**Linking the Process and Outcomes of Parent Involvement Policy to
the Parent Involvement Gap**

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This study compares what schools are doing to engage parents and analyzes the efficacy of these initiatives across predominantly black, Latino and white schools. Using the NCES Schools and Staffing Surveys (1999-2004), we specify a model that accounts both for factors associated with school policies and practices to engage parents in school- and home-based activities and the extent to which these policies affect parent involvement. Findings indicate that predominantly black and Latino schools achieve significant gains in parent involvement as the number of policies in place to support and encourage participation increases, but that not all programs achieve the same results within or across racial contexts. Further, we find leadership by minority principals, teacher attributes, responsibilities and training, as well as greater shares of Title 1 funding are positively and significantly related to school- and home-based policies across all three racial contexts.

Inequality in educational outcomes for black and Latino students remain substantial

despite increasing gains in civil and political rights over the past fifty years and concerted

efforts among school officials, policymakers and the federal government. For example,

recent data show that the average black-white achievement gap in reading and math has

shrunk by four and roughly nine percentage points respectively since 1992, whereas the

Latino-white achievement gap has remained virtually the same for the past 15 years,

decreasing on average by only one percentage point in reading and three percentage points

in math. Despite narrowing the gap, however, African American students continue to score

lower than Latino students on standardized tests in both reading and math (Planty et al.

2009). At the same time, Latino students have the highest status drop out rate, with 18

percent of those aged 16 through 24 neither enrolled in school nor having earned a high

school credential in 2009; compared to 11 percent for African Americans and 6 percent for

Non-Hispanic whites (Aud et al. 2011).

      Within education circles, this achievement gap is increasingly referred to as the

biggest civil rights issue of this generation (Paige & Witty 2010; Dillon 2009; Fishman-

Lipskey 2012). Although the link between parents' racial and socio-economic backgrounds

and the schooling outcomes of their children is one of the strongest and most enduring

findings in the sociology of education literature (Fan & Chen 2001; Sui-Cho & Willms 1996),

the belief that minority students are lagging behind at least in part because their parents

are not (or cannot be) there for them in the same ways as parents of students who are

achieving at higher levels is also gaining currency, particularly in the black community.[1]

From blogs and articles arguing that the achievement gap is symptomatic of a larger social

gap that is defined not simply by race, ethnicity, and class, but by familial support and

involvement (see e.g., Welch 2009), to speeches by President Obama that repeatedly assert that the "responsibility for our children's education must begin at home," parent involvement and the need to increase and improve it among low-income or minority parents has gained prominence as a critical component of addressing the achievement gap.

All of this attention to parent involvement comes as no surprise to education scholars, who have built a large body of evidence documenting the link between parent involvement, effective schools, and student achievement (Jeynes 2003). For example, Lee and Bowen (2006) argue that addressing the achievement gap must involve recognizing common values among parents and schools and changes in the ways in which opportunities and resources for parent involvement at school and at home are made available to all parents. . Despite agreement among policy makers, practitioners, and researchers about the value of family involvement for both school effectiveness and student achievement, increasing the amount and productivity of this involvement remains illusive. Not only do schools continue to struggle with designing and implementing strong programs of school, family, and community partnerships that link to student success (Sheldon 2005), but research identifying what does and does not work remains insufficient as well.

The present study addresses these gaps by looking explicitly at what schools are doing foster parent engagement in their children's schooling and education and what if any difference these programs and activities make in parents' behavior. In particular, we investigate two questions: (1) How successful are school-based efforts at getting parents to participate in school- and home-based activities? (2) Why do some schools dedicate considerable time and resources to parent involvement while others devote much less

attention to this area? Building on work by Sheldon (2005), Marschall et al. (2012), we develop and test a model that simultaneously considers the determinants and outcomes of school-based parent involvement policies. However, we test this model in three distinct contexts—schools that are comprised by predominantly one racial/ethnic group (white, African American or Latino)—in order to investigate both the extent and determinants of the purported parent involvement gap. In particular, this focus allows us to examine the whether and how these predominantly one race/ethnicity schools vary in terms of what they are doing (i.e., the opportunities, incentives, and expectations they provide to parents vis-à-vis their involvement) and the level and form of parental participation in their children's schooling and education.

Our empirical analysis relies on two waves of the on the National Center for Educational Statistics' Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), 1999-00 and 2003-04. Our findings reveal that predominantly black and Latino schools offer more programs to foster parent involvement than do predominantly white schools, yet these schools still have lower levels of parental participation. However, predominantly black and Latino schools achieve significant gains in parent involvement, in some cases nearly matching levels in predominantly white schools, as the number of policies in place to support and encourage participation increases. This finding provides encouraging evidence that what schools do does make a difference. Our results also indicate that the specific *policies* most strongly associated with parent involvement differ across predominantly white and predominantly black or Latino schools, suggesting the efficacy of some policies (e.g., written contracts) depends on school context and that a one-size-fits-all approach may be misguided.

When it comes to the factors that predict what schools do to promote parent involvement, we find teacher quality and a greater commitment to teacher in-service professional development on the part of school principals are positively and significantly related to parent involvement programs across all three racial contexts. We also find that schools with black and Latino principals have more parent involvement initiatives both within and across racial contexts, whereas schools with white principals are associated with fewer programs, even in predominantly white schools. Last, whereas charter and magnet schools serving predominantly white students offer significantly more parent involvement programs, this is not the case in predominantly black or Latino schools, where there appears to be no difference across schools of choice and traditional public schools.

Explaining Parent Involvement

Research examining racial, ethnic, and nativity differences in parent involvement consistently shows lower rates among minority and immigrant parents compared to their Anglo and U.S. born counterparts (Floyd 1998; Turney & Kao 2009). Why is this, and what if any role do schools play in either widening or narrowing this participation gap? We approach this question by looking at the perspective of parents, focusing attention on individual-level attributes, expectations, and perceptions that can pose as either resources or barriers to participation. From here we consider how school and parent interactions shape parent attitudes toward their child's school and the ways in which these interactions might inhibit or encourage parental involvement in schools. Finally, we look more directly at schools and how they shape these interactions.

Resources and Abilities

One of the most essential factors to parent involvement in schooling includes the extent to which parents able to participate. For parents who possess essential resources like time, money and skills (e.g., communication and organization) the relative costs of participation are typically quite low, thereby explaining why research consistently finds parents of higher socio-economic status (SES) more involved in practically every activity related to children's schooling and education than lower SES parents (Birch & Ferrin 2002; Feuerstein 2000; Griffith 1998). Similarly, parents with higher levels of internal or self-efficacy, typically defined as the beliefs and confidence one has in one's ability to understand and influence desired outcomes, have a relatively easier time participating in their children's education. Here too, studies have consistently found these more involved in their children's schooling than parents who lack these psychological orientations (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Brissie 1987). The fact that minority and immigrant parents tend to have fewer resources and lower levels of self-efficacy and trust partly explains the parent involvement gap. Indeed, studies have found that status barriers, such as limited English proficiency, childcare responsibilities, or inadequate transportation, disproportionately discourage and reduce immigrant and minority parent involvement, especially in formal activities (Floyd 1998; Zhou & Logan 2003).

Expectations and Motives

Even if parents have the ability to participate, they may not do so because they lack the information or understanding of what is expected of them. Indeed, studies have found differences in role expectations and the culturally-specific values and experiences of immigrant and minority populations also account for lower levels involvement among

these parents (Crispeels & Rivero 2001; Lawson 2003). For example, a number of studies find that Latino parents conceptualize their role as one of nurturing, teaching values, and instilling good behavior (Delgado-Gaitan 1996; Trumbull et. al., 2001; Valdes 1996), and therefore are typically less likely to initiate communication and contact with the school staff or volunteer in the classroom than are Anglo parents (Chavkin & Gonazalez 1995). Ethnographic studies point out that Latino parents tend to feel that they are encroaching on the school's territory when asked to take on responsibilities they view as part of the school's domain (Daniel-White 2002; Tinkler 2002).

