matter taught. The possible responses included: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Religion, Physical Education, Visual/Performing Arts, and Other (Other (please specify) responses included: all subjects listed except visual/performing arts (n=1); Business courses (n=1); English and Performing Arts (n=1); English, Reading, Religion this year (n=1); Foreign language (n=4); Have taught a variety of subjects during my 30+ years of teaching (n=1); Math, science, and social studies (n=1); Psychology, art, French, journalism (n=1); 4 respondents did not indicate a subject matter). The four primary academic areas of Math, Science, Social Studies and English were well-represented across the respondents. The largest number of respondents taught English (n=15, 19.0%) while the respondents who selected Other indicated a combination of several

subjects. The smallest number of respondents (n = 2, 2.5%) taught Physical Education. (See

Table 5).

Table 5   Subject Matter Taught by Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Subject matter taught	Frequency	Percent
English	15	19
Other[a]	15	19
Social Studies	11	13.9
Mathematics	10	12.7
Religion	10	12.7
Science	9	11.4
Visual/Performing Arts	7	8.8
Physical Education	2	2.5
Total	79	100

[a] Other responses included: all subjects listed except visual/performing arts (n=1); Business courses (n=1); English and Performing Arts (n=1); English, Reading, Religion this year (n=1); Foreign language (n=4); Have taught a variety of subjects during my 30+ years of teaching (n=1); Math, science, and social studies (n=1); Psychology, art, French, journalism (n=1); and 4 respondents did not specify a subject matter to their "Other" response.

Objective Two Results

The second objective was to determine level of preparedness for managing parental

involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana. In an effort to measure the

level of preparedness, participants were asked to provide a response related to preparedness on

14 items of parental involvement activities using an anchored scale with response options

including: 1 = Poorly prepared, 2 = Slightly prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Well

prepared, 5 = Very well prepared. An interpretive scale was established in order to classify the

mean responses. The following descriptors were defined based on descriptors included in the

response scale:

Mean	Description
1.00 – 1.50	Poorly Prepared
1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Prepared
2.51 – 3.49	Somewhat Prepared

3.50 – 4.49   Well Prepared

4.50 – 5.00   Very Well Prepared

The three items with the highest mean preparedness scores included Written/Electronic

Communication Strategies (mean = 4.08, SD = 1.00), Communicating Positive Achievements

(mean = 4.05, SD = .918) and Communicating Expectations (mean = 4.03, SD = .920). The items

with the lowest mean preparedness scores included Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents

(mean = 3.37, SD = 1.21), Field Trip Volunteer Activities (mean = 3.24, SD = 1.20), and

Classroom Volunteer Activities (mean = 3.01, SD = 1.21). (See Table 6).

Table 6   Level of Preparedness for Managing Parental Involvement of Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Item	Mean[a]	SD	Description[b]
Written/Electronic Communication Strategies	4.08	1.00	Well Prepared
Communicating Positive Achievements	4.05	.918	Well Prepared
Communicating Expectations	4.03	.920	Well Prepared
Addressing Parent Concerns	3.94	.952	Well Prepared
Gaining Parent Trust/Support	3.94	.938	Well Prepared
Parent/Teacher Conference	3.90	.982	Well Prepared
Dealing with Family Adversity	3.81	1.06	Well Prepared
Working with Diverse Parents	3.73	1.16	Well Prepared
Face to Face/Communication Strategies	3.70	1.08	Well Prepared
Dealing with Individual Differences	3.66	.959	Well Prepared
Collaboration on Discipline	3.57	1.08	Well Prepared
Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents	3.37	1.21	Somewhat Prepared
Field Trip Volunteer Activities	3.24	1.20	Somewhat Prepared
Classroom Volunteer Activities	3.01	1.21	Somewhat Prepared

[a] Mean score based on the following response scale: 1 = Poorly Prepared; 2 = Slightly Prepared; 3 = Somewhat Prepared; 4 = Well Prepared; and 5 = Very Well Prepared.
[b] Description based on the following interpretative scale: 1.00 – 1.50 = Poorly Prepared; 1.51 – 2.50 = Slightly Prepared; 2.51 – 3.49 = Somewhat Prepared; 3.50 – 4.49 = Well Prepared; 4.50 – 5.00 = Very Well Prepared.

To extend the examination of level of preparedness, the researcher performed a factor

analysis to reveal any underlying constructs that may exist in the scale. Using the Shapiro-

Wilks test, the items were examined for degree of deviation from normality. The measure of

sampling adequacy was also examined for individual items as well as the overall scale. The

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were also examined by the researcher. The MSA's of the items revealed that all data met the assumptions for factor analysis. Review of these measures confirmed that the remaining scale data were appropriate and adequate for conducting the factor analysis.

Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was the procedure used in performing the factor analysis. A combination of scree plot technique and Latent Root criterion was utilized by the researcher to determine the number of factors to be extracted from the scale responses. The factor analysis was computed initially without restrictions on the number of factors extracted. The latent root measure had a default minimum value of 1.00. To determine the most appropriate number of factors for extraction, the scree plot was then examined. The most pronounced bend in the curve was identified at the value of two, therefore, the optimum number of meaningful factors for extraction was two, plus or minus one.

