

HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND CAREER SPECIALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
SCHOOL PRACTICES THAT INVOLVE PARENTS IN STUDENTS' CAREER PLANNING

By

TREVELYN ALFORD-DAVIDSON

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To my mother and father, June and Marvin Alford; my husband, Joe Davidson;
and my daughter, Haylee Austin Smith

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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By

Trevelyn Alford-Davidson

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Research has demonstrated the importance of parental involvement in adolescents' career planning. Yet limited research has been conducted on the practices used by high schools to enhance the involvement of parents in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. The purpose of this study was fourfold: (1) to examine the perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists regarding the value of involving parents in their child's career planning process, (2) to identify the activities that schools currently use to foster such involvement, (3) to identify the barriers that high school counselors and career specialists believe may prevent successful parental involvement in student career planning and decision-making, and 4) to determine if the valuing and implementation of parental involvement activities differed by rural, urban, or suburban geographic context.

The study sample was composed of 184 high school counselors and career specialists employed in schools in Florida and South Carolina who completed an online survey. The survey assessed the participants' perceptions of the importance and implementation of eight types of school activities involving parents and their perceptions of the most significant school-based and parent-based barriers to parental involvement. The results revealed that all eight types of parental

involvement activities were considered by participants to be important for their school's career planning programs and that each of the eight types of activities were provided at the participants' schools. In addition, the valuing and implementation of these eight types of parental involvement activities did not differ significantly by the nature of the school's geographic context. Moreover, there were statistically significant associations between the importance ratings and the provision of each type of involvement activity revealing that not only did the respondents perceive that the activity was valued by their school, but the activity was implemented as well. Finally, participants reported that the most significant barriers for educators to the effective involvement of parents were lack of time and limited parent interest, while for the parents the most significant barrier was lack of time.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Most educators would agree that their school's mission is to prepare students to become successful and productive members of society. For children to achieve this goal, they must be provided with knowledge, support and opportunities to make sound educational and occupational choices. A developmental and comprehensive career guidance program is an important resource for students to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to make such choices (Gysbers, 2001; Hatch and Bowers, 2004; Ripley, Erford, Dahir & Eschbach, 2003; Wakefield, 2004). Yet the increasing diversity of today's school population presents unique challenges for educators committed to providing an effective career guidance program that meets the needs of all students.

The involvement of parents can be a possible resource for educators to utilize as they assist students in making educational and occupational choices and moving into the world of work. Parents are not only their child's first teacher, but in all likelihood have the best understanding of their child's background, abilities, and interests. Moreover, research has shown that involving parents in their children's career education can affect students' career decision-making and career self-efficacy (Ferry, Fouad & Smith, 2000; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994, 2000; Turner & Lapan, 2003, Young, et al., 2008). Unfortunately, parents' involvement in their children's education generally decreases during their children's middle school and high school years (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007). This decrease may be attributed to several factors including students' desires for autonomy, changes in school structure, reduction in parent-teacher trust, and a lack of parent confidence about how to become involved in the complexities of their child's high school education (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Harvard Research Project, 2007; Simon, 2004).

High school educators typically have not reached out to parents or encouraged them to become involved in their child's career planning (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007; Sage, 2004; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Trotman, 2001). As a result, there is limited information available to guide high school educators attempting to involve parents in student career planning. The goal of this study was to ascertain the level of importance school counselors and career specialists in rural, urban, and suburban settings attributed to the involvement of parents in high school students' career planning activities and to describe the parental involvement strategies that schools use to involve parents.

Scope of the Problem

Career guidance programs can assist students in acquiring knowledge of themselves such as their strengths, interests and work values. Through these programs students can also learn about possible career options and develop or enhance their employability skills (Wakefield, 2004). Providers of career guidance programs recognize that while student success is individually defined, the school program can play a key role in preparing students to transition from high school to either post-secondary training or employment (Feller, 2004).

The American School Counselor Association promotes the message of career guidance for *all* students through their ASCA National Model and charges school counselors with the central responsibility of preparing all adolescents to transition to a satisfying, productive, and personally valued post high school setting (Hatch & Bowers, 2004, Wakefield, 2004). Yet the diversity of today's school populations can make this task increasingly difficult. Students can no longer be approached as though they all have similar backgrounds and life experiences (Portman, 2009). Societal and economic changes, increasing cultural diversity, and changes in the nuclear family have made a dramatic impact on today's school population. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported in the 2005 Kids Count Data Report that 42% of the United States population under 18

years of age are culturally diverse compared to 31 % in 1990 (O'Hare, 2001). The National Center for Education Statistics (2007) reported that the 2006-2007 public school population consisted of 56.7% white, non-Hispanic; 20.5% Hispanic; 17.1% black, non-Hispanic; 4.7% Asian/Pacific Islander and 1.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native. According to the 2000 census 18.4 % of the nation's children from five to seventeen years of age spoke a language other than English at home as compared to 13.9% in 1990. In addition, 5.1% of those children were considered linguistically isolated as compared to 3.9% in the 1990 census (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007).

Moreover the percentage of children living in poverty increased from 17% in 2000 to 19% in 2005 (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007). The percentage of children living in families where no parent had a full time, year round job increased from 32% in 2000 to 34 % in 2005 (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007). Figures from 2005 show that 9.4% of students ages 16 to 24 had dropped out of high school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007) and that 8% of students ages 16 to 19 were not working or attending school (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007). In addition 16% of children under 18 were living in a home where the head of the household did not complete high school (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007).

Changes in the family composition of our school population are also clearly evident. The proportion of families headed by male breadwinners and stay-at-home mothers has decreased. There is no longer a typical household. Reports from 2005 indicate that 32% of our children live in single parent households, which is an increase from 31% in 2000. In addition 5% of our children live with grandparents and 6% live with neither parent (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007).

Finally, dramatic changes have occurred in students' communities in the last forty years. For example, although some rural areas have increased in population due to the migration of retirees to small towns, many rural areas have deteriorated due to major changes in economic opportunities in farming communities (Purdy, 1999). In addition there has been an increase in the migration of many city residents to smaller suburbs. These social and economic shifts have significantly impacted school enrollments and the resources available to schools (Amatea, 2008).

These changes have important implications for high school educators and school counselors as they assist students in preparing for their future. Not only have student needs become more varied, but school resources for program development differ depending on their geographic context. Hence, it is a much greater challenge for educators to effectively help students plan for their career success.

According to Jackson and Nutini (2002), the goal of career counseling is to expand adolescents' understanding of career and educational interests, abilities, options, and beliefs. They state that for students from diverse economic and cultural groups who are vulnerable to discrimination, career planning should include a study of social, cultural, economic and discrimination factors. Research studies of the career development of economically and culturally diverse youth indicate a need for educators to become more knowledgeable about cultural backgrounds, social attitudes, and socioeconomic status differences (Constantine, Kindaichi & Miville, 2007; Flores & O'Brien, 2002; Jackson & Nutini, 2002; Smith-Weber, 1999; Tang, Fouad & Smith, 1999).

Factors such as language, parental support, and cultural values can greatly affect students' career choices (Chin & Kameoka, 2002; Flores & O'Brien, 2002; Jackson & Nutini, 2002; Smith-Weber, 1999). In their study of Mexican American adolescent girls, Flores and O'Brien

(2002) found that the presence of parental support and few perceived barriers had a positive effect on the girls' career goals. The girls who anticipated fewer barriers and who perceived support from their parents chose prestigious careers. In addition, the girls who perceived their parents to be supportive of their career goals had higher levels of career aspiration.

Tang, Fouad, and Smith (1999) investigated factors that might influence Asian American students' career choices. In their study of Asian American college students, they found the students were influenced by acculturation, family background and self-efficacy in their choice of occupations. Family influence on career choice was strongly supported by the data. The Asian American parents wanted their children to choose careers that were secure, practical, and marketable. In this study the most frequent occupations selected by the students were engineer, physician, and computer scientist, which are traditional occupational choices for Asian Americans. In addition, students with lower acculturation levels chose more traditional occupations, whereas students with higher acculturation levels tended to choose less traditional jobs.

To provide meaningful career guidance to all students, school personnel must acquire a greater understanding of student diversity and be willing to develop individualized and realistic career guidance programs for this diverse population (Constantine, Kadaicha & Merville, 2007; Evans & Latrobe, 2002; Smith-Weber, 1999; Yeh, Okubo, Ma, Shea, Ou & Pituc, 2008). Counselors are involved in individual work with students and are keenly aware of students' cultural, cognitive, and socioeconomic differences. Counselors have begun to recognize that generic career guidance programs may not adequately meet the needs of students in all settings. Therefore, in the development of a school's unique career guidance program, it is necessary to

consider the community's cultural and socioeconomic composition in addition to the area's economic opportunities and resources.