Culture Capital and the School Environment

In addition to parents' incentives, expectations and abilities, research has examined how school and parent interactions shape parent attitudes toward their child's school and school personnel. Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural capital, which emphasizes social class differences between school personnel and parents and the way such differences may hinder effective communication and mutual understanding, is the foundation for much of this work. As Lareau (1987) explains, because schools represent and reproduce middle and upper class values and forms of communication, schools put lower income and minority parents at a disadvantage because these parents are less able to negotiate and understand norms, expectations, and institutional procedures. Lower levels of involvement among poor, working class, or minority parents, particularly in school-based activities, is therefore a function not simply of parents' own disadvantages and lack of resources, but also of socio-cultural values and practices that conflict with the middle class and white values that typify schools (see also Griffith 1998).   In the context of Latinos, studies cite numerous examples of how parents' feelings of inadequacy or incompetence prevent them from

responding to school requests and invitations (see e.g., Crispeels & Rivero 2001). Even when these parents are deeply committed to their children doing well in school, they are often hesitant to speak directly to the teacher (Valdes 1996).

Though the theory of cultural capital acknowledges the role that schools play in structuring the relationship between school personnel and parents, it treats schools as somewhat passive in this relationship. Indeed, most of the research on parent involvement focuses on individual-level attributes of parents, paying only cursory attention to how specific school-level programs, policies or organizational characteristics might shape the behavior of parents or other school-level actors. If schools are an important piece of the puzzle for parent involvement, we must examine in more detail not only how schools formulate and implement parent involvement policy and practices, but also why some schools devote more time, money and energy to these activities than others?

School-Level Practices to Promote Parent Involvement: Cause & Consequence

While research investigating the causes and consequences of school-level policies and practices to promote parent involvement is relatively rare, the effective schools literature as well as broader theoretical work on the organization of schools and the production and delivery of public goods, provides some guidance. In the fields of public administration and urban politics, scholars have conceptualized schooling as a public good that is 'coproduced' by school personnel and parents. This body of work underscores the critical role of schools in fostering parent involvement and explicitly argues that how schools structure opportunities for parent participation, engage in recruitment efforts, and develop and implement procedures that facilitate the flow of information between parents and schools are critical for establishing and sustaining productive relationships between

schools and parents (Ostrom 1996; Pammer 1992; Sharp 1980). A corollary body of literature from the sociology of education focuses on how school characteristics, practices, and arrangements contribute to a school's capacity to create a successful learning environment (see e.g., Purkey & Smith 1983; Hallinger & Murphy 1986). While parent involvement is one of the core characteristics of the 'effective schools,' identified by this body of work, others include a clear school mission, administrative autonomy, cohesive curriculum, high expectations for student and teacher performance, and the presence of order and discipline within the school (Purkey & Smith 1983).

Empirical studies testing implications from the theories of 'coproduction' and 'effective schools' have found that school attributes are particularly essential in fostering involvement in schools that cannot rely as strongly on the voluntary actions of parents. For example, focusing on two low-income districts in New York City, Schneider, Teske and Marschall (2000) found that disseminating information and providing assistance to parents stimulated significantly greater parent involvement in school-related activities. Similarly, a study of parent involvement in schools serving Latino students found three organizational variables consistently linked to school practices and policies to encourage parent involvement—effective communication among school personnel, a clear and widely shared school mission, and strong leadership (Marschall 2006).

School leadership plays an especially crucial role in whether and how schools engage parents. In particular, principals have the greatest capacity to design and implement formal and informal school policies and shape the norms, expectations, personnel, and culture of the school. For example, principals can shape the 'invitation-involvement' connection by communicating a clear and consistent message to teachers and

other staff regarding the importance of parent involvement. They can also sponsor professional development programs and workshops to help teachers and staff understand and overcome cultural differences and other barriers to parent involvement, interact directly with parents, or implement policies to foster and encourage strong parent-school partnerships (Griffith 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005; Marschall, Shah & Donato 2012). In the context of schools serving minority populations, minority principals are often more aware of the cultural norms that facilitate trust with co-ethnic parents and understand the social hierarchies and avenues for gaining access to racial and ethnic communities (Goodwin 2002). In these schools, co-ethnic principals may therefore be better able to develop effective parent involvement policies and practices than principals who do not share racial/ ethnic characteristics, and this in turn may lead these policies to be more consistently implemented by other school personnel (see e.g., Achinstein & Aguirre 2008; Marschall, Shah & Donato 2012; Nieto 2000).

Teacher invitations and other forms of outreach to involve parents (Epstein & Dauber 1991), as well as teacher attitudes regarding parent participation can also make a difference. For example, some research finds that when teachers make parent involvement part of regular teaching practices, parents are more involved and feel more positive about their abilities to help (Ames 1993). Minority teachers have been found to be instrumental in recognizing and addressing cultural differences that manifest themselves in parental attitudes and behaviors that might be misinterpreted as disengagement or indifference (Cooper 2002; Gordon 2000). Marschall, Shah and Donato (2012) for example, found that the percentage of black, Latino and Asian teachers in established immigrant gateway schools was strongly associated with school activities to engage parents both at home and

in school. Without linguistically and culturally sensitive school personnel, parents may view school-based activities as less welcoming (Daniel-White 2002). Thus, similar to minority principals, minority teachers may foster greater communication, trust, and cultural understanding, which purportedly help to foster greater parent involvement and the implementation of programs and policies better tailored to address the specific issues and problems that might be getting in the way of parent participation.

Finally, studies find that organizational characteristics of charter schools, which in many jurisdictions serve predominantly minority and low-income parents, are associated with both greater opportunities for parent involvement and higher levels of parent participation (Bifulco & Ladd 2006). Similarly, smaller schools and schools with well-articulated missions have also been consistently associated with more productive forms of parent outreach (Bauch & Goldring 1995; Schneider et al. 2000).

Overall, insights from this disparate body of work points to a number of important implications regarding the role of schools in minority parent involvement. First, it suggests that whereas schools may be engaging in outreach with parents, these efforts may not be effective for all types of parents. Limited access to material resources, coupled with role orientations that do not conform to those of whites or Anglos often places racial and ethnic minority parents at a disadvantage. Second, in light of these limited resources, school-level factors may be particularly important in shaping parent attitudes and behaviors towards schools and schooling. The 'invitation-involvement' connection literature suggests that who does the asking may be as important as what is asked, and evidence supports the idea that teacher training regarding how to foster parent involvement may be a central indicator of how school culture shapes parent involvement. Moreover, from the cultural

capital perspective, lower levels of involvement among minority or low SES parents, particularly in school-based activities, are at least partly a function of the inability of schools to create communities, organizational forms, and modes of communication that adapt to or even embrace the socio-cultural values and practices of these parents. And finally, research finds that racial and ethnic congruence among school staff/administrators and parents may be an important link between the offer and acceptance to participate and more generally, the development of positive school-parent relationships.

Our review of how school organization and culture, as well as leadership and staff, impact school policies and practices lead us to expect schools with coproductive efforts, elements of effective schools, and strong leadership to implement programs and policies that positively influence parent involvement. An empirical question, however, is the extent to which these factors matter across different racial contexts. We now turn to the empirical analysis, where we specify and test a model of the two distinct but related processes we have outlined in the preceding section.