The researcher then computed and examined each of these number of factors for three criteria. The loadings for each of the factors extracted were examined and determined to have met the minimum load value of .3 as specified by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006). The analysis was also examined for inefficient factors, which are those that included only one or two items. Such factors provide little benefit to the researcher since the intent of the analysis is to reveal underlying constructs in the data. In the two factor solution, the second factor had only two items. When the one factor solution was examined, the loadings ranged from a high of .878 to a low of .523. According to Hair et al. (2006) "…if the loadings are +/-.50 or greater, they are considered practically significant (p.111)." Therefore, the one factor solution was selected as the most appropriate which suggests that there are no underlying constructs in the scale. The results of the factor analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7   Factor Analysis of Responses to Level of Preparedness for Managing Parental Involvement of Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Item	Factor Loading
Gaining Parent Trust/Support	.878
Addressing Parent Concerns	.862
Parent/Teacher Conference	.849
Collaboration on Discipline	.816
Face to Face/Communication Strategies	.812
Communicating Expectations	.804
Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents	.800
Communicating Positive Achievements	.796
Working with Diverse Parents	.770
Dealing with Individual Differences	.766
Written/Electronic Communication Strategies	.738
Dealing with Family Adversity	.664
Field Trip Volunteer Activities	.583
Classroom Volunteer Activities	.523

Note. Eigenvalue = 8.258, Percent of variance explained = 58.988

Based on the results of the factor analysis, an overall score for level of preparedness was computed which included all of the items in the scale since all of the items met the minimum loading criterion of .30 for inclusion in the factor. When this overall preparedness score was computed using the means of the 14 items, the mean overall preparedness score was 3.71 (SD = .79) with scores ranging from 1.00 to 5.00. This overall score was classified in the interpretive category of "well-prepared."

Objective Three Results

The third objective of this study was to determine the source of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana. A review of the largest percentage of responses for each of the items revealed that the most frequently reported source of preparedness was "On Own – Experience". Of those responses, the single item reported by the highest number of participants (n=61, 77.0%) in the "On Own – Experience" source of preparedness category was "Face to Face/Communication Strategies." In comparison, only three (3.8%) of the responding teachers identified "Pre-service – Teacher

Education" as the source of preparedness for this item. The item which was identified by the largest percentage of teachers as their pre-service program being the source of preparation was "Collaboration on Discipline" (n = 13, 16.5%). However, even for this item, a higher percentage of teachers reported "On-Own – Experience" as the source of their preparation (n = 27, 34.2%). For "In-Service – School" preparation, there was a tie for the highest reported items. "Written/Electronic Communication Strategies" and "Addressing Parent Concerns" both had a 30.4% (n = 24) response as the source of preparedness coming from "In-Service – School" programs. "Collaboration on Discipline" was reported as the highest source of preparedness from "In-Service – Other Workshops." The item with the smallest number of responses was "Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents" in the source category of "Pre-Service-Teacher Education" program (n=2, 2.5%). (See Table 8).

Table 8   Source of Preparedness for Managing Parental Involvement of Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Item		Pre-service - teacher education	In-service-School	In-service-Other workshop	On Own - Experience	Other	Total
Written/Electronic Communication Strategies	n	5	24	8	39	3	79
	%	6.3	30.4	10.1	49.4	3.8	100
Communicating Positive Achievements	n	8	18	10	38	5	79
	%	10.1	22.8	12.7	48.1	6.3	100
Communicating Expectations	n	9	16	9	41	4	79
	%	11.4	20.3	11.4	51.9	5.1	100
Addressing Parent Concerns	n	8	24	7	34	6	79
	%	10.1	30.4	8.9	43.0	7.6	100
Gaining Parent Trust/Support	n	6	7	8	52	6	79
	%	7.6	8.9	10.1	65.8	7.6	100
Parent/Teacher Conference	n	7	18	6	43	5	79
	%	8.9	22.8	7.6	54.4	6.3	100

(Table 8 continued)

Item		Pre-service - teacher education	In-service-School	In-service-Other workshop	On Own - Experience	Other	Total
Dealing with Family Adversity	n %	6 7.6	12 15.2	10 12.7	45 57.0	6 7.6	79 100
Working with Diverse Parents	n %	9 11.4	14 17.7	7 8.9	44 55.7	5 6.3	79 100
Face to Face/ Communication Strategies	n %	3 3.8	7 8.9	5 6.3	61 77.2	3 3.8	79 100
Dealing with Individual Differences	n %	10 12.7	22 27.8	12 15.2	31 39.2	4 5.1	79 100
Collaboration on Discipline	n %	13 16.5	22 27.8	13 16.5	27 34.2	4 5.1	79 100
Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents	n %	2 2.5	16 20.3	8 10.1	47 59.5	6 7.6	79 100
Field Trip Volunteer Activities	n %	8 10.1	10 12.7	4 5.1	44 55.7	13 16.5	79 100
Classroom Volunteer Activities	n %	7 8.9	5 6.3	6 7.6	46 58.2	15 19	79 100

To further examine the source of preparedness measures, for each item, the primary source of preparedness was coded as "1" while the other sources were coded "0." A summated score was then computed for each of the four sources. When this overall source score was computed, "On-Own- Experience" was the source with the highest mean at 7.49 (SD = 4.29). "Pre-Service – Teacher Education" was the source with the lowest score with a mean of 1.28 (SD = 2.54). The results of the Total Source Score analysis are presented in Table 9.

Table 9   Total Source of Preparedness for Managing Parental Involvement Score Among Private School Teachers in Louisiana

Total Source Score	Mean	SD
Total Experience Score	7.49	4.29
Total In-Service-School Score	2.72	3.08
Total In-Service-Workshop Score	1.43	2.12
Total Pre-Service Score	1.28	2.54

Objective Four Results

The fourth objective of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana and selected demographic characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

Gender, Teacher Certification, Intent to Gain Certification, Subject Matter Taught and Type of Certification Program

In order to determine if a relationship exists between overall Teacher Preparedness and the demographic variables, Gender, Teacher Certification, Intent to Gain Certification, Subject Matter Taught and Type of Certification Program which are measured as dichotomous variables, the independent t-test procedure was used for analysis. This procedure was selected based on the ease of interpretation of the findings.

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Gender was the first demographic variable analyzed. The mean overall preparedness score for Males was 3.64 (SD = 1.19) and for Females was 3.73 (SD = .68). No significant difference was found in the Overall Preparedness scores by gender (t_{77} = .416, p = .68).