Since parents are knowledgeable of their adolescent's unique needs, interests, abilities, and talents, they can be a very important link in this career planning process (Muscott, 2002; Sage, 2004; Wakefield & Sage, 2004). There has been a substantial amount of research documenting how parents influence children's career development (Ferry, Found & Smith, 2000; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994, 2000; Lipan, Heckerman, Adams, & Turner, 1999; Paa & McWhirter, 2000; Way & Rossman, 1996; Whiston & Keller, 2004). In their review, Whiston and Keller (2004) summarized the findings of 77 studies using 29 different professional journals across diverse disciplines. They concluded from their review that empirical trends suggest that families do influence a youth's career development in specific and predictable ways.

Family support, attachment, and other family variables are important avenues through which parents have influenced career self-efficacy, decisiveness, commitment and career exploration of adolescents and young adults (Whiston & Keller, 2004). For example, using social cognitive career theory, Ferry, Found, and Smith (2000) examined the effects of family context and personal input variables on learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectancies, interests, and goals of high school students. These researchers reported a significant relationship between perceived parental encouragement in math science and student grades in those subjects. The researchers stated that their results showed the influential role that parents' verbal suggestions, support, and domain-specific encouragement played in student academic and career development. In another study using a social cognitive framework, Lipan and her associates (Lipan, Heckerman, Adams, & Turner, 1999) examined 126 rural adolescents, aged 15-18, to determine some of the reasons rural adolescents might limit their career interests along self-

efficacy and gender lines. The study results indicated that perceived parental support was a significant predictor of differences in career efficacy expectations and vocational interests

Since parental influence can positively affect student career development, it can be an additional resource for educators to use in meeting the needs of today's diverse youth (Bregman & Killen, 1999; Hall, 2003; Larson, 1995; Paa & McWhirter, 2000; Young, 1994; Young, et al., 2001). However, educators have typically not reached out to parents or encouraged them to become involved in their child's career planning (Giles, 2005; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Trotman, 2005).

In recent years legislative efforts have recognized the need to involve parents in the educational process and have made it clear that schools should increase parental involvement. The Goals 2000 mandate emphasized increased parental involvement in schools (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). The No Child Left Behind legislation also requires more parental involvement as schools work to reform their programs to meet the needs of all children (U. S. Department of Education, 2003).

Involving parents in providing career guidance during the high school years can assist educators in addressing individual student needs and provide students with support (Hall, 2003; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Wakefield, 2004). In their study on perceived influences on high school students' career expectations, Paa and McWhirter (2000) found that both boys and girls identified their parents as important positive influences. The researchers suggest that counselors might more effectively support adolescent career development through collaboration with students' families. Parents, however, have not been a resource that many schools utilize (Giles, 2005; Hall, 2003; Sage, 2004). Reasons for the lack of parental involvement by school staff may include a territorial attitude held by educators, a belief that parents are not capable of helping, a

lack of understanding as to how parents can contribute, or a concern as to how to get parents involved (Giles, 2005; Swap, 1993; Trotman, 2001). Parents often cite their own lack of knowledge as the reason they do not become more involved in their child's career development (Wakefield, 2004).

When parents have been asked to become involved at school, it has generally been in a limited capacity such as being responsible for student attendance, homework or behavior, or attending school meetings (Giles, 2005; Swap, 1993). Some school staff view parental efforts as interference and have not welcomed them (Swap, 1993), while others have given conflicting messages that have distanced parents from the school (Sage, 2004). Although most parents want to be involved in their children's education, they often are not sure what to do (Hidalgo, Suit, Bright, Swap, & Epstein, 1995; Sage, 2004; Swap, 1993).

In 2008 the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation conducted a series of focus groups and a survey of 1,006 parents of current and recent high school students in rural, urban and suburban communities across the nation. The purpose of the study was to give parents a voice and to determine how schools and parents can work more effectively together to strengthen the education of children. The study showed that parents of high school students definitely want to help their children succeed, but they need better information and tools from schools to do so. The findings indicated that regardless of the parent's socioeconomic status or education they believed that their involvement was important to their child's academic success (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason, 2008).

To develop effective high school career guidance programs in this age of diversity, reform and accountability, it is important for schools to use all available resources by learning how to take advantage of parental expertise (Wakefield, 2004; Wakefield & Sage, 2004). Parents'

perceptions of their roles appear to be a function of the way a school treats them (Giles, 2005; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001); therefore, to develop a successful working relationship with parents, schools must begin to view them as a resource and support (Sage, 2004; Swap, 1993). Parents must be placed in the center of the discussion on how to improve student performance and schools need to educate parents on the benefits of their involvement and the types of involvement that are available to them (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason, 2008)

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is a combination of two theories that emphasize different aspects of the relational context of student career development. Both social cognitive career theory (SCCT) and Epstein's theory of family/school interactions emphasize the influence of contextual factors on the development of the individual (Epstein, 1987, 1995b; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Contextual factors can include environmental influences such as the quality of home and educational experiences, real and perceived parental support, economic conditions, parental behaviors, and peer influences (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is based primarily on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. SCCT describes the processes through which people form interests, make choices, and achieve varying levels of success in educational and occupational endeavors (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). While other career development theories address the influence of parents on student career choices, SCCT is much more explicit in describing how a student's environment, which primarily includes home and school, can influence student career development.

Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influence integrates the educational insights of families, the emphasis of shared responsibilities, and years of research on school and family environments and their effects on children (Hidalgo, Suit, Bright, Swap, & Epstein, 1995). The

model recognizes that family and school are the two major contexts in which students learn and grow. These two influences can be drawn together or pushed apart depending on the type of interactions of the participants.

Since individuals and their environments are always changing, Vondracek, Lerner and Schulenberg (1986) state that career development can be viewed through either a dynamic, interactive perspective or a developmental, contextual approach. From a contextual perspective, the context is influenced by the individual's characteristics. It is an interactive process through which the individual influences and is influenced by the social, cultural and physical features of the environment (Whiston & Keller, 2004). From their extensive career research review, Whiston & Keller (2004) have determined that all major theories of career development address in some manner the influence of contextual factors on career development.

One assumption of social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is that person, environmental and behavioral variables affect one another through complex reciprocal linkages. Contextual barriers and supports from a person's environment interact with personal variables to predict career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career interests. Contextual factors include factors in a person's background or environment such as perceived parent support or geographic access to career opportunities. For example, a person's perceived parental support system will interact with person-based variables such as race, gender or ability to influence the career decision-making process (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

According to SCCT, career development is influenced by both objective and subjective or perceived contextual factors. Objective contextual factors involve such influences as the quality of the educational experience or financial support. Subjective factors include opportunities, resources and barriers presented by a particular environment. Subjective factors are subject to

individual interpretation. SCCT holds that the effects that the contextual factors have on a person are partly determined by the way that person responds to these influences (perceived environmental influences). People are not just passive victims of their environment. The manner in which a person views themselves and their environment accounts for their personal agency in their career development (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2000). According to Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000), in addition to background contextual factors, personal inputs such as gender, race/ethnicity, and intellectual ability, affect the individual's learning experiences. These learning experiences, in turn, affect self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations determine interests, which influence goals and encourage the individual to take action related to those goals.

A person's primary interests prompt corresponding goals. For example, a person interested in living things might have the goal of a career in the medical field and enroll in a training program to pursue that goal. SCCT hypothesizes that when confronted by environmental pressures, an individual's choice behavior is guided less by interests and more by environmental and personal factors (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). In other words, people are less likely to translate their own career interests into goals and their goals into actions if they perceive their efforts to be impeded by adverse environmental factors such as a lack of family support.

Although personal factors such as ethnicity, gender and intellectual abilities cannot be changed, contextual factors such as family support and educational experiences can be influenced. Since researchers have documented the strong influence that parents can have on adolescents' career development (Whiston & Keller, 2004), it would appear that educators should seek avenues to utilize parental influence to enhance students' career development journey. Schools are in optimal positions to influence contextual factors (i.e., parent support,

school environment, vocational exposure) to provide positive learning experiences for students. Based on SCCT, positive, supportive learning experiences that address personal variables could enable students to develop the career self-efficacy and outcome expectations needed to pursue their primary interests, formulate goals, and make progress toward their goals (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Since parents are generally keenly aware of their adolescent's personal variables and are in a position to provide support to the adolescent, their involvement in student career development appears to be an obvious answer to the dilemma of addressing the diverse needs of today's adolescent.

Schulenberg, Vondracek, & Crouter (1984) proposed a dynamic, interactional approach to research in career development; one that considers individual development, contextual influences, and the interaction between the individual and context. This type of approach embodies elements of both social cognitive career theory and Epstein's overlapping spheres of influences. Both address environmental and developmental changes that affect the individual and address interactions between the person, family, and education.

Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence revises past sociological theories based on the belief that social organizations are most effective if they have separate goals and responsibilities. Her research indicated that an integrative theory was needed to show that families and schools are most effective if they have overlapping or shared goals and responsibilities (Epstein, 1995b).

Epstein stated, "changing times require changing theories" (Epstein, 1987, p.123). She cited four trends that dramatically affected family-school connections in the United States during the mid-twentieth century: a) more mothers with college educations, b) increased parent experience with and awareness of children as young learners, c) federal regulations and funding

for parental involvement, and d) changing family structures. These trends resulted in more parents being involved in their children's education, more recognition of "parents as teachers," and increased awareness of the need for improved home/school communication.

To accommodate these societal changes, Epstein recognized the need for the development of a model of family-school relations that accounted for the changing elements that would continue to influence them. She believed that a theory that adequately addressed family-school relations must attend to the history, developmental patterns, and changing experiences of parents, teachers, and students (Epstein, 1987). Therefore, Epstein's model contains both external and internal structures. The external structures show how the school and family spheres can be pushed together or pulled apart to overlap in various degrees depending on conditions and intentions of the stakeholders. These two contexts for student learning and development can work separately or together to facilitate student success. The forces of time and the nature of family and school experiences control the amount of overlap in the model. The greatest overlap occurs when parents and schools collaborate and develop a true partnership (Epstein, 1987, 1995b).

The internal structure specifies the lines of connection and interaction that occur within and across the boundaries of these two spheres to influence student learning and development. The child is placed at the center of the model because it is assumed that the child is the reason for the partnership (Hidalgo, Siu, Bright, Swap & Epstein, 1995). Families and schools share the responsibilities for student success and interact to help students to achieve academically and prepare for their future.

Family-school interactions may produce positive or negative results depending on how their relationships are designed, implemented, and coordinated. The question of which

interactions result in the greatest degree of overlap led Epstein to formulate six major types of family-school involvement. These types are: a) parenting, b) communicating, c) volunteering, d) learning at home, e) decision-making, and f) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 1995b). According to Epstein (1995b), if activities characterizing these types of involvement are well designed and implemented, they can produce benefits for students, families, and schools.

Epstein's theoretical model of overlapping spheres "assumes that there are mutual interests and influences of families and schools that can be more or less successfully promoted by the policies and programs of the organizations and the actions and attitudes of the individuals in those organizations" (Epstein, 1987, p. 130). Parents are interested in the success of their children and have a great deal of influence on their children's career decisions (Sage, 2004; Wakefield & Sage, 2004; Winston & Keller, 2004). The ultimate goal of comprehensive career guidance programs is to help students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become productive citizens (Hatch & Bowers, 2004; Ripley, Erford, Dahir, & Eschbach, 2003; Wakefield, 2004). Therefore, it appears that school policies and programs that involve parents and promote positive interactions with them could benefit the career development of students (Sage, 2004).

This study was based on the SCCT assumption that contextual variables can enhance or constrain career development (i.e., parental involvement is an important component of student career development). The study also utilized Epstein's assumption that positive interactions between school and parent are essential to help students succeed in school and prepare for the future (Epstein, 1995b). Taken together these two theories suggest the particular types of activities that characterize optimal family-school relationships to enhance student career

development. Hence, they served as the conceptual framework for examining the current parental involvement activities in which high school counselors report that their schools engage.

Need for the Study

According to Turner and Lapan (2002), the roles of parents and school counselors can go hand in hand. As advocates for student success and with training in understanding culturally diverse students and their families, school counselors are in a unique position to foster parental involvement (Bemak & Cornely, 2002; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Davis & Lambie, 2005). However, even with decades of research showing the influence of parents over their children's career choices, parental involvement has generally been a minor part of high school guidance programs (Sage, 2004). There is also limited information available to guide high school counselors about how to effectively involve parents as a resource in their child's career development (Hall, 2003). In addition, there is a dearth of information available for high school counselors on effective strategies for parental involvement in diverse geographical areas. To develop appropriate goals for all students, counselors need information concerning effective parental involvement strategies and supports that are most beneficial for their high school's unique population.

Research findings support the idea that parental involvement in education makes a difference, but studies connecting parental support of school learning and the roles of parents in school-to-work transition have been narrow in focus and few in number (Way & Rossman, 1996). It is hoped that this study contributes to the research on parental involvement in education by providing data as to counselors and career specialists' perceptions of the importance of parental involvement and school parental involvement practices in career planning.

Counselors and career specialists' perceptions of the importance of particular parental involvement activities and of the existing barriers to such involvement can provide valuable

information that may be used to guide high school educators in developing more effective interactions with parents and students. Productive involvement of parents can provide adolescents with additional support as they begin the process of identifying their unique interests, establishing goals and developing action plans for their future (Hall, 2003; Larson, 1995).

In addition the information gathered from this study may be helpful in preparing counselors in diverse geographic contexts to evaluate their current career guidance program and assist them in planning future services. The information gained from the study can also assist educators in their efforts to increase parental involvement as they attempt to meet school reform requirements such as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. Finally, this study expands the knowledge base of counselors, career specialists and educators so they might more effectively use parents as a resource to meet the needs of students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was fourfold: (1) to examine the perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists regarding the value of involving parents in their child's career planning process, (2) to identify the strategies that schools currently use to foster such involvement, (3) to identify the barriers that high school counselors and career specialists believe may prevent successful parental involvement in student career planning and decision-making, and 4) to determine if the valuing and implementation of parental involvement activities varied by school geographic context. The following questions were addressed in this study:

- *Question One:* What degree of importance do high school counselors and career specialists attribute to the eight types of parental involvement activities for student career planning and decision-making?
- *Question Two:* Is there a difference among high school counselors and career specialists in urban, suburban, and rural geographic settings in the degree of importance they attribute to the eight types of parental involvement activities for student career planning and decision-making?

- *Question Three:* According to high school counselors and career specialists, to what extent do high schools implement the eight types of parental involvement activities in student career planning and decision-making?
- *Question Four:* Is there a difference in the extent to which high schools in urban, suburban, and rural geographic settings implement the eight types of parental involvement activities in student career planning and decision-making?
- *Question Five:* Is there a relationship between the degree of importance and the number of activities counselors and career specialists report implementing for each of the eight types of parent involvement activities?
- *Question Six:* What are the perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists in urban, suburban, and rural geographic settings regarding the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for schools in preventing the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making?
- *Question Seven:* What are the perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists in urban, suburban, and rural geographic settings regarding the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for parents in preventing their involvement in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making?

Definition of Terms

- **CAREER DEVELOPMENT.** A process of focusing on the relationship between the academic program and the world of work with the goal of preparing each individual for living and working in our society (Balcombe, 1995; Wakefield, 2004).
- **CAREER GUIDANCE.** A process of enabling students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to acquire and maintain appropriate employment.
- **CAREER PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING.** A process of career exploration and self-discovery leading to a student's development of career goals.
- **DIVERSE YOUTH.** Youth who may be vulnerable to discrimination due to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or family composition.
- **EPSTEIN'S SIX TYPES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.** 1) Parenting, 2) communicating, 3) volunteering, 4) learning at home, 5) decision making, and 6) collaborating with communities (Epstein, 1995b).
- **THE NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES.** The guidelines originally developed in 1989 to assist schools from elementary to postsecondary levels in establishing career counseling and guidance programs. The guidelines revised in 2004, identify content, provide activities and recommend program strategies to support the career development process throughout life (Wakefield, 2004).

- **OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE.** Epstein's (1987) model of family and school interactions. The model consists of external and internal structures and explains their ability to influence interactions between members (family, school, parent, teacher, and child).
- **PARENT.** A child's caregiver who may be someone other than natural parents.
- **PARENTAL INFLUENCE.** The influence that parents have on their children through role modeling, communication of ideas, beliefs, and opinions including the support the children perceive they have from their parents.
- **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.** Ongoing, active participation in a child's life.
- **RURAL SETTINGS.** Schools located outside of large towns or cities in areas that are primarily considered small towns, countryside or agricultural.
- **SOCIAL COGNITIVE CAREER THEORY.** A theory based primarily on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) in an effort to understand the processes through which people form interests, make choices, and achieve varying levels of success in educational and occupational endeavors.
- **SUBURBAN SETTINGS.** Schools located in residential areas on the outskirts of cities or large towns.
- **URBAN SETTINGS.** Schools located in areas with a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile and with a minimum residential population of at least 50,000 people (U. S. Census, 2000).

Overview of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters. In Chapter Two relevant literature is reviewed. Chapter Three provides a description of the research methodology and the results of the data analysis are discussed in Chapter Four. The study concludes with a discussion of major findings, implications for practice, and suggestions for further research in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to the study. The review begins with a discussion of career guidance and moves into a discussion of the economic and societal changes that have made the transition from school to the world of work more complex for our country's youth. Next the literature on parental influence and parental involvement in the education of children will be reviewed. Finally, literature describing the influence that parents have on career development will be discussed.