Data and Methods

Our analysis of parent involvement considers not simply the factors that shape parents' decisions to participate in their children's schools, but also how leadership, teacher attributes and other characteristics of schools influence what schools are doing to foster parent involvement in the first place. The National Center for Educational Statistics' Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), administered every four years to a nationally representative sample of U.S. schools and districts, include an array of these indicators. While we are interested in the parent involvement gap across racial/ethnic groups, our focus on schools with predominantly Latino, African American, or Anglo students is also

justified by the fact that black and Latino students now attend more racially and socio-economically segregated schools than they did in previous decades.[2] According to Orfield (2009), these schools enroll on average nearly three-fourths minority students. In order to increase the variability across different contexts and ensure a large sample size, we merge the 1999-2000 and 2003-04 SASS files,[3] yielding 1,039 predominantly black schools, 551 predominantly Latino schools, and 9,828 predominantly white schools.

Parent Involvement and Opportunities to Participate: What Schools Report

Figure 1 displays principals' estimates of the proportion of parents participating in three parent involvement activities for predominantly African American, Latino and white schools: (1) open houses, (2) parent-teacher conferences and (3) special events such as science fairs or concerts.[4] Not surprisingly, schools with predominantly white parents have the highest levels of parent involvement in each of these "traditional" activities. Roughly 60 percent of these parents reportedly attend parent-teacher conferences and open houses and nearly 55 percent participate in special events.[5] Given the additional barriers (language, citizenship) faced by Latino parents, we might have expected Latinos to exhibit the lowest levels of involvement, but Figure 1 shows a higher rate of participation in predominantly Latino schools as compared to predominantly African American schools. In fact, participation rates in predominantly Latino schools are closer to those of predominantly white than black schools on two of the three measures, and in only one case (special events) fall below 50 percent. On the other hand, fewer than half of parents in predominantly black schools participate in each of the three activities, with only a third reportedly attending special events.[6]

[Figure 1 here]

To what extent do schools with different racial/ethnic compositions vary with regard to the programs and practices they pursue to foster parent involvement? Figure 2 provides a preliminary look at this question by reporting bivariate relationships between school racial/ethnic composition and principal reports of whether their school had each of the following: (1) parent education workshops or classes, (2) a written contract between the school and parents, (3) opportunities for parents to serve as volunteers in the schools on a regular basis, (4) a reliable system of communication with parents, such as newsletters or phone trees, (5) services to support parent participation, such as providing childcare or transportation; a requirement that teachers: (6) send information home to parents explaining school lessons, (7) provide suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child, (8) create homework assignments that involve parents.

[Figure 2 Here]

What we see here is a strikingly different pattern than the one reported in Figure 1. Whereas parents in predominantly white schools were reported to have the highest rates of participation, Figure 2 shows these same schools are least likely to offer all but one (reliable system of communication) of the programs designed to foster parent involvement. Indeed, we see the largest gaps in school-based initiatives that require teachers to involve parents in student learning at home, where predominately black schools are almost three times more likely to require homework that involves parents and twice as likely to require suggestions to parents about activities they can do at home with their child than are predominately white schools. Similarly, whereas more than two-thirds of predominantly black and Latino schools report providing parent workshops or written contracts between parents and the school, less than half of predominately white schools do. Finally,

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predominantly Latino schools are significantly more likely to report offering support services like child care or transportation (48%) than are either predominately black (31%) or white (25%) schools.

These patterns are consistent with resource and class-based explanations of parent involvement (Bourdieu 1977; Lareau 1987) that suggest involvement among white parents stems more from voluntary actions and thus does not require as much programming or infrastructure on the part of schools as might be the case for Latino or African American parents. On the other hand, in predominantly minority schools, the lack of resources and lower levels of white, middle class cultural capital suggest that schools must take a more active and aggressive role in stimulating and directing parent engagement and action towards traditional parent involvement activities. Yet as we suggested previously, resource and class-based explanations are less helpful in accounting for differences ***among*** minority parents, and in this case ***across*** Latino and African American parents situated in schools hyper-segregated along racial/ethnic lines. Further, these explanations would not have predicted the pattern of behavior for minority parents depicted in Figure 1, nor do they provide any leverage in understanding whether and how school policies and practices in the area of parent involved are related to these patterns.

Modeling Parent Involvement

We now turn our attention to explaining levels of parent involvement in these predominantly black, Latino and white schools. Our goal here is to not only assess the impact and significance of different school-initiated efforts to recruit, inform, and support parent involvement, but to also explicitly account for school-level factors that shape whether and how schools target their efforts.   Our analysis is based on *Seemingly Unrelated*

Regression (SUR) because we believe the outcome for both equations is influenced by the same set of exogenous factors, thereby leading to correlated errors terms across equations (Zellner 1962).[7] We thus have multiple regression equations that can be expressed as:

$$y_{it} = x'_{it}\beta_i + \varepsilon_{it}, \quad i = 1, \ldots, m.$$

Here i represents the equation number, and $t = 1, \ldots, T$ is the observation index. Each equation i has a single response variable y_{it}, and a k_i-dimensional vector of regressors x_{it}. If we stack observations corresponding to the i-th equation into T-dimensional vectors and matrices, then the model can be written in vector form as

$$y_i = X_i\beta_i + \varepsilon_i, \quad i = 1, \ldots, m,$$

where y_i and ε_i are $T{\times}1$ vectors, X_i is a $T{\times}k_i$ matrix, and β_i is a $k_i{\times}1$ vector. Stacking these on top of each other, the system will take the form:

$$\begin{pmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \\ \vdots \\ y_m \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} X_1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & X_2 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \cdots & X_m \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \beta_1 \\ \beta_2 \\ \vdots \\ \beta_m \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \varepsilon_1 \\ \varepsilon_2 \\ \vdots \\ \varepsilon_m \end{pmatrix} = X\beta + \varepsilon.$$

The assumption of the model is that error terms ε_{it} are independent across time, but may have cross-equation contemporaneous correlations.

We estimate separate SUR models for each of the three racial/ethnic contexts with the following two sets of equations:

[1]   School Policies/Practices = ʃ {Leadership + School-level Factors + Controls + ε}

[2]   Parent Involvement = ʃ {School Policies/Practices + Leadership + School-level

       Factors + Controls + ε}

Dependent Variables

Parent Involvement includes three variables measuring principals' estimates of the proportion of parents reportedly participating in: (1) Open Houses, (2) Parent-Teacher Conferences and (3) Special Events such as science fairs or concerts (see footnote 2).

School Policies/Practices is a vector that includes two indices that measure school efforts to foster school- and home-based involvement respectively. The school-based policy index (*School-Based*) taps both the extent of opportunities for parent involvement and school programs and resources that attempt to help parents overcome barriers to participation: (1) parent workshops, (2) a written contracts, (3) opportunities for parent volunteers, (4) communication systems, (5) support services.[8] We constructed a summated rating scale with these five indictors to represent the dependent variable in the first set of equations, but estimated separate SUR models with both the index and the individual items as independent variables in the second set of equations. This approach allows us to discern the independent effects of each policy or program on levels of parent involvement.

The second index includes three indicators regarding what schools require teachers to do vis-à-vis parent involvement at home (*Home-Required*): (1) send information home explaining school lessons, (2) provide suggestions for activities parents can do at home, (3) create homework assignments that involve parents (see Figure 2). Since school programs regarding home-based learning presumably operate more indirectly on parent involvement in school-based activities we use only the index (and not the individual items) in the second set of equations.