Teacher Certification was another variable with two categories: Yes or No. The mean value for certified teachers was 3.78 (SD = .74). When compared to the mean preparedness score for uncertified teachers (mean 3.34, SD = 1.05), no significant difference was found between the two groups (t_{77} = 1.72, p = .089).

The third dichotomous variable was Intent to Gain Certification. Only the 11 teachers who indicated that they were not certified were included in this analysis. The mean value for those who responded "yes," meaning that they are working toward certification, was 3.79 (SD = .47). Those who responded "no" had a mean of 2.96 (SD = 1.28). No significant difference was found between the two groups (t_9 = 1.348, p = .211).

To study the relationship between Subject Matter Taught and teacher preparedness, the researcher intended to use the one way ANOVA since eight subjects were reported by the respondents. However, when the data were examined, insufficient responses were available in most categories. Therefore the categories were combined to provide groups with sufficient responses to produce meaningful results. The final groupings included core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies) and elective subjects (Physical Education, Visual/Performing Arts, Religion and Other). Since these final groups included only two categories, the independent t-test was used for analysis.

Results of this analysis revealed that the mean for teachers in the core subjects group was 3.76 (SD = .65) and the mean for those teaching elective subjects was 3.69 (SD = .88).

The comparison of the mean preparedness between the two groups yielded no significant difference (t_{73} = .366, p = .716).

Due to insufficient numbers in some categories, type of teacher certification program was also recoded into two categories in preparation for comparison. The two categories were Traditional Teacher Education Program and Alternative Teacher Education Program. The mean for the traditional teacher education program was 3.63 (SD = .82). The mean for the alternative teacher education program was 4.02 (SD = .52). The comparison of the mean preparedness between the two groups yielded a significant difference (t_{65} = -2.185, p = .032). This significant difference indicates that teachers who completed an alternative teacher education program perceived a higher level of overall preparedness for managing parental involvement.

Age, Years of Teaching Experience and Education Level

In order to determine if a relationship exists between overall Teacher Preparedness and the demographic variables: Age, Years of Teaching Experience, and Education Level, which are measured as ordinal variables, the Kendall's Tau Correlation Coefficient procedure was utilized. Teacher preparedness scale scores were found to be significantly correlated with Age (r = .29, p = .001). Years of Teaching Experience was also found to be significantly correlated with teachers' perception of preparedness scale scores (r = .29, p = .001). These significant correlations indicate that for this sample of teachers, being older and having more years of teaching experience tended to lead to a perception of higher level of overall preparedness for managing parental involvement. Education Level was not significantly correlated with teachers' perceived preparedness scale scores (r = .17, p = .069). (See Table 10).

Table 10 Relationship between Overall Preparedness to Manage Parental Involvement Score and Selected Demographic Characteristics

Variable	n	r[a]	P
Age	79	.29	.001
Years of teaching experience	79	.29	.001
Education Level	78	.17	.069

[a] Kendall's Tau Correlation Coefficient

Objective Five Results

The fifth objective of this study was to determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana from selected personal and professional demographic characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

To accomplish this objective, the researcher performed a multiple regression analysis. Since the study was primarily exploratory, stepwise entry of the variables was utilized. "Sequential regression [sometimes referred to as hierarchical multiple regression] …should be used in research based on theory or some previous knowledge; stepwise regression should be used where exploration is the purpose of the analysis" (Mertler & Vannata, 2002, p.171).

Variables that added 1% or more to explained variance were entered into the model as long as the overall model remained significant.

The bivariate correlations from the regression analysis were examined by the researcher. Four of the correlations were found to be significant. The highest correlation coefficient was on "Years of Teaching Experience." Two-way correlations between factors used as independent variables and the Overall Preparedness Scores are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Relationship between Selected Demographic Characteristics and Overall Preparedness

Variable	r	p
Years of Teaching Experience	.45	<.001
Age	.44	<.001
Certified Teacher	-.22	.029
Ed Level	.19	.048
Subject Taught (Core 4/Non-core)	-.05	.333
Gender	-.05	.341

Note. n = 74

The researcher reviewed the variables used in the regression analysis to ensure that no excessive multicollinearity was present. Hair et al. (2006) state "…very small tolerance values…denote high collinearity. A common cutoff threshold is a tolerance value of .10" (Hair et al., 2006, p. 193). Tolerance values ranged from .436 to .974. Therefore, no excess multicollinearity was present in the data.

The first variable entered into the regression model was Years of Teaching Experience which explained 20.2% of the variance. The second variable entered was Age which explained an additional 2.2% of the variance. The beta values indicate that teachers with a higher age and more years of experience have a tendency to have a higher level of perceived overall preparation. (See Table 12).

Table 12 Multiple Regression Analysis of Preparedness Scores for Parental Involvement and Selected Demographic Characteristics of Private School Teachers

ANOVA					
Source of Variation	df	MS	F	p	
Regression	2	4.56	10.276	<0.001	
Residual	71.00	0.44			
Total	73.00				

Model Summary					
Model	R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change	Standardized Coefficients Beta
Years of experience	.202	.202	18.259	<.0	.281
Age	.224	.022	2.029	.159	.225

Variables not in the Equation					
Variables	t	p			
Gender	-.459	.648			
Education Level	.440	.661			
Certified Teacher	-.482	.631			
Subject Taught	-.080	.936			

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY

Summary of Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this study was to determine perceived level of preparedness for managing parental involvement and the source of that preparation among secondary teachers in private high schools in Louisiana. The dependent variable in this study was perceived level of preparedness that participants reported across a number of parent involvement activities.

Several objectives were formulated to guide this study:

1. To describe secondary private school teachers in Louisiana on selected personal and professional characteristics including:

    m. Gender;

    n. Age;

    o. Years of teaching experience;

    p. Education level;

    q. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    r. Subject matter taught.