Comprehensive Career Guidance

To guide students' career development involves much more than simply learning about occupations and being prepared academically. Career development focuses on the relationships between the academic program and the world of work with its major purpose being to prepare each individual for living and working in our society. A developmental and comprehensive career guidance program can be the avenue through which students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to attain meaningful careers (Balcombe, 1995; Wakefield, 2004).

The American School Counselor Association, a division of the American Counseling Association, promotes the message of career counseling for *all* students through their ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (Dahir, 2004). This model contains student content standards that can be used to design competencies addressing academic, career and personal-social domains. The model can be used as a foundation for schools to develop their own comprehensive, sequential, developmental, and outcome-oriented programs (Dahir, 2004; Hatch & Bowers, 2004).

In 1989 the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee developed a set of career guidelines that were revised in 2004 by the National Career Development Association,

also a division of The American Counseling Association. The new guidelines identify and recommend program strategies to support the career development process throughout life and can assist school counselors and administrators in establishing their school's individual career development program. (National Career Development Association, 2005).

A comprehensive career guidance program involves a total school effort (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007; Erford, Dahir, & Eschbach, 2003); however, school counselors play an integral part in each student's total development (Gordon & Elovitz, 2002). Even though a major focus for school counselors today is on student academic success, they are also involved in personal/social and career development. Counselors strive to help students identify their career interests, select appropriate courses, and choose the right path to achieve their goals (Gordon & Elovitz, 2002; Niles & Akos, 2003).

Planning for the future has become complex for students in our increasingly diverse world. Social structures and personal values change as cultural diversity increases and our economy changes. People are moving to different geographical areas in search of economic, social, and emotional security. These changes have a substantial impact on students' personal/social, career and academic development (Gysbers, 2001; Lee, 2005).

The goal of this study was to gather information from counselors and career specialists in diverse settings to facilitate schools collaborating with parents to improve the adolescent transition to the world of work. The information gained from the study can assist educators in their efforts to increase parental involvement as they meet school reform requirements such as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the No Child Left Behind Act. This study can provide direction for counselors, career specialists and educators as they evaluate their current programs

and make plans for future students. The information is also helpful in deciding how to train school counselors in counselor education programs.

Demographic Changes in the United States

Societal changes are creating new challenges for American youth and educators (Muscott, 2002; O'Hare, 2001; Portman, 2009; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). The face of our nation is dramatically changing as our population becomes more diverse. The U. S. population increased 13% from 1990 to 2000 and most of this expansion was due to the rapid increase in racial/ethnic minority groups (Sue & Sue, 2003). By the year 2000, the number of children in our country reached a record high of 72.3 million and minority children (e.g., any group other than non-Hispanic white) accounted for 98% of the minority growth (O'Hare, 2001). The percentage of minority children grew from 31% in 1990 to 39% in 2000. It is estimated that by the year 2010, the Caucasian population in the United States will be approximately 48% and ethnic minorities will become the majority (O'Hare, 2001).

O'Hare (2001) states that based on the effects of the baby boom in the 1950s, the increase in the nation's under 18 population will place new demands on public education, child care, and family support systems. In addition, a large percentage of these children come from homes in which cultural traditions are unfamiliar to many educators and English is not the primary language. This diversification of America has greatly influenced the needs of our school populations and has posed a real challenge for educators to adequately address those needs (Garcia, 2004; Lapan, Tucker, Kim, & Kosciulek, 2003; Lee, 2005).

Another challenge for education is that the majority of teachers today will find that they are responsible for educating students from a much different sociocultural background than their own (Amatea, 2008). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2005), white teachers currently account for some 86% of the teaching force and teachers of color account for

only 14%. Schools must find ways to adapt and change with the times if they are to provide appropriate programs.

Educators must acquire new understandings of their students, be capable of addressing diversity and be willing to develop individualized and realistic career development programs for today's student population (Evans & Larrabee, 2002; Muscott, 2002; Portman, 2009; Zunker, 2006). Educational reform efforts are driven by the fact that our school populations are becoming increasingly diverse with higher numbers of students from low-income and minority families in urban and rural communities (Erford, House, & Martin, 2003). The No Child Left Behind Act mandates that schools adopt the philosophy that *all* children can learn. It has encouraged school reform and highlighted the differences in student needs (Dahir, 2004). The No Child Left Behind Act stresses that schools must provide access to programs, activities and materials to *all* parents and emphasizes the involvement of parents in planning and decision-making (U. S. Department of Education, 2003). This empowerment of parents can be a valuable tool for educators as they seek help in meeting individual needs of students.

Nature of Parental Involvement

Decades of research have documented that parents have a powerful influence on their children's achievement in school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Swap, 1993; Trusty, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1997; Weiss & Edwards, 1992). When families are involved in children's education, students adapt well to school, do better academically, attend school more regularly, develop positive social skills, graduate from high school at higher rates, and are more likely to enroll in post-secondary education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; U. S. Department of Education, 1997).

One way for schools to develop effective programs for diverse youth is to learn how to use parents as resources. In her article on a family-school collaborative consultation project, Amatea

(2004) points out that although educators have long been aware of the influence of family on student achievement, only since the late 1980s has emphasis been placed on ways that educators might work with families to strengthen this connection. Prior to this emphasis on collaboration, the relationship between parents and schools was traditionally one of the educator being the sole expert who assessed and dictated the course of action or solution to the problem with little to no parental involvement (Amatea, 2004). In a more collaborative model, parents and educators work together as partners to identify needs, resources, and courses of action (Amatea, 2004; Martin & Hagan-Burke, 2002).

Since parents are a continuous, generally stable resource, they can be a strong influence in their children's academic development (Trusty, 1998). In her review of literature on the benefits of parental involvement, Swap (1993) states that the data on the connections between parental involvement and achievement point "unambiguously" to the strength of the relationship. She also points out that studies indicate that parents are willing to become involved when the activities are meaningful and congruent with family priorities.

In their review of parental involvement research, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that teacher outreach programs for parents resulted in consistent gains in student performance in reading and math. In addition workshops for parents on helping their children at home are linked to higher reading and math scores. Schools with quality parent/school partnerships also make greater gains on state-wide tests.

In addition Henderson and Mapp (2002) found schools that effectively engage families from diverse backgrounds share three key practices:

- Focus on building trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families and community members

- Recognize, respect and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural differences
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared

Using her model of overlapping spheres of influence on family-school connections Epstein (1987) has conducted a substantial amount of research on school, family and community partnerships. When the family, school and community work as partners, then a caring community forms around the student. She uses the term "family-like" school for these types of partnerships. According to Epstein (1995b) family-like schools design activities that engage, guide, energize, and motivate students to produce their own successes. Through her research Epstein (1995b) determined six types of parental involvement:

- Type 1: Parenting: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.
- Type 2: Communicating: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.
- Type 3: Volunteering: Recruit and organize parent help and support.
- Type 4: Learning at Home: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decision-making, and planning.
- Type 5: Decision Making: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
- Type 6: Collaborating with Community: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Research reveals that as students mature and move through school, parental involvement in school decreases. According to the Harvard Family Research Project (2007), this is partially due to the adolescent need to develop autonomy and also due to changes in school structure and organization at the secondary level. Even so, family involvement at the secondary level has been found to play a critical role in students' academic success, school attendance, and transition into

post-secondary programs (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason, 2008; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007; Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988). A large body of research supports the importance of parental involvement in middle and high school and shows that with interventions parental involvement can be strengthened (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007).

Since little attention had been given to family involvement in high school, the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning at Johns Hopkins University began the High School and Family Partnership Project. The purpose of this project, which began in 1991, was to learn whether the basic theories, frameworks, and practices of family involvement at the elementary level were also appropriate for secondary schools. The Center developed a partnership with six Maryland high schools: two rural, two urban, and two suburban. The project researched how schools can develop and implement family involvement practices and how partnerships affect the students, families, schools and communities involved (Epstein and Connors, 1994). The project identified the starting point as a "trust fund" to recognize that past involvement practices can be built upon to create future partnerships. The use of the term "trust fund" also recognized that trust among participants is an important condition for developing successful practices. Epstein and Connors (1994) studied the results of school reports and parent, teacher and student surveys to develop a framework for high schools to use to improve family-school collaboration. In their report they categorized the high school activities using Epstein's six major types of parental involvement for the purpose of assisting other high schools to plan and monitor the development of more comprehensive partnership programs.