Explanatory Variables

Our explanatory variables capture the factors noted in the effective schools and coproduction literature and are expected to influence both the participatory behavior of parents (as reported by principals) and the type and degree of policies and programs schools offer to foster these behaviors. The first of these is *Leadership.* Given our interest in comparing the effects of leadership across different racial/ethnic contexts, our conceptualization focuses on the role of co-ethnic school leaders. We measure the racial/ethnic identity of the principal (*Black Principal, Latino Principal*) with the expectation that minority schools with a co-ethnic principal will be associated with more school programs and policies promoting parent involvement and higher levels of parent involvement as well.

The second vector, *School-level Factors,* include a set of variables that measure specific dimensions of effective schools as well as the resources or socio-economic status of families whose children attend the school. In terms of effective schools measures, we focus on teacher autonomy, high expectations for teacher performance, minority representation within the teaching force, and school culture and climate. *Teacher Professional Development* is an index constructed from three survey questions that asked principals: (1) whether schools provide teachers with time for professional development during regular contract hours (1= yes; 0=no), (2) how often professional development for teachers in the school is planned by teachers in the school or district, and (3) how often professional development for teachers in the schools is accompanied by the resources that teachers need (e.g., time and materials) to make changes in the classroom.[9] The index ranges in value from 0-3 such that higher values are associated with stronger commitment to teachers' professional development. In addition to tapping principal leadership, schools that devote time and

support to professional development programming may focus more attention on parent

involvement and enhance teachers' abilities to connect with parents and foster higher

levels of parent involvement in school. *High Performing Teachers* is based on a survey

question that asked principals what percentage of teachers in their school were teaching to

high academic standards, and *Teacher Influence* is an index constructed from a set of

questions asking principals how much influence teachers had on school policy and

decision-making in six different areas: (1) curriculum, (2) performance standards, (3)

evaluating teachers, (4) setting discipline policy, (5) deciding how the school budget will be

spent, (6) determining the content of in-service professional development programs for

teachers at this school.[10] The index ranges in value from 0 to 5, where larger values are

associated with more teacher influence. We expect schools where teachers have a greater

voice in decision making or are of higher quality to exercise a stronger role in designing

and implementing policies and practices regarding parent involvement. We also expect

such teachers to be more effective at engaging parents, thus leading to higher levels of

parent involvement in the three activities we examine here.

Given the body of literature that links co-ethnic teachers to effective schools and

outcomes, we expect minority representation in the teaching force to be associated with

greater levels of parent involvement. Thus, we include the percentage of black, Latino, and

white teachers (*Percent Black, White, and Latino Teachers*), as well as the representation of

bilingual or ESL Teachers on staff (*Percent Bilingual/ESL Teachers*). Finally, another

characteristic of effective schools is the presence of order and discipline. To operationalize

this we include two variables constructed from survey questions that asked principals how

much they perceived *Teacher Absenteeism* and *Discipline* to be problems in their schools.[11]

We expect these to be associated with lower levels of parent involvement, but to also be negatively correlated to school policies and practices regarding school-parent relations.

In addition to effective schools measures, we also include an indicator of parent resources and the class composition of schools. We operationalize this by the proportion of Title 1 (*Proportion Title 1*) students in the school or in other words, the proportion of students eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. This variable serves as a proxy for the number of students in a school who are near or below the poverty line. We expect schools where more parents lack financial resources will have lower levels of parent involvement and a wider gap between school and parent norms and expectations about institutional procedures. However, these schools should also be offering more policies and providing additional supports to parents in order to overcome these disadvantages.[12]

Finally, *Controls*, includes a set of covariates that likely affect both levels of parent involvement and the extent to which schools provide programs and support to foster this involvement. First, since schools of choice are believed to be more likely to embody the characteristics of effective schools (Purkey & Smith 1983; Hallinger & Murphy 1986), including higher levels of parent involvement, we include measures for whether the school is a *Charter* or *Magnet* (1=yes, 0 otherwise), as well as a measure of *School Size* (total students logged). In addition, since parent involvement is most prevalent in *Elementary Schools*, we include a binary variable that controls for this (1=yes, 0 otherwise). Last, we control for the school's location, and include a dummy variable for *Urban* (1=yes, 0 otherwise). Table 1 lists the summary statistics by each of the three school contexts.

[Table 1 here]

Analysis and Findings

Tables 2-4 report the full results for the two SUR model estimates in predominantly black, Latino and white schools respectively. We begin with the determinants of parent involvement, and the question of how efficacious school efforts are in engaging parents. In particular, do school-based policies foster parent involvement across different racial contexts and can they contribute to narrowing the gap between predominantly white and predominantly minority schools?

[Tables 2-4 Here]

Focusing on columns 3-5 in the Tables 2-4 we find that across all three racial contexts, school-based and home-required policies are positively related to levels of parent involvement. That is, each additional policy implemented by a school is associated with greater participation. To examine these relationships within each racial context more closely, in Figure 3, we plot the predicted marginal effects of the school policy index by each of the three parent involvement indicators and across the three racial contexts.

[Figure 3 Here]

Figure 3 illustrates that irrespective of what schools do, parents in predominantly black and Latino schools participate at lower rates than parents in predominantly white schools. The gap between predominantly white and predominantly minority schools is greatest when there are no efforts put forth by the school (school policy index = 0). However, as the number of school policies to encourage and support parent involvement increases, the gap between white and minority schools decreases (*Special Events* is the exception). For example, the gap in parent-teacher conference attendance narrows from 0.14 to 0.05. Interestingly, the gap between black and Latino schools gets larger for the open house measure, where we see parents in Latino schools almost matching the

participation rate of parents in white schools, but parents in black schools participating at a lower rate. In addition, while school-based policies have large and significant effects for parent involvement in all three racial contexts, the greatest effects are found in predominantly Latino schools. For example, participation in parent-teacher conferences increases by over 30 percentage points in predominantly Latino schools going from no policies to all of the policies in our index (0→1), whereas the increase in closer to 20 percentage points in predominantly black and white schools.

We find similar effects of home-required policies on parent participation, but the changes are smaller. The proportion of parents participating in each activity is again greatest in predominantly white schools when no home-required policies are offered: for example, 57 percent of parents in predominantly white schools participate in open houses compared to 43 percent in black schools, and 52 percent in Latino schools. And again, even when schools offer all three home-required policies, parents in predominantly white schools participate more. But the gap between school contexts diminishes, especially in predominantly Latino schools. Specifically, the gap in attendance at parent-teacher conferences between Latino and white schools drops from 0.07 with no home-required policy to 0.005 with all home-required policies and from 0.16 to 0.09 for special events.

These results make a strong case for the efficacy of school policies and practices, especially in Latino schools. However, they cannot tell us which school-based policies matter most. To answer this question, we reran the models substituting the individual items comprising the *School-based Policy Index* for the index. Table 5 reports the SUR estimates for this set of covariates by racial context, for each of the three dependent variables.

[Table 5 Here]

As these results indicate, the most consistent policy variable affecting parent involvement is regular volunteer opportunities. The coefficient on this variable is significant and positive in each of the nine equations, providing strong evidence that schools can foster greater involvement by simply providing more opportunities for parents to participate. For parents in predominantly black schools, on-going and consistent volunteer opportunities translate to roughly 10 percent more parents attending open houses and special events and 8 percent more parents participating in parent-teacher conferences. These effects are roughly equivalent in predominantly white schools, but quite a bit stronger in predominantly Latino schools (0.17, 0.11, and 0.12 respectively).

Another policy variable strongly and consistently associated with levels of parent involvement is support programs. In all three racial contexts, schools that provide assistance to parents in the form of childcare and transportation have higher levels of parent involvement (ranging from 4-7 percent more participation) than schools that do not. Though workshops are less consistently significant and also have less substantive effects, they nevertheless provide a boost in levels of parent involvement, particularly in predominantly white schools.