2. To determine level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

3. To determine the source of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana.

4. To determine if a relationship exists between the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana and selected demographic characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

5. To determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana from selected personal and professional demographic characteristics including:

    a. Gender;

    b. Age;

    c. Years of teaching experience;

    d. Education level;

    e. Teacher certification;

        i. Type of Certification Program;

        ii. Intent to work toward certification;

    f. Subject matter taught.

Summary of Methodology

The target population for this study was secondary private school teachers in Louisiana. The accessible population was secondary private school teachers in one Diocese in Louisiana. The minimum required sample size was determined to be 79 using Cochran's Sample Size Formula. The sample included the 275 secondary teachers employed at the 11 high schools in the Diocese of Lafayette. The sampling plan involved the identification and selection of 100% of the teachers currently employed at the 11 schools. A total of 79 usable responses was received.

A researcher-designed survey instrument was used to collect information from the participants. Fourteen items related to parental involvement were identified and an anchored scale with five levels of response was used including: poorly prepared, slightly prepared, somewhat prepared, well-prepared, and very well-prepared. Four sources of preparation for each of the fourteen items were available for selection by the participants: Pre-Service Teacher Education, In-Service - School, In-Service - Other Workshops, On-Own – Experience and Other. Demographic data were collected including: gender, age, years of teaching experience, education level, certification, and subject matter taught.

The survey was administered online using Qualtrics. A one week response period was allocated for data collection. After the one week period, a reminder email was sent allowing three additional days for response. A second follow-up email was sent allowing another three days for response.

Summary of Major Findings

The first objective was to describe secondary private school teachers in Louisiana on selected personal and professional characteristics including: Gender, Age, Years of teaching

experience, Education level, Teacher certification, Type of Certification Program, Intent to Work Toward Certification, and Subject Matter Taught.

There were 79 usable responses to the questionnaire provided by secondary private school teachers. The first variable on which the participants were described was gender. Of the 79 respondents, 64 (81.0%) were identified as female and 15 (19.0%) were identified as male. Age was the second variable on which participants were described. The six response options included the following age categories: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; and 65 or older. All age categories were well-represented except for the 18-24 group (n=2). The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25-54 (n = 57). More than 25% of respondents were over 55 years old.

Another variable on which the respondents were described was years of teaching experience. The four response options included: 0-3 years; 4-10 years; 10-20 years; and 20 or more years. The largest group of respondents had taught for more than 20 years with 26 individuals (32.9%) and the smallest group of 8 individuals (10.1%) had taught for 0-3 years.

The fourth variable on which the participants were described was education level. There were five response options including: Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Ed Specialist; Doctorate; and Other. The majority (69.2%) of respondents reported having a bachelor's degree. Only 1.3% (n = 1) of respondents indicated that they had an Ed Specialist degree.

Teacher certification was the fifth variable on which participants were described. Respondents had options of yes or no for this item on the questionnaire. The majority (86.1%) of the respondents were certified teachers while 13.9% (n = 11) were not certified.

The type of certification program was the sixth variable on which participants were described. The possible responses included: "4 year teacher education program;" "5 year teacher

education program"; "Alternate post-baccalaureate certification program"; and "Other (please specify)." The majority, 56.7% (n = 38) of respondents reported having completed a 4 year teacher education program. Two respondents (3.0%) indicated "Other" with one reporting having completed a Master Catechist program and the other reporting Master Catechist certification, 15 years teaching at university, Master's degree from College of Human Resources with minor in extension education.

The seventh variable on which participants were described was intent to work toward certification if the respondent reported they were not certified. Of the 11 teachers who reported that they were not certified, 5 of the respondents are working toward certification and 6 reported that they were not.

The eighth variable on which participants were described was subject matter taught. The possible responses included: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Religion, Physical Education, Visual/Performing Arts, and Other (please specify). The four primary academic areas of Math, Science, Social Studies and English were well-represented across the respondents. The largest number of respondents taught English (n=15) while the respondents who selected "Other" indicated a combination of several subjects. The smallest number of respondents taught Physical Education.

The second objective was to determine level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana. In an effort to measure the level of preparedness, participants were asked to provide a response related to preparedness on 14 items of parental involvement activities using an anchored scale with response options including: 1 = Poorly prepared, 2 = Slightly prepared, 3 = Somewhat Prepared, 4 = Well prepared, 5 = Very well prepared. An interpretive scale was established in

order to classify the mean responses. The three items with the highest mean preparedness scores included Written/Electronic Communication Strategies (mean = 4.08, SD = 1.00), Communication Positive Achievements (mean = 4.05, SD = .918) and Communicating Expectations (mean = 4.03, SD = .920). The items with the lowest mean preparedness scores included Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents (mean = 3.37, SD = 1.21), Field Trip Volunteer Activities (mean = 3.24, SD = 1.20), and Classroom Volunteer Activities (mean = 3.01, SD = 1.21). To extend the examination of level of preparedness, the researcher performed a factor analysis to reveal any underlying constructs that may exist in the scale. The analysis revealed that the one factor solution was the most appropriate which suggests that there are no underlying constructs in the scale, and that an overall preparedness score could be computed as the combination of the 14 items in the scale. These overall scores ranged from 1.00 to 5.00 with a mean of 3.71.

The third objective of this study was to determine the source of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana. A review of the largest percentage of responses for each of the items revealed that the most frequently reported source of preparedness was "On Own – Experience". Of those responses, the single item reported by the highest number of participants (n=61, 77.0%) in the "On Own – Experience" source of preparedness category was Face to Face/Communication Strategies. The item with the smallest number of responses was Dealing with Angry/Distraught Parents in the source category of Pre-service-teacher education program (n=2, 2.5%). An overall score for each of the four sources of preparedness was then computed. When these overall source scores were examined, On-Own- Experience was the source with the highest mean at 7.49. Pre-Service had the lowest mean of 1.28 (SD = 2.54).