Sanders, Epstein, and Connors-Tadros (1999) conducted research on family partnerships with six high schools in Maryland – two rural, two urban and two suburban. They surveyed 423 parents at the high schools. Using Epstein's framework of family involvement, the schools had

begun developing partnership programs that included practices for each of the six types of involvement. A preliminary descriptive analysis of the survey data revealed some important findings on parental attitudes:

- Ninety percent (90 %) of the parents agreed they need to be involved in their teens' high school.
- Eighty percent (80%) of the parents said they wanted to be more involved and needed information to effectively help their teens at home.
- Seventy-five percent (75%) of the parents stated that the school had never approached them about volunteer activities and they felt that these activities were important to their teen's school success.
- Seventy-two percent (72%) believed high schools should begin or improve programs of partnership to help families better understand adolescent development and topics related to teens' growth and learning.

The results of the research indicated that the parents' attitudes toward school were positively influenced by the partnership programs. A key factor in their research was that the results remained constant when controlling for characteristics such as race, gender, academic performance, and parental employment and educational background.

The study suggested that different school practices resulted in different parental involvement such as parental involvement at home was positively influenced by school programs that assisted parents and facilitated interactions with teens. Parental involvement at school was positively influenced by school practices that encouraged volunteering and participation in school decision-making.

The findings also suggested that the different types of involvement practices resulted in corresponding parental involvement behaviors and that including practices for the six types of involvement will provide families with the guidance and information needed to be effectively involved in their teen's education. Results showed parental involvement at home was positively and significantly influenced by type one (parenting) and type four (learning at home). Reports of

involvement were also positively and significantly influenced by type three (volunteering) and type five (school decision-making). The research also shows that type two (communication) practices are essential for improvement in all of the types of involvement.

Although studies have explored the impact of parental involvement on the relationships among school, home and community (Swap, 1993; Trusty, 1998; Weiss & Edwards, 1992) only recently have studies begun to examine the factors influencing parent participation (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) proposed a model of the parent involvement process in an effort to explain why parents get involved. The model suggests that parental involvement is motivated by two beliefs: role construction for involvement and sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed academically. Parent role construction is defined as “parents’ beliefs about what they are supposed to do in relation to their children’s education and the patterns of parental behavior that follow those beliefs” (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005, p.107). Role construction for parental involvement develops over time and is shaped by the personal experiences and expectations of individuals and social groups important to the parent. Since it is socially constructed, it is subject to change and may be affected by specific interventions (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Parent self-efficacy for helping their child in school is defined as a parent’s belief in their ability to produce the desired outcomes in their child’s education. The model asserts that parents develop goals for their involvement based on their appraisal of their abilities in the situation (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

Hoover-Dempsey and her associates (2005) reviewed recent empirical work related to the constructs included in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s work. They concluded from the literature that parents’ decisions about involvement in their children’s education are influenced by role

construction for becoming involved, a sense of self-efficacy in their abilities, their perception of invitations to involvement, and life-context variables such as skills, knowledge, time and energy. The most important finding for educators is that parents' decisions about involvement are influenced by schools. Intentional or unintentional actions of schools influence parents. Positive action may enhance motivation, but inaction or negative action may diminish motivation for many parents.

Using Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) model of the parent involvement process, Deslandes and Bertrand (2005) examined four factors of parental involvement in secondary schools in Canada. The factors studied were: a) the relative strength of parents' role construction, b) the parents' self-efficacy for helping adolescents succeed in school, c) the parents' perceptions of teacher invitations to become involved, and d) parents' perceptions of students' invitations to become involved. The study participants were parents of adolescents in five Quebec secondary schools in grades seven, eight, and nine. Surveys were received from 770 parents. The results show that researchers must differentiate between involvement at home and involvement at school when examining the predictive power of the four factors. Parental perceptions of teacher invitations were associated with parental involvement at school across all grade levels. In either home or school involvement, parents became more involved when they perceived that teachers and/or students expected or wanted their involvement.

Research has shown the positive effects on education when educators take advantage of parents as a resource and view them as a support rather than as a barrier, yet many schools do not invite parental involvement (Trotman, 2001). Reasons for this lack of involvement may include a territorial attitude from educators, a negative perception of the capacity of parents to assist, a lack of time and understanding as to how parents can contribute or a concern as to how to get

parents involved (Giles, 2005; Swap, 1993; Trotman, 2001). Parents often cite their own lack of knowledge as the reason they do not become more involved (Wakefield, 2004).

In a qualitative research study with low-income, minority parents, Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel (2001) explored parental ideas and attitudes about education in an effort to understand parents' interactions with school staff. The study involved parents from a single school located in a minority community in California. The community was composed of Black, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander families with the majority of the Hispanic and Pacific Islander families being first generation immigrants to the United States. The researchers interviewed a random sample of parents from 30 families across grade levels via telephone. From this sample, ten families were chosen for in-home interviews.

Questions for the study were clustered around: (a) educational background and experiences, (b) ideas about the meaning and value of schooling, (c) ideas about the role of parents in their children's schooling, and (d) relationships between parents and schools. Researchers had been warned by school officials that it might be unsafe to venture into these homes and school staff had stated that very few families would actually participate. The researchers felt that these comments were typical of the historically unchallenged views that minority parents with low educational attainment attach little value to the education of their children. These beliefs were not supported, as only one family out of those initially contacted was unwilling to participate. It is also worth noting that nine out of the ten families interviewed stated that if they were asked, they would find ways to increase their involvement at home and school.

Many of the parents who were interviewed viewed education as a route to financial success. They also recognized that the changes in technology would require that their children

obtain at least a high school education. Overall, most parents also wanted their children to pursue post secondary training.

Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel (2001) suggest that over time parents learn the roles they are expected to assume. Often parents view their roles as supporters, helpers, and fundraisers rather than as decision makers, partners and collaborators. These particular parents were generally consistent in their view that attendance at meetings and assistance with homework were their primary functions.

High school outreach and family involvement was researched by Simon (2001) in an effort to address the question: *When high schools reach out to involve parents, are they more likely to become involved?* Data was analyzed from over 11,000 parents of high school seniors participating in the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988. Her findings show that outreach positively and significantly predicted parents' involvement and that high schools do have the ability to conduct activities that support family involvement in adolescents' learning and development.

Through their research on small communities, Harmon and Dickens (2004) found that even though the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires states and school districts to increase the involvement of parents in schools, rural schools are becoming less open to parent and community involvement. These schools face a real challenge in getting meaningful parental involvement. Classrooms no longer have time to accommodate outside visits by community members and school expectations of parents are little more than helping with homework. A 2002 study of school board members by the National School Board Association found that small school districts (which are mostly rural) provide the fewest opportunities for community input on school issues (Harmon & Dickens, 2004).

Harmon and Dickens (2004) participated in a project sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to improve math and science achievement in Appalachian counties in six states. Their responsibility was to research ways of engaging parents and the community to help raise math and science scores. They found that rural educators had little time or expertise in involving parents just as rural parents and community members knew little about meaningful engagement. One major contribution was the development of engagement teams that consisted of a teacher, a parent, local business owners, religious leaders, and students. The teams helped communities to collaborate in their efforts to improve math and science scores. In addition the research demonstrated that change needs to be embraced by not only the principal, but also the superintendent and school board.

In an effort to gather more information on how the effects of parental involvement vary for students from diverse racial/ethnic and economic backgrounds, Desimone (2001) examined the relationship between 12 types of parental involvement and eighth-grade mathematics and reading scores. Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, she found that statistically significant differences existed in the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement according to the students' race/ethnicity and family income as well as type of achievement measure, type of parental involvement and whether it was reported by the student or parent.

She concluded the findings of the study suggest that the effectiveness of parental involvement practices differ according to race/ethnicity and family income. More research is needed on effective parental involvement to promote success in diverse family and community contexts for students who may be at risk of educational failure. Such information will assist

educators in responding to the individual needs of children and improve the life success of all students (Desimone, 2001).

In 2008 Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter and Mason reported the results of a study sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The purpose of the study was to give parents a voice and to determine how high schools and parents can work more effectively together to strengthen the education of children. The study consisted of a series of focus groups and a survey of 1,006 parents of current and recent high school students in rural, urban and suburban communities across the nation. The study focused on comparing parents' responses from high, medium and low performing schools. The results showed that regardless of the family's income, race, ethnicity, or school; parents shared common beliefs about the importance of education for their children. Parents with less education, lower incomes and children in low-performing schools were more likely to view rigorous academics and parent involvement as critical for their children's success. However, only 47% of parents from the low performing schools believed that their schools encouraged parental involvement as compared to 85% from the higher performing schools. The findings also showed that parents want to be involved, but they expressed a need for better information and tools from schools to become effectively involved (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason 2008).

Citing evidence from research literature and her observations and interviews as a counselor, consultant and researcher in urban schools, Giles (2005) outlines three basic patterns underlying the roles and relationships between parents and educators in urban schools. She suggests that often in the economically poor and working-class urban communities social cues bear down upon parents. At times their identities are reframed when they enter the school environment. They receive the message that they are to help their children, but only in a limited

capacity which is defined by educators. Although these cues may be subtle at times, they convey a powerful message to parents about who they are and their ability to contribute to their children's schools. In addition the difference in race and social class between educators and urban parents can contribute significant barriers to developing productive relationships.