Apart from these similarities in the effects of the school-policy variables, there are some important differences across the racial composition of schools. For example, written contracts between schools and parents are negatively associated with levels of involvement in predominantly white schools, yet positively associated with parent-teacher conferences and open houses in black and Latino schools respectively. In predominantly white schools, the presence a reliable communication system (e.g., phone trees, newsletters) yields

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between 10-13 percent more parents participating. Yet, in predominantly black and Latino schools, the presence of such communication systems has no effect on levels of parent involvement. This set of findings indicates that there is no 'one-size fits all' to school-based initiatives to engage parents, that some policies and practices might work better in particular school contexts and that other factors, such as the broader school culture, who does the asking, or expectations on the part of parents or school personnel also play an important role whether and how parents get involved in school-based activities.

Returning to the full table of results (Tables 2-4), we find other school-level covariates also matter. In particular, schools with larger percentages of teachers teaching to high standards are associated with higher levels parent involvement across racial contexts. The biggest effects are in predominantly Latino schools, where an increase from 50-100 percent of teachers teaching to high standards (the average range one standard deviation above and below the mean across racial contexts) is associated with a 12 percent increase in parent involvement in open houses (compared to 6 and 8 percent in predominantly black and white schools). Moreover, schools with discipline and teacher absenteeism problems report less parent involvement, further substantiating the role of leadership, effective teachers and school culture in shaping the extent of parent engagement in schools. For example, predominantly black [Latino] schools with "serious" discipline problems have 8.6 [10.5] percent fewer parents participating in open houses compared to schools where principals report "no" discipline problems. The problems posed by teacher absenteeism seem to be greatest in the predominantly white schools – across all three parent participation activities, we find negative and significant results.

We were surprised by the consistent and negative impact of co-ethnic teachers for parent involvement in predominantly black and Latino schools, which contrasts with the positive results for white teachers in predominantly white schools. Substantively, however, the effects are small: increasing the proportion of teachers that are black from 0.5 to 0.7 leads to a modest 1.4 percent fewer parents attending open houses and roughly 2 percent fewer attending parent-teacher conferences or special events. This relationship is reversed in predominantly white schools where a similar increase in the proportion of white teachers is associated with 0.5 percent more parents participating in open houses and 2.5 and 1.4 percent more parents attending conferences and special events respectively.

The effect of the proportion of Title 1 students also varies according to the racial context of schools. In predominantly black and Latino schools, coefficients indicate no association between greater shares of disadvantaged students (and thus parents) and levels of parent involvement, whereas in predominantly white schools two of the three models reveal a positive relationship. Thus our findings suggest that class-based arguments commonly found in the culture capital literature are less relevant in some contexts.

Finally, past research finds that charter and magnet schools have greater levels of parent involvement, as they demonstrate many of the characteristics of 'effective schools.' This finding is confirmed for predominantly black and white schools, but not for schools that serve predominantly Latino students. All else equal, predominantly black charter schools have 52.4 percent of parents attending open houses, compared to 44 percent in "traditional" public schools. Similarly, a predominantly white charter school has 7.2 percent more parent participation (65.4 versus 58.2%) than its traditional school counterpart. The null effects for Latino schools may indicate that whereas these parents in

these schools are active in choosing their schools, this form of participation does not translate into greater involvement in school activities.

Explaining Parent Involvement Policies

The previous discussion asserts that school policies make a difference in parent involvement outcomes and reduce the parent involvement gap. We now turn to the model that examines what schools are doing to promote parent involvement in the first place and how school-factors shape what types of policies and practices schools implement. What determines what types of policies schools offer, and how does this vary by the racial context of the school?

Turning again to Tables 2-4, this time we focus on the first panel (columns 1-2), which displays the results for the models predicting schools' scores on the school-based and home-required policy indices. Looking first at the effects of co-ethnic leadership, we find strong, positive effects for black principals, somewhat weaker effects for Latino principals and negative effects for white principals. Specifically, the presence of a black principal in a predominantly black school increases the home-required policy index from 0.53 to 0.61, and a predominantly Latino school with a Latino principal has 0.05 more home-required policies (0.48 versus 0.43). However, we also find effects of black and Latino principals across racial contexts—with Latino principals positively associated with greater school- and home-based initiatives in predominantly black schools and black principals having similar effects in predominantly Latino schools. This pattern of findings suggests that the effects of cultural brokers are not based exclusively on shared racial/ethnic identity (see also Marschall, Shah & Donato 2012).

Several of the variables tapping teacher attributes, responsibilities and training are also positive and significant across the racial contexts, confirming the hypothesis that schools that emphasize staff training and development within a collaborative environment are associated with increased attention to policies and practices that engage parents. For example, we find strong effects for professional development across the three racial contexts: on average, moving from 1 to 5 on the index results in a 0.12 increase on the school-based index and 0.27 on the home-required index across all three racial contexts. Likewise, schools with higher scores on the *Teacher Influence* index are associated with significantly more school-based policies (predominantly black and white schools), and home-required policies (predominantly white schools).

The results in Tables 2-4 also indicate that whereas charter and magnet schools serving predominantly white students offer significantly more school and home-required policies, this is not the case in predominantly black or Latino schools, where there appears to be no difference across schools of choice and traditional public schools. This finding suggests that higher levels of parent involvement in charter and magnet schools serving predominantly minority students may be driven primarily by selection effects (e.g., the concentration of more involved parents in these schools) rather than differences in school outreach or programming designed to increase parent participation. In predominantly white schools however, magnet and charter schools appear to be doing more to foster parent involvement and these efforts may be at least partly responsible for the higher levels of involvement in these schools compared to 'traditional' public schools.

Last, we find consistent and positive effects of Title 1 on school efforts to engage parents. Predominantly black schools with 70 percent of students receiving Title 1 funds

(one standard deviation above the mean) score 0.73 on the school-based policy index and 0.63 on the home-required policy, as opposed to 0.69 (0.6) in schools with 25 percent Title 1 students (the mean). Similarly, schools with predominantly Latino students see a 0.05 increase in school-based practices with a 10 percent increase in Title 1 recipients. These findings suggest that schools recognize the greater disadvantages of their parents and respond by offering additional resources, support and programming with hopes of increasing parent participation in schools.

Conclusion and Implications

If parent involvement is, as conventional wisdom and a host of scholarly research suggests, critically linked to school effectiveness and student outcomes, understanding better what schools serving minority students are doing to engage parents and how efficacious these initiatives are may help reduce disparities in parent involvement and ultimately bridge the achievement gap. In this study, we first analyzed and compared the extent to which school policies and practices affect levels of parent involvement in traditional school activities across three different racial contexts, focusing foremost on how these policies might lead to smaller gap in parent involvement. We then turned to the question of what schools are doing to promote parent involvement in the first place and how school-factors shape the types of policies and practices schools implement.

Our findings confirm that predominantly white schools have higher levels of parent involvement, fewer programs and policies in place explicitly designed to foster this involvement, and a greater return on these policies (i.e., these policies are more strongly and consistently associated with increases in parent participation). Moreover, findings from our study clearly demonstrate that school efforts to engage parents by providing

opportunities for involvement as well as resources and incentives to support and encourage this involvement make a significant difference in the extent of parent involvement in predominantly black and Latino schools. Given that socio-economic resources and cultural capital that rewards white, middle class social assets are in relatively shorter supply in predominantly minority schools, it should come as no surprise that these schools must do more to initiate and sustain parent involvement. Yet the additional effort (and associated costs) put forth by predominantly minority schools is by no means wasted. Indeed, as the number of policies in place to support and encourage participation increases, predominantly minority schools achieve significant gains in parent involvement, in some cases nearly matching levels in predominantly white schools.