The fourth objective was to determine if a relationship exists between the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana and selected demographic characteristics including: Gender, Age, Years of teaching experience, Education level, Teacher certification, Type of Certification Program, Intent to work toward certification, and Subject matter taught.

No significant difference to overall preparedness was found for Gender, Teacher Certification, Intent to Gain Certification or Subject Matter Taught. For Gender, the mean overall preparedness score for Male was 3.64 (SD = 1.19) and for Female was 3.73 (SD = .68). No significant difference was found in the Overall Preparedness scores by gender (t_{77} = .416, p = .68). Teacher Certification was another variable with two categories: Yes or No. The mean value for certified teachers was 3.78 (SD = .74). When compared to the mean preparedness score for uncertified teachers (mean 3.34, SD = 1.05), no significant difference was found between the two groups (t_{77} = 1.72, p = .089).

The third dichotomous variable was Intent to Gain Certification. Only the 11 teachers who indicated that they were not certified were included in this analysis. The mean value for those who responded "yes," meaning that they are working toward certification, was 3.79 (SD = .47). Those who responded "no" had a mean of 2.96 (SD = 1.28). No significant difference was found between the two groups (t_9 = 1.348, p = .211). To study the relationship between Subject Matter Taught and teacher preparedness, categories were combined to create dichotomous variables and utilize t-tests. Results of this analysis revealed that the mean for the core subjects was 3.76 (SD = .65) and the mean for the elective subjects was 3.69 (SD = .88). The comparison of the mean preparedness between the two groups yielded no significant difference (t_{73} = .366, p = .716).

Type of teacher certification program was also recoded into two categories in preparation for entry into the multiple regression analysis. The two categories were Traditional Teacher Education Program and Alternative Teacher Education Program: Bachelors and Higher than Bachelors. The mean for the traditional teacher education program was 3.63 (SD = .82). The mean for the alternative teacher education program was 4.02 (SD = .52). The comparison of the mean preparedness between the two groups yielded a significant difference (t_{65} = -2.185, $\underline{p}$ = .032).

In order to determine if a relationship exists between overall Teacher Preparedness and the demographic variables: Age, Years of Teaching Experience, and Education Level, which are measured as ordinal variables, the Kendall's Tau Correlation Coefficient procedure was utilized. Teacher preparedness scale scores were found to be significantly correlated with Age (r = .29, $\underline{p}$ = .001). Years of Teaching Experience was also found to be significantly correlated with teacher preparedness scale scores (r = .29, $\underline{p}$ = .001). Education Level was not significantly correlated with the teacher preparedness scale scores (r = .17, $\underline{p}$ = .069).

The fifth objective was to determine if a model exists which explains a significant portion of the variance in level of preparedness for managing parental involvement among secondary private school teachers in Louisiana from selected personal and professional demographic characteristics including: Gender, Age, Years of teaching experience, Education level, Teacher certification, Type of Certification Program, Intent to work toward certification, and Subject matter taught.

To accomplish this objective, the researcher performed a multiple regression analysis. Variables that added 1% or more to the explained variance were entered into the model as long as the overall model remained significant. The first variable entered into the regression model

was Years of Teaching Experience which explained 20.2% of the variance. The second variable entered was Age which explained an additional 2.2% of the variance.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Conclusion One

The majority of responding teachers hold a Bachelor's degree.

This conclusion is based on the finding that 69.2% of responding teachers hold a bachelor's degree. As a result, there will be a number of these teachers who will likely pursue an advanced degree in the near future. The opportunity exists for providing specific preparation to existing teachers for working effectively with parents through the curriculum of an advanced degree at the master's level. It is further recommended that this course be included as a degree requirement.

The researcher recommends that since the undergraduate teacher education programs did not provide a significant source of preparation for parental involvement, departments in Colleges of Education should design course content in graduate programs to prepare teachers to effectively work with parents. This content should be incorporated into the master's degree curriculum as a standalone course or part of an existing course.

An additional recommendation relates to the teachers who already report a high level of preparedness for dealing with parental involvement. These experienced and highly prepared teachers could serve as mentors to young teachers, however, they may not have the knowledge and skills to effectively serve as mentors. Graduate courses on mentoring should be available to teachers seeking advanced degrees. Huling & Resta (2001) note several benefits of mentoring including: professional competency of both the mentor and the protégé, a sense of renewal and

commitment to the profession, psychological boost to self-esteem, rich collegial interactions, and contributions to teacher leadership (Huling & Resta, 2001).

None of the literature reviewed addressed level of education relative to preparedness for parental involvement. Since this study was exploratory, this is an area where future research is recommended.

Conclusion Two

Overall, this sample of teachers feel well-prepared for managing parental involvement.

This conclusion is based on the finding from the study that the overall mean preparedness score is 3.71 and using the established interpretive scale this score is classified as "well-prepared." A closer look at the survey responses revealed that those areas where teachers felt most prepared tended to be more positive activities such as written/electronic communication, communicating positive achievements and communicating expectations.

This gives reason to be optimistic as teachers report that even without specific preparation, they do indeed acquire a higher level of preparation over time. However, attaining preparation over time suggests an opportunity cost of teachers enduring ineffective or even negative interactions with parents unnecessarily. These negative interactions and experiences can result in decreased morale among new teachers and ultimately the loss of otherwise highly motivated, talented teachers from the profession. Ingersoll & Smith (2003) in an article addressing teacher shortages state, "The data suggest that after just five years, between 40 and 50 percent of all beginning teachers have left the profession" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 30). Dissatisfaction was listed as one of the reasons teachers leave the profession after the first year. Negative experiences with parents may contribute to that dissatisfaction.