Giles (2005) identifies one of these relationship patterns as the deficit narrative. In this type of relationship pattern, educators consider working-class and low income parents to be deprived, deviant, or "at-risk". These parents are viewed as having low expectations for their involvement in their child's education. When school professionals have this view of parents, it translates into low expectations for the students' academic achievement and personal growth and development. A second narrative Giles identified was the *in loco parentis* or "in place of parent" narrative. Educators with this view assume that it is their responsibility to provide an academic and at times social and emotional education for students with limited or no participation by parents. Like the deficit narrative this view assumes that working-class and poor parents are not capable of contributing to their children's education. The third narrative, the relationship narrative, is a more positive view of parents. Parents are expected to contribute their knowledge and strengths to improve the school and educators and parents hold each other mutually responsible for educating students. The key to this view is that educators work with parents, not for them.

Giles (2005) offers her three narratives as a lens through which school counselors can examine the relationships of parents and educators in schools as they work to incorporate the framework of the Transforming School Counseling Initiative. She encourages counselors to determine the extent to which educators in their schools are participating in narratives that limit parents' contributions to the education of children and warns that the language of the initiative

itself appears to be that of an *in loco parentis* narrative. Although the goal is to raise expectations for the potential of parents to work to narrow the achievement gap, the language does not articulate a significant role for parents to accomplish this objective. Her example is that in the counselors' scope of work description, parents are not mentioned in the leadership, advocacy, or teaming and collaboration areas but are identified as recipients of resources under the counseling and coordination area.

Parental Involvement in Career Development

The emphasis on increasing parental involvement in children's schooling is reflected in policies aimed at improving our nation's schools. The Goals 2000 legislative mandate to improve public education emphasizes the improvement of learners' capacity for productive employment. It does not, however, make a connection between parents and career planning (Way & Rossman, 1996). The No Child Left Behind Act's emphasis on parental involvement to ensure student success can be a catalyst to promote parental involvement in career planning. Schools are encouraged to reach out to all parents as equal partners. They are to provide parents with training and effective means of communication. Parents are to be encouraged to participate in educational planning and decision-making (U. S. Department of Education, 2007). Therefore, it appears that parental involvement in career planning is a logical part of school reform.

Parental influence on children's career development has been well documented (Brown, 2004; Hall, 2003; Trusty, 1998; Way & Rossman, 1996; Whiston & Keller, 2004). In the 1950's Anne Roe's research focused on family relations and their effects on career development (Zunker, 2002). She theorized that parental styles had major impacts on career decisions (Whiston & Keller, 2004). According to Brown (2004) the family is the single most powerful influence on vocational behavior. He also points out that the majority of career theories make reference to the family's role in influencing career development.

Whiston and Keller's (2004) comprehensive review of career literature examined the influence of family of origin on career development. In this review of literature from 1980, they found that to some extent all of the major career development theories address the influence of contextual factors on career development. Contextual factors refer to the influences that exist or are perceived to exist in the environment surrounding a person (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). Contextual factors would, therefore, include family members.

According to Social Cognitive Career Theory, contextual barriers and supports from a person's environment interact with personal variables to predict career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career interests. For example, a person's perceived parental support system will interact with personal variables such as race, gender or ability to influence the career decision-making process (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

Research indicates that perceived parental support is a significant predictor of career self-efficacy, differences in efficacy expectations and vocational interests (Turner & Lapan, 2003). In an effort to examine some of the reasons rural adolescents may limit their career interests along self-efficacy and gender lines, Lapan, Hinkelman, Adams, and Turner (1999) conducted a one group post-test design study utilizing a social cognitive framework. These authors used the instrument, Mapping Vocational Challenges (MVC), to identify background factors that influence the establishment of vocational interest patterns. The study consisted of a sample of 126 adolescents aged 15-18. All were lower middle class and 98% were Caucasian. The study results indicated that perceived parental support was a significant predictor of differences in career efficacy expectations and vocational interests. Students who expected greater parental support generally expressed greater career self-efficacy for an interest in the areas of Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, and Conventional.

The information on the sample is very limited, but the researchers did state that replication of their findings is needed with diverse rural groups before results can be generalized. The study provides some valuable implications for counselors regarding actively engaging rural parents in the career development process.

In their review, Whiston and Keller (2004) summarized the findings of 77 studies using 29 different journals across diverse disciplines. They concluded from their review that empirical trends suggest that families do influence youth's career development in specific and predictable ways. Family support, attachment, and other family variables are important avenues through which parents have influenced career self-efficacy, decisiveness, commitment and career exploration of adolescents and young adults (Whiston & Keller, 2004).

The research on the parental impact on the development of a person's self-concept and self-efficacy demonstrates that parents are a vital resource to students in any educational endeavor (Chin & Kameoka, 2002; Gallavan, 2003; Hall, 2003; Hay & Ashman, 2003; Turner & Lapan, 2003). A person's self concept is developed gradually through life experiences and interaction with parents, significant others, and peers. In addition vocational self-concept develops over time and is influenced by the environment, life experiences, physical and mental growth and observation of working adults (Zunker, 1990). Self-efficacy is the belief that after one has mastered the skills involved in performing a task, one can do the task and transfer that learning to similar tasks (Bandura, 1986). These two key components of career development are dependent on family and environmental factors since a person's assumptions, values and beliefs are modeled and reinforced by the people with whom they interact (Bandura, 1986; Whiston & Keller, 2004).

Hall (2003) and Larson (1995) have suggested the use of a family systems approach to adolescent career development. This approach suggests that adolescents be provided with additional family support as they begin to explore interests, establish goals and to actively plan their career development. In addition, parents may develop more accurate appraisals of their children's interests and abilities. If parents are better educated in this area, then their career expectations of their children will be more realistic and hopefully more supportive.

In a more recent study Young (2006) and his colleagues examined parent-adolescent joint actions that address the adolescent's future. They studied these actions for their connection to the parent-adolescent relationship and communication goals, and the steps taken to reach those goals. The study involved 19 parent-adolescent dyads with and without challenges such as illness, divorce, and unemployment. The families each identified a family career development project from the joint conversations between the two members and the researchers. The pairs were monitored for six months using a qualitative action-project method.

The results supported the view that vocational exploration and decision-making is nested in a complex matrix of human interactions. The study highlights the importance of relationships and communication between parents and adolescents because life projects are often connected to them in relevant ways. Career support and direction that parents provide and children seek are constructed within their communications. The study also points out that what is often viewed as individual behaviors can be better understood as joint family projects. It also shows a paradigm shift in thinking from a more traditional understanding of parent-adolescent relationship variables as influencing career development to one in which goals and personal agency are constructed through relationships (Young, et al., 2006).

Studies of the career development of diverse youth have also supported parental involvement (Jackson & Nutini, 2002; Lapan, Hinkelman, Adams, & Turner 1999; Chin and Kameoka, 2002). Parents or caregivers can be a resource to help provide a missing link to meet the challenges of diversity. After all, parents are experts on their children and generally want to be involved in the educational process, but often are not sure how (Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, & Moore, 2002; McCaleb, 1994). Career information is not very helpful to students if they do not have access to caring adults who can provide guidance in the transition to the world of work.

Since parenting styles, parental attitudes and parent-child interactions all play a part in students' career decisions (Sharf, 2002), it makes sense that counselors take advantage of parental influence and involve them more directly in student career development. Family involvement can be a valuable avenue for developing more effective programs and providing students with needed support (Hall, 2003), but traditionally parents have not been encouraged to become involved in the process (Sage, 2004).

Parents need to be encouraged to work as partners with schools to enhance the transition from school to work (Sage, 2004). Palmer and Cochran (1988) tested the effectiveness of a program in Canada designed to assist parents in helping their adolescent children in career planning. They used a pre-test/post-test control group design with 40 families. Their results concluded that parents can effectively foster the development of their children when provided with a program they can follow.

According to John Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, while more than six out of ten high school graduates enter college, one-third of those students who enroll will leave college without obtaining a degree. The Center states that only 30% of Americans today have a bachelor's degree and the remaining 70% urgently need better career

education and support. In an effort to provide insight that will strengthen the education of young people about careers, work and economic change, The Center reviewed the research and data on educational attainment, educational reform, labor market requirements and career education models. Their research also included five focus groups with guidance and employment counselors to discuss the shortcomings of guidance counseling in high schools and develop innovative solutions to improving opportunities for young people. A total of 38 individuals from across the nation were involved. Their report, *The 70 Percent Solution*, provides five principles for helping young people make better choices during and after high school. Principle Three from the report explains the importance of schools improving the pool of knowledge of parents, guardians, and other stakeholders about the educational and career options and opportunities available to every student. The findings suggest that schools accomplish this goal by utilizing the leadership of school administrators and school counselors, researching good practices nationwide, promoting the use of career education tools and websites by students and parents, developing student career and academic plans with full parental involvement, and increasing parent knowledge about careers (Van Horn, Pierson-Balik, & Schaffner, 2004).