When it comes to how school-level factors shape the nature and extent of parent involvement programming in schools, this study underscores the important role of effective teachers, leadership, and schooling arrangements. In particular, we find similarities in the effects of teacher attributes, responsibilities, and training on parent involvement policies across all three racial contexts. Our empirical analysis reveals that schools devoting more time and support to teacher professional development implement significantly more policies and programs promoting parent involvement in both school- and home-based activities. In these schools, having more teachers who teach to high standards is also linked to more school initiatives to engage parents in assisting their children with schoolwork and learning at home. Thus, effective teachers can and do make a difference in the extent to which schools serving both minority and white students prioritize and invest in parent involvement.

We also find significant differences across contexts. In particular, black and Latino principals are associated with greater school- and home-based initiatives both within and across racial contexts, whereas white principals are associated with fewer programs, even in predominantly white schools. This pattern suggests that who does the asking and how the asking is done is important, and that the effects of cultural brokers are not based exclusively on shared racial/ethnic identity. In addition, we find interesting and potentially troubling differences in the effects of charter and magnet schools across minority and white schools. While levels of parent involvement are higher in these schools than in traditional public schools regardless of racial context, in predominantly black and Latino schools these gains seem to be driven less from school-based efforts to foster parent involvement and more by concentrating the involved parents in these schools. However, evidence of this kind of 'selection effect' is not as striking in charter and magnet schools serving white students. Given recent calls to expand charter schools and the fact that most charter schools serve minority and low-income students, this finding warrants further investigation.

While the present study makes an important contribution to understanding the process and outcomes of school-based parent involvement initiatives across different contexts, considerably more work needs to be done. In particular, multi-level datasets that include information from both schools and parents would allow for both direct measures of parent involvement by parents' racial and ethnic backgrounds and additional controls for socio-economic status, nativity, gender, age and family structure. In addition, multi-level data would permit stronger and more nuanced analyses of the myriad ways in which the

racial/ethnic and socio-economic contexts of schools affect the attitudes and behaviors of parents, teachers, and principals of different socio-demographic backgrounds.

During his campaign for the presidency, Barack Obama referred to the large race- and class-based achievement gaps among U.S. students as "morally unacceptable and economically untenable." While increasing parent involvement in predominantly black and Latino schools is not a panacea for the problems of these schools, building stronger, more effective partnerships between schools and parents in these communities could certainly be an important part of the solution.

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Table 1: Summary Statistics

Variable	Predominantly Black Schools (n=1039)		Predominantly Latino Schools (n=551)		Predominantly White Schools (n=9828)		
	Mean	StdDev	Mean	StdDev	Mean	StdDev	Range
School Based	0.693	0.239	0.725	0.242	0.582	0.231	(0,1)
Home Required	0.591	0.385	0.450	0.392	0.309	0.348	(0,1)
Parent Involvement in Open House	0.447	0.262	0.535	0.275	0.581	0.288	(0, 0.9)
Parent Involvement in PT Conference	0.428	0.272	0.550	0.314	0.591	0.311	(0, 0.9)
Parent Involvement in Special Events	0.331	0.263	0.409	0.284	0.540	0.295	(0, 0.9)
Black Principal	0.677	0.468	0.082	0.275	0.019	0.135	(0,1)
Latino Principal	0.014	0.116	0.427	0.495	0.010	0.102	(0,1)
White Principal	0.318	0.466	0.514	0.500	0.971	0.167	(0,1)
% High Performing Teachers	73.24	22.20	75.86	19.73	81.70	16.99	(0,100)
Teacher Influence	3.270	0.686	3.511	0.661	3.498	0.634	(1,5)
Professional Development	3.776	0.690	3.816	0.705	3.621	0.652	(1, 5)
Teacher Absenteeism	1.357	0.870	1.390	0.926	1.409	1.090	(0,3)
Discipline	2.471	0.636	2.511	0.651	2.488	0.707	(1,4)
% Black Teachers	0.543	0.276	0.061	0.132	0.015	0.053	(0,1)
% Latino Teachers	0.020	0.067	0.358	0.272	0.015	0.077	(0, 1)
% White Teachers	0.427	0.272	0.557	0.276	0.961	0.103	(0,1)
# Bilingual Staff			1.951	3.446			(0, 36)
Charter School	0.036	0.186	0.033	0.179	0.008	0.090	(0,1)
Magnet School	0.116	0.321	0.098	0.297	0.024	0.152	(0,1)
Number of Students (log)	6.121	0.800	6.301	1.066	6.055	0.935	(0.7,8.6)
Elementary School	0.664	0.473	0.692	0.462	0.602	0.490	(0,1)
Proportion Title 1	0.266	0.415	0.332	0.437	0.078	0.209	(0,1)
Urban	0.572	0.495	0.521	0.500	0.121	0.327	(0,1)

Table 2: SUR Estimates for Predominantly Black Schools

	Determinants of Parent Involvement Policy		Determinants of Parent Involvement		
	School-Based	Home-required	Open House	Prnt-Tchr Conference	Special Events
School-based Policy Index			0.164***	0.204***	0.184***
			(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.037)
Home-required Policy Index			0.039^	0.057*	0.055*
			(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Black Principal	0.035*	0.120***	0.040*	0.017	0.034^
	(0.017)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Latino Principal	0.100^	0.173*	0.057	-0.018	0.069
	(0.057)	(0.094)	(0.064)	(0.068)	(0.065)
% High Performing Teachers	0.000	0.0009^	0.001***	0.001**	0.0006^
	(0.000)	(0.0005)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.0003)
Teacher Influence	0.031**	0.031	0.007	0.012	-0.005
	(0.011)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Professional Development	0.032**	0.068***	0.012	0.016	0.012
	(0.010)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Teacher Absenteeism	0.006	-0.007	-0.002	-0.005	-0.007
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Discipline	0.012	-0.003	-0.026*	0.004	-0.014
	(0.012)	(0.019)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)
% Black Teachers	0.004	0.046	-0.084**	-0.106**	-0.103**
	(0.028)	(0.047)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.032)
% Latino Teachers	0.016	0.106	-0.082	-0.149	-0.053
	(0.108)	(0.178)	(0.120)	(0.127)	(0.122)
Charter	0.014	0.003	0.079*	0.061	0.217***
	(0.036)	(0.059)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.041)
Magnet	0.033	-0.010	0.116***	0.040	0.068**
	(0.022)	(0.036)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.025)
Student Enrollment (Log)	0.044***	0.024^	0.044***	0.014	0.046***
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Elementary School	0.124***	0.206***	0.089***	0.075***	0.042*
	(0.015)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Proportion Title 1	0.101***	0.067*	0.021	0.010	0.021
	(0.017)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Urban	0.061***	0.050*	-0.004	0.022	-0.016
	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Constant	-0.039	-0.239	-0.106	-0.028	-0.150
	(0.078)	(0.128)	(0.087)	(0.092)	(0.088)
n	1039	1039	1039	1039	1039
r2	0.164	0.140	0.151	0.125	0.135