Additionally, negative interactions between parents and teachers can have profound effects on the student. When parents and teachers are at odds, decisions are sometimes made that are not in the long-term best interest of the child. The very possibility of these negative interactions and resulting consequences is enough to warrant more focus on this issue in teacher education programs as well as in future research related to negative effects of parent-teacher conflict on students.

Conclusion Three

There are important skills for dealing with parents for which this sample of teachers are not well-prepared.

This conclusion is based on the finding that the item "Dealing with angry/distraught parents," had a mean of 3.37, Field trip volunteer activities had a mean of 3.24, and Classroom volunteer activities had a mean of 3.01 and were the lowest mean preparedness scores.

This conclusion is supported in the literature by Seitsinger et al. (2008) who concludes that there is a limitation in teacher educator's knowledge of the best methods for preparing teachers on effective practices to include and engage parents in meaningful ways (Seitsinger et al., 2008). Further, Chavkin and Williams (1988) assert that it is widely accepted that teachers need a toolbox of skills for involving parents in their child's education, but few education curricula focus on these skills. Lazar et al. (1999) emphasizes the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement pointing out that it is now recognized as one of the most critical influencing factors. They go on to highlight the expectation that teachers actively invite parent involvement and teacher educators need to be concerned with this as well (Lazar et al., 1999).

With the knowledge that these activities received the lowest mean scores, more attention and emphasis should be given to these areas in pre-service and in-service programs. Specifically, more deliberate actions should be taken by both Colleges of Education and school systems through in-service programs to ensure a higher level of preparation among teachers in dealing with parents. Parent Teacher Associations should also initiate parent education programs/workshops to better prepare parents on the role they play as they interact with their child's teachers.

DiCamillo (2001) submits that PTA organizations offer parent education in a variety of ways, including meetings, online resources, training sessions and workshops. Joining a PTA is one of the most convenient options parents have for getting involved at school. Utilizing the PTA as a communication channel for parent education is also a prime opportunity for teachers and administrators to share important information and shape expectations. Taking advantage of the PTA as a vehicle for parent education yields several benefits including improved relationships between teachers and parents, improved school climate and programs customized for specific parent needs (DiCamillo, 2001).

Conclusion Four

According to this sample, undergraduate teacher education programs may be lacking curriculum that prepares new teachers for parental involvement.

This conclusion is based on the finding that pre-service education programs received the lowest calculated total preparedness source score (mean = 1.28, SD = 2.54). While preparation for collaboration on discipline was reported to be the source of preparation cited most often from pre-service training, the lowest reported level of preparedness as well as the lowest score for

source of preparedness from pre-service training was related to dealing with angry/distraught parents.

The body of knowledge on this topic supports this conclusion as there are various studies that focus on parent involvement in their child's education resulting in conclusions that teacher preparation for parent involvement is important enough to warrant inclusion in a teacher preparation curriculum. (Katz & Bauch, 1999; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987).

Patte (2011) summarizes research that contends that the majority of formal teacher education programs in colleges and universities lack content that prepares teachers to understand the importance of and how to establish relationships with parents. Patte states in his 2011 study, "I remember thinking that if I had explored such content and competencies as an undergraduate, my first few years engaging families would have been more meaningful and productive" (Patte, 2011, p. 145). Patte goes on to summarize that teacher preparation programs are not where they need to be in order to equip teachers with the skills and tools necessary for novice teachers to appropriately foster school-family partnerships and do so with confidence (Baum & McMurray-Schwarz, 2004).

This conclusion is supported by literature as well as by personal testimony by teachers who entered the profession feeling unprepared to deal with parental involvement. As stated by a former high school Agriculture teacher, "While I felt that my teacher educator program was excellent, I was not at all prepared to deal with parents when I entered the classroom" (M.F. Burnett, personal communication, June, 16, 2017).

This conclusion lays the foundation for the recommendation that State Departments of Education should include as a certification requirement, content in teacher preparation curricula on how to effectively work with parents. Based on the data collected in this study, dealing with

angry/distraught parents is an area where more attention is needed. Even if not required, Colleges of Education should include in their curriculum role playing situations between teachers and distraught parents. These activities may provide the foundational tools and experience for teachers to avoid being blindsided by the first of such encounters.

An opportunity for further research is the execution of content analysis of teacher education program curricula to determine if, and at what level, the issue of managing parental involvement is being addressed.

Conclusion Five

The greatest source of preparation that teachers reported was On-Own – Experience.

This conclusion is based on the finding that across all items on the questionnaire related to source of preparedness, 100% of the highest frequency values were reported for "On-Own – Experience."

Hiatt-Michael provides support for this conclusion in the literature with her own conclusion that if pre-service teacher education programs are not readying new teachers before they step into the classroom, there will be few chances to obtain the necessary skills (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). However, one such opportunity is through mentoring. While a novice teacher will not have the benefit of years of experience, research on mentoring indicates that much value is gained by identifying someone who can serve as a coach and sounding board during the early years in the profession.

If experience is the greatest source of preparedness for parental involvement, newer, less-experienced teachers can capitalize on the experience of their veteran peers. Therefore, the researcher recommends that schools develop mentoring programs among teachers to steepen the learning curve regarding dealing with parental involvement. Huling and Resta (2001) note

several benefits of mentoring including: professional competency of both the mentor and the protégé, a sense of renewal and commitment to the profession, psychological boost to self-esteem, rich collegial interactions, and contributions to teacher leadership (Huling & Resta, 2001).

The researcher further recommends that administrator certification programs include content on how to design and implement mentoring programs. Many administrators lack the knowledge needed to effectively design, implement and manage mentoring programs.

Conclusion Six

In-service programs did not prepare these teachers for parental involvement.