Research has shown that parents do affect their children's career efficacy and choices and the importance of involving parents in career planning and decision-making, yet there is very little information as to how educators might utilize parents as a resource for effective career development (Hall, 2002; Sage, 2004). This research study can provide counselors with information that may be a key component of successful involvement of parents in children's career education.

Summary

Research has demonstrated the importance of parental involvement in career development and planning. Families play important roles in the career orientation and career choice of

adolescents. They also influence the transmission of values such as independence and ambition. Since family members play such an important role in career planning, it is surprising that research in this area is so sparse. Perhaps this is because there are still barriers that educators and parents must learn to overcome (Giles, 2005) or perhaps it is because there is little research available on the actual roles that families play in preparing their children for work (Way & Rossman, 1996). There is also a dearth of information as to how educators and counselors might best involve parents as a career development resource. Although policies and mandates require parental involvement, it is generally left up to the schools to determine the most effective means to work with parents.

Whatever the reason for the lack of parental involvement, one thing is certain; school counselors need more information and training on how to involve parents. Bryan (2004) states that although there is increasing literature about school/family/community partnerships, little research can be found addressing the roles or involvement of the school counselor in these partnerships. In her work, Giles (2005) addresses counselor repertoires for building relationships between educators and parents, but also points out that even in the description of counselor scopes of work in the Transforming School Counseling Initiative, parents are not mentioned in the areas of leadership, advocacy, or teaming and collaboration. In their research, Hall (2002) and Sage (2004) have stated that there is very little to guide counselors in involving parents in career development.

To meet the needs of today's diverse society and the changing demands of this century, Sage (2004) states that comprehensive guidance programs must educate parents by providing the knowledge, facilitative skills and attitudes needed to enhance their child's career self-assessment, exploration and decision making skills. Perhaps schools need more than mandates and

requirements to empower parents. The need for discussion and additional research to develop guidelines or standards to guide parental involvement in career development is clear (Otto, 2000; Turner, 2002; Van Horn, Pierson-Balik & Schaffner, 2004). The researcher hopes this study provides the first step in articulating guidelines that assist counselors and parents in working together.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was fourfold: 1) to assess the perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists regarding the value of involving parents in their child's career planning process, 2) to identify the strategies schools currently use to foster such involvement, 3) to identify barriers that counselors and career specialists believe may prevent successful involvement of parents at the high school level, and 4) to determine if parental involvement activities varied by geographic context. In this chapter the design of the study, the nature of the study variables, the population and sampling procedures, the resultant sample, the instrumentation and instrument development, the research hypotheses, and the data collection and data analysis procedures are discussed.

Design of the Study

In this study a cross-sectional survey research design was used. Survey research has been defined by McGraw and Watson (1976) as a "method of collecting standardized information by interviewing a sample representative of some population" (p.343). Cross-sectional survey designs are used to collect data from groups of individuals at one point in time (Creswell, 2005). A cross-sectional design was chosen for the study for a variety of reasons. First, a cross-sectional survey can be used to examine current attitudes, opinions and practices of individuals (Creswell, 2005), and is the method of choice when these individuals are the only ones who can answer the questions (Nelson, 1996). Second, cross-sectional survey methods are useful in measuring a group's involvement in activities or their need for services (Creswell, 2005). In this study the use of a survey research method enabled the researcher to examine the opinions and perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists regarding the value of parental involvement in

student career planning, the current types of parental involvement, and the barriers that may prevent parental involvement.

Nature of the Study Variables

The variables of interest in the study were eight types of school activities involving parents and two types of barriers to parental involvement. The eight school activity variables are based on the six types of parental involvement proposed by Joyce Epstein (1995). Variable one is *assisting parents with student personal/social development* and consists of activities (i.e., workshops or printed information) schools could offer to parents to assist them in supporting and guiding their adolescent children in their personal and social development. Variable two is *assisting parents with student career exploration* and consists of activities and resources to assist parents in helping their adolescents to identify their own unique career interests and skills. It also addresses opportunities that can provide parents with support in assisting their adolescent in exploring careers. Variable three is *assisting parents with student career planning and decision-making* and consists of activities and resources that schools could offer to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. Variable four is *assisting parents with student post-secondary planning* and consists of various modes of providing information to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's planning for post-secondary education such as online services, printed information, presentations from post-secondary schools, and workshops. Variable five is *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level* and contains activities to actively involve parents in the career guidance program at school through volunteering and opportunities for input on career curriculum decisions. These activities may involve surveys, committee membership, and volunteer activities such as classroom and career fair presentations in their area of expertise. Variable six is *facilitating general parent/school communication* and contains activities and resources schools can provide

to parents to maintain effective communication from school to home. These activities and resources address providing translators and translated material, providing current information about school programs, and providing opportunities for informal discussions with school staff. Variable seven is *facilitating parent/school communication about academic matters* and consists of activities and resources schools can provide to parents to maintain effective communication from school to home and from home to school. These activities involve communication about student progress, registration, course selection, and educational planning. Variable eight is *collaborating with community and parents* and contains activities to promote the involvement of school, parents, and community as a team to positively affect the physical, mental, and social development of adolescents.

The two additional study variables focused on possible barriers to parental involvement in student career planning and decision-making. Variable nine assessed the barrier that counselors reported experiencing as most significant in their efforts to involve parents in student career planning and decision-making. It included: a) lack of administrative support (Harmon & Dickens, 2004), b) lack of counselor time (Cicero & Barton, 2003), c) limited parent interest (Cicero & Barton, 2003), d) limited financial resources (Garcia, 2004; e) limited technological resources, and f) lack of counselor training in parental involvement skills (Cicero & Barton, 2003; Garcia, 2004). Variable ten concerned the counselors' perceptions of the most significant barrier for parents to overcome in their effort to become involved in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. It included: a) not feeling competent to help their adolescent (Cicero & Barton, 2003; Ingram, Wolfe & Lieberman, 2007) b) feeling unwelcomed by the school, (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason, 2008; Cicero & Barton, 2003), c) feeling not

wanted by the student (Ingram, Wolfe & Lieberman, 2007), and d) lack of time to become involved (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter, & Mason, 2008; Cicero & Barton, 2003).

Population and Sampling Procedures

The researcher used an expert sampling method, which is a form of nonprobability sampling. Nonprobability sampling is often used when the information itself is more important than gaining a representative sample of the entire population (Nelson, 1996). Approximately 600 high school counselors and career coaches/career development facilitators from two southern states were invited to participate. A sample of 184 useable responses was obtained from those who chose to participate. The criterion for selection of counselors to participate in the study were the following: a) a minimum of two years counseling at the high school level, b) a minimum of a masters degree in school guidance, c) state certification as a guidance counselor or career coach/career development facilitator (CDF), and d) current employment as a high school guidance counselor or career coach/CDF. Email addresses for potential participants were obtained from a search of the state department of education websites. The researcher accessed the state website and acquired the lists of school district websites in Florida and South Carolina.

To access school counselors in South Carolina, a list of high schools was generated for each district and counselor email addresses were obtained from the school website. In some cases the school website did not contain email addresses and letters were sent to counselors via U. S. mail. Since the addresses of the Florida high school counselors were more difficult to obtain through the Internet, an introductory letter was sent via email to the Director of Student Services in each Florida school district. The letter explained the study and requested that they forward the information to their high school counselors (See Appendix A). In some of the smaller Florida districts, there was no Director of Student Services. In those cases, emails were

sent to the Assistant Superintendent or principal. In a limited number of cases email addresses were not available and letters were sent to the appropriate school counselor via U. S. mail.

Description of the Study Sample

Participants were drawn from Florida and South Carolina. Although there were 221 participants who completed section one (demographics) of the survey, only 189 participants completed the entire survey. In addition, there were five participants who did not meet the sampling criteria because they did not have state certification as a counselor, career coach or Career Development Facilitator. Florida issues a Professional Certificate to career specialists or coaches based on the individual district's guidelines (Florida Department of Education, 2008). In South Carolina career specialists are given the title of Career Development Facilitator (CDF). CDFs must have a bachelors degree and must have completed the national (Global) Career Development Facilitator certification training (South Carolina Department of Education, 2007). As a result, the final sample consisted of 184 participants of which 174 were high school counselors (96%) and 10 (4%) were career coaches or CDFs. One hundred seventeen (63.6%) were from Florida and sixty-seven (36.4%) were from South Carolina. It was not possible to obtain a clear response rate due to the researcher depending on the Florida Directors of Student Services to forward the email invitation to the districts' high school counselors and career specialists.