*** p ≤ .001; ** p ≤ 01; * p ≤ .05 ^ p ≤ .10, two-tailed test.

Table 3: SUR Estimates for Predominantly Latino Schools

	Determinants of Parent Involvement Policy		Determinants of Parent Involvement		
	School-Based	Home-required	Open House	Prnt-Tchr Conference	Special Events
School-based Policy Index			0.283***	0.303***	0.188***
			(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.053)
Home-required Policy Index			0.034	0.093**	0.088**
			(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.030)
Black Principal	0.025	0.100^	-0.018	0.016	-0.057
	(0.034)	(0.061)	(0.039)	(0.043)	(0.042)
Latino Principal	-0.032	0.059^	0.008	-0.007	0.038
	(0.020)	(0.037)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.025)
% High Performing Teachers	-0.000	0.002*	0.002***	0.001*	0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Teacher Influence	-0.002	-0.007	-0.001	-0.021	0.023
	(0.016)	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Professional Development	0.032*	0.082***	0.003	0.024	0.014
	(0.014)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Teacher Absenteeism	-0.007	0.037	0.008	-0.005	-0.034*
	(0.012)	(0.021)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.014)
Discipline	0.000	-0.031	-0.013	-0.010	-0.035^
	(0.015)	(0.027)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.018)
% Black Teachers	-0.051	0.279*	-0.020	-0.145	-0.199*
	(0.074)	(0.132)	(0.085)	(0.094)	(0.090)
% Latino Teachers	0.111**	0.017	-0.021	-0.089^	-0.042
	(0.038)	(0.068)	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.047)
% Bilingual Staff	0.009***	0.006	0.002	0.005	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Charter	-0.007	0.098	0.074	0.075	0.023
	(0.051)	(0.091)	(0.058)	(0.064)	(0.062)
Magnet	0.022	0.055	0.007	0.014	0.013
	(0.031)	(0.056)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.038)
Student Enrollment (Log)	0.069***	0.031^	0.044***	-0.002	0.049***
	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Elementary School	0.138***	0.157***	0.157***	0.225***	0.095***
	(0.021)	(0.037)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.027)
Proportion Title 1	0.051*	-0.023	0.027	0.011	0.047
	(0.023)	(0.040)	(0.026)	(0.029)	(0.028)
Urban	0.013	-0.037	-0.042*	-0.033	-0.052*
	(0.019)	(0.034)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Constant	0.033	-0.302	-0.223*	0.083	-0.229*
	(0.095)	(0.169)	(0.109)	(0.121)	(0.116)
n	551	551	551	551	551
r2	0.248	0.118	0.263	0.304	0.221

*** p ≤ .001; ** p ≤ 01; * p ≤ .05 ^ p ≤ .10, two-tailed test.

**Table 4: SUR Estimates for Predominantly White Schools**

	Determinants of Parent Involvement Policy		Determinants of Parent Involvement		
	School-Based	Home-Required	Open House	Prnt-Tchr Conference	Special Events
School-based Policy Index			0.198***	0.192***	0.162***
			(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Home-required Policy Index			0.030***	0.026**	0.016*
			(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
White Principal	-0.021	-0.102***	-0.002	0.032*	0.036*
	(0.013)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.016)
% High Performing Teachers	0.001***	0.001***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Teacher Influence	0.019***	-0.005	0.022***	0.037***	0.019***
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Professional Development	0.036***	0.052***	0.012**	-0.005	0.008
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Teacher Absenteeism	-0.002	0.006	-0.024***	-0.028***	-0.037***
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Discipline	-0.001	0.012	-0.009^	0.000	-0.021***
	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
% White Teachers	-0.059**	-0.146***	0.021	0.125***	0.134***
	(0.021)	(0.034)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Charter	0.135***	0.154***	0.072*	0.053^	0.049^
	(0.024)	(0.038)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.030)
Magnet	0.057***	0.035	0.005	0.001	0.034^
	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Student Enrollment (Logged)	0.039***	0.015***	0.042***	-0.055***	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Elementary School	0.126***	0.127***	0.219***	0.210***	0.146***
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Proportion Title 1	0.110***	0.065***	-0.013	-0.039**	-0.039**
	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Urban	0.045***	-0.002	0.021**	0.018*	-0.028***
	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Constant	0.076*	0.092	-0.158***	0.321***	0.058
	(0.034)	(0.054)	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.043)
n	9828	9828	9828	9828	9828
r2	0.135	0.060	0.241	0.236	0.137

*** p ≤ .001; ** p ≤ 01; * p ≤ .05 ^ p ≤ .10, two-tailed test.

Table 5: Policy Effects – Individual Parent Policies

	Black Schools			Latino Schools			White Schools		
	OH	*PTC*	*SE*	*OH*	*PTC*	*SE*	*OH*	*PTC*	*SE*
Workshops	0.03	0.01	0.04*	0.01	0.06*	0.00	0.041**	0.03**	0.03**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.005)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Contract	0.01	0.04*	-0.00	0.04*	0.03	0.01	-0.011*	-0.02**	-0.03**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.005)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Volunteer Opportunity	0.09**	0.08**	0.10**	0.17**	0.12**	0.11**	0.093**	0.08**	0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.008)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Support	0.02	0.06**	0.04*	0.07**	0.06*	0.05	0.041**	0.06**	0.05**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.006)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Commun System	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.101**	0.13**	0.11**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.011)	(0.01)	(0.01)

OH= Open House, PTC = Parent-Teacher Conferences, SE = Special Events. ** $p \leq 01$; * $p \leq .05$;
^ $p \leq .10$, two-tailed test.

Figure 1: Parent Involvement by School Racial/ Ethnic Composition
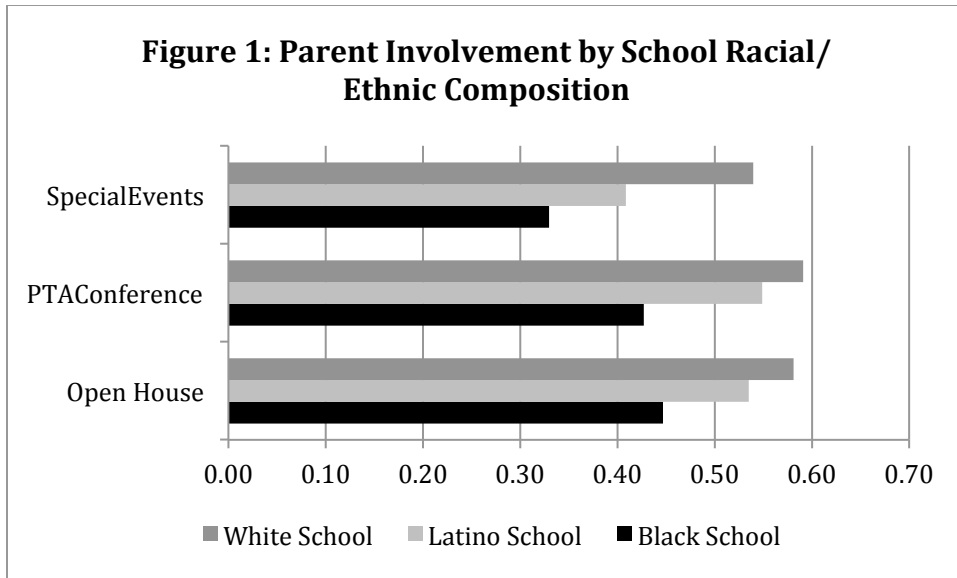
Source: NCES, Schools and Staffing Surveys (1999-00, 2003-04). Note all t-tests significant at p ≤ .01, two-tailed test.