This conclusion is based on the finding that in-service preparation received low reported preparedness scores in several areas. These include preparation for "Classroom Volunteer Activities" (n = 5, 6.3%), "Face to Face Communication Strategies" (n=7, 8.9%), and "Gaining Parent Trust/Support" (n = 7, 8.9%)

As previously stated, if teacher education programs are not readying new teachers before they step into the classroom, there will be few chances to obtain the necessary skills (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). With the deficiencies in pre-service preparation for parental involvement, one of the only options available to current teachers to gain such preparation is through in-service programs. Based on the researcher's interaction with teachers, this does not seem to be a topic that is appropriately addressed through school in-service or through outside programs or workshops.

The researcher recommends that schools begin to address this issue through in-service program either at the school or district level. Professional associations and conferences should

also play an active part in offering occasions for educating teachers and preparing them for parental involvement.

An opportunity for further research is the execution of content analysis of teacher professional development program curricula to determine if, and at what level, the issue of managing parental involvement is being addressed.

Conclusion Seven

Teachers who obtained certification through alternative teacher education programs reported higher overall preparedness than those certified through traditional teacher education programs.

This conclusion is based on the finding that the mean for the traditional teacher education program was 3.63 (SD = .82). The mean for the alternative teacher education program was 4.02 (SD = .52). The comparison of the mean preparedness between the two groups yielded a significant difference (t_{65} = -2.185, p = .032).

Alternative teacher education programs tend to be condensed and include content deemed to be most relevant to efficiently prepare new teachers for a career in the classroom. Coursework in teaching methods, courses related to content and a student teaching practicum are typically included in such programs. It is reasonable to expect that the curriculum in an alternative teacher education program would include less theory and more real world practical content which may include instruction on dealing with interactions with parents.

Another possible explanation for this conclusion is that teachers who choose an alternative teacher education program may be changing careers and consequently are older than the traditional teacher education program student. They would likely have a breadth of life

experiences that better equip them to manage parental involvement. This is an area where future research is recommended.

Conclusion Eight

Age and Years of Experience have a positive influence on teacher's reported level of preparedness.

This conclusion is based on the finding that the correlation coefficient for Age with Overall Preparedness was .29 (p = .001) and Years of Experience had a correlation coefficient of .29 (p = .001).

It is a reasonable conclusion that as a teacher has more experience, he/she is more mature and more confident in their knowledge and skills. With age and experience, it is also reasonable to expect that these veteran teachers will have encountered a more diverse group of parents and will have partaken in a variety of positive and negative interactions with parents. These experiences inform their future interactions and one would expect those interactions to become more positive due to lessons learned during their career.

At first glance, one might question why education level was not a significant predictor of teacher preparedness, however, since no evidence exists that says managing parental involvement is part of master's degree programs, it is probably to be expected that this relationship was not present. If teachers feel that the educational programs they participated in did not lend to their preparation for managing parental involvement, one cannot expect teachers with advanced degrees to be more prepared than those without.

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From: Institutional R Board
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2017 8:51 AM
To: Susan T Crochet <crochet@lsu.edu>
Cc: Michael F Burnett <vocbur@lsu.edu>
Subject: IRB Application

Hi,
The IRB chair reviewed your application, Teacher Preparation for Managing Parental Involvement in La Private High Schools , and determined IRB approval for this specific application (IRB# E10460) is not needed. There is no manipulation of, nor intervention with, human subjects. Should you subsequently devise a project which does involve the use of human subjects, then IRB review and approval will be needed. Please include in your recruiting statements or intro to your survey, the IRB looked at the project and determined it did not need a formal review.

You can still conduct your study. It falls under a certain category that does not need IRB approval.
Elizabeth

LSU

Elizabeth Cadarette
IRB Coordinator
Office of Research and Economic Development
Louisiana State University
130 David Boyd Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803
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APPENDIX B: REQUEST TO SUPERINTENDENT TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

From: Susan T Crochet

Sent: Friday, May 05, 2017 2:37 PM

To: Anna Larriviere <ALarriviere@diolaf.org>

Subject: Input from high school faculty needed for a research study

Dear Ms. Larriviere,

As we discussed last week, please send the message below to all *high school principals* in the Diocese on Monday morning with a request for forwarding to their *high school faculty*, preferably same day. To make this as easy for you as possible, I've drafted some language that may be appropriate for your preface. Of course, feel free to edit/revise to make it your own.

I don't want you to have any undue burden, but If there is any way to confirm that the message went out to the faculty, I would appreciate knowing that the population of faculty has been reached. If the principal could cc: you (or me) on his/her forward, I would at least know which schools have received the request. I'd like to be able to refine my population and sample numbers as accurately as possible.

Thank you again for your support,

Susan Crochet

_____

Good morning High School Principals,

Managing parental involvement in our schools is an issue of increasing importance to teachers and school administrators. A current study conducted by LSU attempts to address that issue, specifically for private schools. I am aware of this study and fully support participation by our high school faculty. Please forward this message to your faculty today in support of this effort. Have a good day.

Anna

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN SURVEY: <u>Teacher Preparation for Parent Involvement Survey</u>

APPENDIX C: TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear High School Teacher,

I am writing to ask for your help with a study to determine the level of preparedness for managing parental involvement and the source of that preparation among secondary teachers in private high schools in Louisiana.

You have been selected because you are an active high school teacher in the Diocese of Lafayette and your participation will make a valuable contribution to this body of knowledge. Research in this area is lacking, specifically as it relates to the private school setting.

Results from the survey will be used to understand how prepared teachers are to manage parental involvement. By knowing more about how teachers gain the skills necessary for managing parental involvement, pre-service teacher education curricula and in-service programs may be refined to better serve teachers in this area.

Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries where no individual's answers will be identified. The survey is voluntary and more information regarding the approved study is provided on page 1 of the survey. To begin, click the link below, scroll to the bottom of the first page, click Accept, and click the arrow on the bottom right of the screen to access the survey. I know your time is valuable, especially at this time of year, however It should only take 5 minutes of your time to complete. ***Please complete the survey by Friday, May 19, 2017.***

Thank you for very much for helping with this important study.

Susan Crochet   Michael F. Burnett

Director of IT Human Resources & Finance Head, Department of Agricultural Extension

Education Louisiana State University   & Evaluation

                                                 Louisiana State University

Study Title: Teacher Preparation for Managing Parental Involvement in Louisiana Private High Schools

Performance Site: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Investigators:
M-F, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Susan Crochet 337-278-2584 crochet@lsu.edu
Dr. Michael Burnett 225-578-6194   vocbur@lsu.edu

Purpose of the Study:
The primary purpose of this study is to identify fundamental issues surrounding parental involvement in education, conduct survey research to capture the level of preparation of teachers and the source of that preparation to better understand this issue.

Subject Inclusion:
Employed teachers in Louisiana private high schools.

Number of subjects: 100

Study Procedures:
Participants will spend about 10 minutes completing a questionnaire related to their level of preparation for managing several activities involving parents as well as identifying the source of that preparation.

Benefits:
The data obtained in this survey will inform the body of knowledge related to parental involvement in education and possibly influence future teacher preparation programs.

Risks/Discomforts:
Since there is no sensitive information being collected, there are no known risks related to participation in this study.

Measures taken to reduce risk:
The researcher will maintain the confidentiality of the survey results.

Right to Refuse:
Participation in the study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Privacy:
Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

Signature:
The study has been discussed with me and all of my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about participants' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Chairman, LSU Institutional Review Board, 225-578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb.

I agree to participate in this study and completion and submission of the questionnaire constitutes my consent to participate.

Agree - Click arrow below to proceed with the survey

Disagree - Terminate Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey which explores teacher preparation for managing parental involvement in their child's education. For each statement, please indicate your current level of preparedness and in the next section, please indicate the source of that preparation. Below is an example of a complete response.

Indicate your current level of preparedness for interaction with parents on the following activities:

	Level of preparedness (1 = least and 5 = most prepared)				
	1- Poorly Prepared	2 - Slightly Prepared	3 - Somewhat Prepared	4 - Well Prepared	5 - Very Well Prepared
Communicating expectations (e.g. opportunities for interaction)	O	O	O	●	O

Indicate your current level of preparedness for interaction with parents on the following activities:

	Level of preparedness (1 = least and 5 = most prepared)				
	1- Poorly Prepared	2 - Slightly Prepared	3 - Somewhat Prepared	4 - Well Prepared	5 - Very Well Prepared
Communicating expectations (e.g. opportunities for interaction)	O	O	O	O	O
Communicating Positive Achievements	O	O	O	O	O
Written/electronic communciation strategies	O	O	O	O	O
Face to face/phone communication strategies	O	O	O	O	O
Parent/Teacher Conference	O	O	O	O	O
Classroom volunteer activities	O	O	O	O	O
Field trip volunteer activities (e.g. setting boundaries for parent behavior)	O	O	O	O	O
Collaboration on discipline	O	O	O	O	O
Addressing parent concerns	O	O	O	O	O
Dealing with individual differences (e.g. communication styles, personality types)	O	O	O	O	O
Gaining parent trust/support	O	O	O	O	O
Dealing with family adversity (e.g. death, flood, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O
Working with diverse parents (e.g. economic status, ethnicity, race)	O	O	O	O	O
Dealing with angry/distraught parents	O	O	O	O	O

Indicate the source of your preparation for interaction with parents on the following activities:

	Source of Preparation				
	Pre-service - Teacher Education	In-service - School	In-service - Other Workshops	On Own - Experience	Other
Communicating expectations (e.g. opportunities for interaction)	O	O	O	O	O
Communicating Positive Achievements	O	O	O	O	O
Written/electronic communciation strategies	O	O	O	O	O
Face to face/phone communication strategies	O	O	O	O	O
Parent/Teacher Conference	O	O	O	O	O
Classroom volunteer activities	O	O	O	O	O
Field trip volunteer activities (e.g. setting boundaries for parent behavior)	O	O	O	O	O
Collaboration on discipline	O	O	O	O	O
Addressing parent concerns	O	O	O	O	O
Dealing with individual differences (e.g. communication styles, personality types)	O	O	O	O	O
Gaining parent trust/support	O	O	O	O	O
Dealing with family adversity (e.g. death, flood, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O
Working with diverse parents (e.g. economic status, ethnicity, race)	O	O	O	O	O
Dealing with angry/distraught parents	O	O	O	O	O

Gender:

Male

Female

Age:

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 +

Years of Teaching Experience:

0-3 years

4-10 years

10-20 years

20+ years

Subject matter taught:

English

Mathematics

Science

Social Studies

Religion

Physical Education

Visual/Performing Arts

Other

Education level:

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ed Specialist

Doctorate

Other - please specify

Are you a certified teacher?

Yes

No

If you answered yes to question #11, please indicate the type of certification program you completed:

4 year teacher education program

5 year teacher education program

Alternate Post-Baccalaureate Certification Program

Other - Please specify

If you answered no to question #11, are you currently working toward certification?

Yes

No

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VITA

Susan Crochet, a native and resident of New Iberia, LA, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in General Studies from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (USL) in 1993. She immediately began graduate studies at Louisiana State University (LSU) and earned a Master of Business Administration degree in 1995. She worked in the Business Office of an LSU department for several years before deciding to continue her education in the area of Human Resource Education and is expected to receive her Doctorate in Philosophy from LSU in December 2017.

She is currently the Director for the Portfolio Management Office and Talent Management for the Information Technology Services Department at Louisiana State University.