Figure 2: Programs and Practices by School Racial/ Ethnic Composition
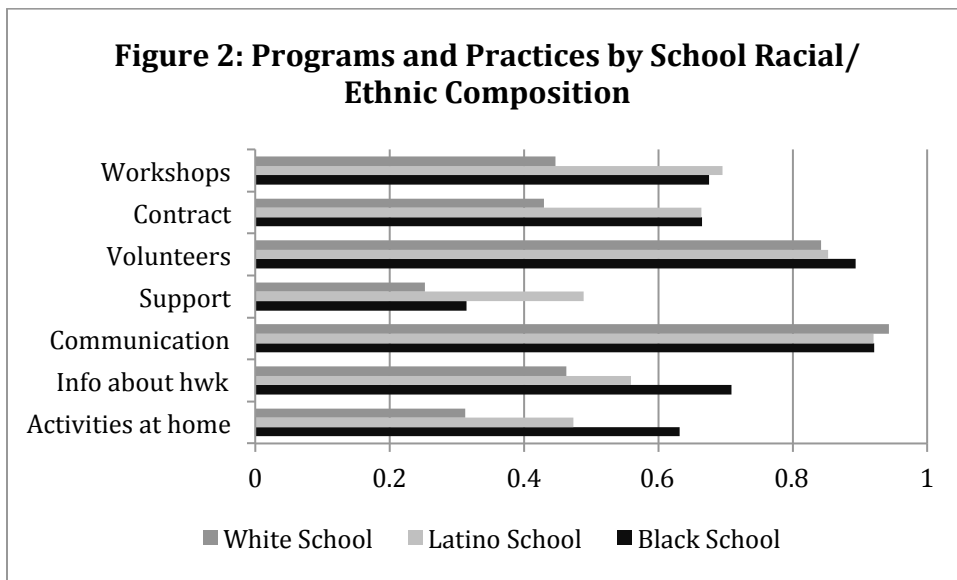
Source: NCES, Schools and Staffing Surveys (1999-00, 2003-04). Note all t-tests between black-white and Latino-white significant at p ≤ .01, two-tailed test (except Latino-white Volunteers).

Figure 3: Effects of School-based Policies on Parent Involvement

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Open House Attendance

Special Event Attendance
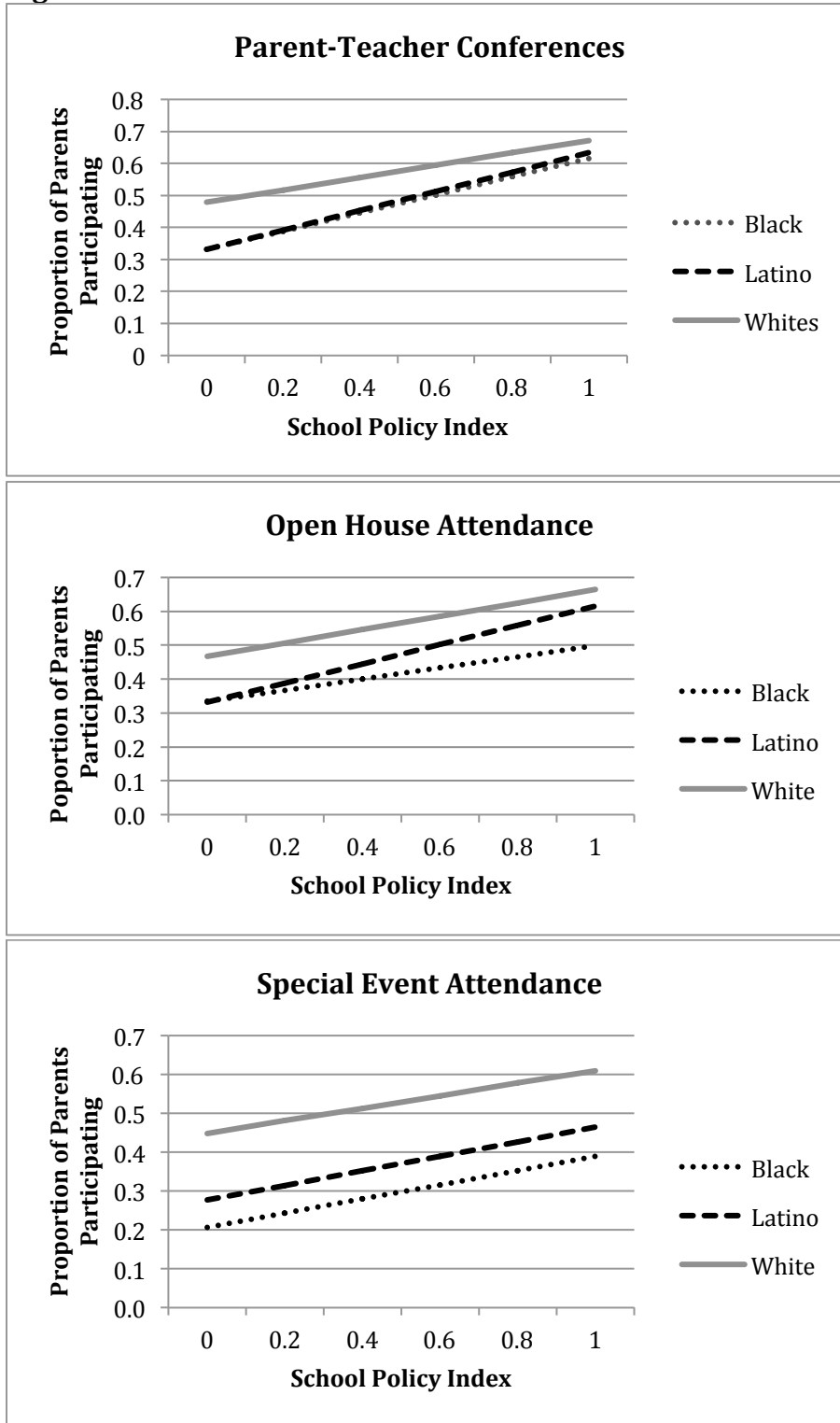
Endnotes

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[1] More recent studies also demonstrate that school-level factors, including the racial segregation of schools, play a key role in the black-white achievement gap (Berends et al. 2008; Condron 2009; Downey et al. 2004; Fryer & Levitt 2004).

[2] We define predominantly as equal to or greater than 67 percent black, Latino or white students.

[3] Identical questions were asked on both sets of surveys, but response categories for the parent involvement question differed. Since the distribution of responses across the two sets of categories was similar, we merged the variables recoding response categories as follows: few=.10, less than half=.30, about half=.50, more than half=.70, and most=.9; 0-25%=.125, 26-50%=.375, 51-75%=.625, and 76-100%=.875. Schools not offering the parent involvement activity were coded 0. Thus we have a continuous variable that ranges from 0 to .90.

[4] There are no surveys that match school and parent responses, thereby limiting us to principal reports of parent involvement. However, on the indicators examined here, parent and school reports are comparable, particularly across parent race/ethnicity and activity (see e.g., Planty et al. 2009).

[5] T-tests of differences in mean participation for white-Latino, white-black and Latino-black schools are significant at $p < .01$ for all three indicators.

[6] One reason for the lack of involvement stems from the lack of opportunities to participate, and black schools reported not offering special events (13.8%) more frequently than did Latino (12.4%) or white (8.8%) schools. However, predominately black schools were most likely to offer open houses or parent-teacher conferences, so this explanation does not sufficiently account for their lower levels of participation.

[7] In other words, we do not treat school policies as endogenous, and therefore do not estimate a selection model.

[8] These SASS questions asked principals whether each was offered to parents/guardians in the last school year (1=yes; 0 otherwise).

[9] Response categories for the frequency questions were: never, rarely, sometimes, frequently, and always and were coded from 0-1.

[10] Response categories = 0=no, 0.33=minor, 0.67=moderate, and 1=major influence.

[11] Teacher Absenteeism response categories: 1=serious problem in this school; 2=moderate problem, 3= minor problem, and 4= not a problem. Discipline is an index of 5 questions tapping student tardiness, student absenteeism, drop-outs, student apathy, unprepared students, with response categories coded as above.

[12] In fact, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires schools receiving Title 1 funds to involve low-income parents in school programs, so in this way NCLB provides an added incentive for these schools to be more actively involved in engaging their parents.