In terms of gender, twenty-seven participants (14.7%) were male and 157 (85.3%) were female. Among the study participants, 78.8% held masters degrees, 17.9% education specialist degrees, and 3.3% doctoral degrees. The years of experience of the participants as high school counselors or career coaches/CDFs were as follows: a) 34.8% had from one to five years, b) 18.5% had from six to ten years, c) 13% had from eleven to fifteen years, and d) 33.7% had more than 15 years. Among the participants 93.4% were full-time high school guidance counselors,

1.1% worked as part-time high school guidance counselors, 3.3% were full-time career coaches or CDFs, and 2.2% worked part-time as career coaches or CDFs. Table 3-1 summarizes the demographic data on the sample population.

Table 3-1. Demographic data on the sample population

Characteristics (N=184)	Total N	Total %	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
			N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender								
Male	27	14.7	9	16.1	9	18.8	9	11.3
Female	157	85.3	47	83.9	39	81.2	71	88.7
State of employment								
Florida	117	63.6	26	46.4	39	81.2	52	65.0
South Carolina	67	36.4	30	53.6	9	18.8	28	35.0
High school counseling								
1-5 years	64	34.8	18	32.1	17	35.4	29	36.2
6-10 years	34	18.5	13	23.2	6	12.5	15	18.8
11-15 years	24	13.0	7	12.5	3	6.3	14	17.5
More than 15 years	62	33.7	18	32.2	22	45.8	22	27.5
Highest degree earned								
Masters	145	78.8	48	85.7	37	77.1	60	75.0
Specialists	33	17.9	6	10.7	10	20.8	17	21.2
Doctoral	6	3.3	2	3.6	1	2.1	3	3.8
Type of position								
Part-time counselor	2	1.1	2	3.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Full-time counselor	172	93.4	50	89.3	44	91.7	78	97.5
Part-time career coach (CDF)	4	2.2	3	5.3	1	2.1	0	0.0
Full-time career coach (CDF)	6	3.3	1	1.8	3	6.2	2	2.5

As part of the demographic information requested in the survey, participants were asked to describe their school setting and student population. Survey definitions for school setting were: a) rural: small town, countryside, agricultural; b) urban: located in a city with a residential population of at least 50,000, c) suburban: located on the outskirts of a city or large town. Fifty-six (30.4%) participants classified their high school settings as rural, forty-eight participants (26.1%) as urban, and eighty participants (43.5%) as suburban. The size of the participants' high schools ranged from .5% having a population of over 4000, 33.2% with a population ranging between 2001 and 4000, 46.7% with a population between 1001 and 2000, 12.5% with a population between 501 and 1000, and 7.1% with a population of 500 or less. The minority composition of the high schools was as follows: a) 13% had a minority enrollment of 76-100%,

b) 19.6% had a minority enrollment of 51-75%, c) 35.3% had a minority enrollment of 26-50%, and d) 32.1% had a minority enrollment of 0-25%.

Data is presented for school size, student socioeconomic status, and minority enrollment by geographic area in Tables 3-2, 3-3, and 3-4, respectively.

Table 3-2. Size of school by geographic area

School size	Rural %	Urban %	Suburban %	Total %
1-500	14.3	4.2	3.8	7.1
501-1000	26.8	6.3	6.3	12.5
1001-2000	53.5	47.8	41.2	46.7
2001-4000	5.4	39.6	48.7	33.2
4000+	0.0	2.1	0.0	.5

As can be seen in Table 3-2, the majority of the participants from both rural (53.5%) and urban (47.8%) settings reported working in schools that ranged in size from 1001-2000 students. The majority of the participants from suburban schools (48.7%) reported working in schools that ranged in size from 2001-4000 students. No rural or suburban participants reported working in schools larger than 4000 students and only 2.1 % of urban participants reported working in schools of that size. Among the participants working in rural settings 14.3 % reported working in small high schools ranging in size from 1-500 students. In contrast urban participants reported only 4.2% and suburban participants reported 3.8% working in small high schools of 1-500 students.

Table 3-3. School student socioeconomic status by geographic area

% Free and reduced lunch	Rural %	Urban %	Suburban %	Total %
0-25	10.7	16.7	32.5	21.7
26-50	44.6	43.7	48.7	46.2
51-75	26.8	25.0	13.8	20.7
76-100	17.9	14.6	5.0	11.4

As can be seen in Table 3-3, the majority of participants from all three geographic settings worked in schools with 26-50% of their students on free or reduced lunch. Among the suburban participants, 32.5% worked in schools in the 0-25 % range and only 5% worked in schools with

76-100% of their enrollment on free or reduced lunch. Among the rural participants, 17.9% worked in schools with 76-100 percent of their students on free or reduced lunch.

Table 3-4. School minority enrollment by geographic area

% Minority	Rural %	Urban %	Suburban %	Total %
0-25	42.8	18.7	32.5	32.1
26-50	26.8	27.1	46.3	35.3
51-75	17.9	27.1	16.2	19.6
76-100	12.5	27.1	5.0	13.0

As can be seen in Table 3-4, only five percent of the participants in suburban schools had minority enrollments of 76-100 % in contrast to participants from urban schools at 27.1% and rural schools at 12.5%. The majority (46.3%) of the suburban participants worked in schools with 26-50 % minority enrollment. The enrollment at the urban schools did not vary as much as the rural and suburban schools with 18.7% of the participants from schools with 0-25 % minority and each of the remaining three categories having 27.1% minority enrollment. Among the participants from rural schools, 42.8% worked in schools with 0-25 percent minority and 12.5% from schools with 76-100 % minority.

Instrumentation

The study utilized an Internet-based survey created by the researcher to examine participants' perceptions about the importance of parental involvement practices in the career development of high school students in diverse geographic settings. No survey existed to measure school counselors' perceptions of parental involvement in student career development. As a result, a survey was developed based on the six types of parental involvement proposed by Epstein (1995a) and the goals and objectives specified in the NCDA guidelines (National Career Development Association, 2005).

The instrument consisted of three sections. In section one (items 1-12), demographic information was requested. Participants were asked to provide information that included their

gender, age, highest degree in counseling, years of experience as a high school counselor, whether or not they were full-time counselors or career coaches or CDFs, and whether or not they were a state certified school guidance counselor, career coach or CDF. In addition, information was requested regarding the nature of the student population of the school in which the counselor was employed (i.e., minority composition, geographical location, socioeconomic status) during the 2007-2008 school year.

Section two consisted of 37 Likert-style items depicting various parental involvement activities. These items were developed based on the six types of parental involvement formulated by Epstein (1995): a) parenting, b) communicating, c) volunteering, d) learning at home, e) decision-making, and f) collaborating with the community; and the three career development domains specified by the National Career Development Guidelines: a) personal and social development, b) educational achievement and lifelong learning, and c) career management (National Career Development Association, 2005). For each of the 37 items, participants used a Likert scale ranging from one to four to rate the importance of career involvement activities with a rating of four being an important activity, a three being a relatively important activity, two being a not too important activity, and one being an unimportant activity. Participants also indicated by marking a response of *yes* or *no* whether their school currently provided each of the 37 activities.

Section three was composed of two multiple-choice questions describing potential barriers to parental involvement. These barriers were chosen from the literature on parental involvement in schools. In the first question, participants were asked to select the most significant barrier posed by schools from a list of six possible barriers. In the second question, participants were

asked to select from among four possible barriers experienced by parents, the one they believed to be the most significant barrier to parents becoming involved in student career planning.

Instrument Development

Internal validity of section two of the survey was established by means of the following procedures. First a pool of 37 career involvement items was developed that assessed the value and type of parental involvement in student career planning activities. These items were categorized under the six types of parental involvement developed by Joyce Epstein (1995a). This item pool was reviewed by a panel of experts consisting of a high school counselor, a state career guidance curriculum director, a district guidance director, and a state career and technology director.

Based on the suggestions from the panel, the item pool was revised and the items were grouped under seven different subscales. Subscale one, *assisting parents with student personal/social development*, contained activities (e.g., workshops or printed information) schools could offer to parents to assist them in supporting and guiding their adolescent children in their personal and social development. The skills addressed were: a) being achievement oriented, b) getting along with others, and c) having positive work habits. A sample item was: *Conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents to become more achievement oriented.*

Subscale two, *assisting parents with student career exploration*, consisted of activities and resources to assist parents in helping their adolescents to identify their own unique career interests and skills. It also addressed opportunities that can provide parents with support in assisting their adolescent in exploring careers. Three different modes of service delivery were listed. These were: a) workshops, b) printed information, and c) career fairs. A sample item was:

Conduct workshops to assist parents in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills.

Subscale three, *assisting parents with student career planning and decision-making*, contained activities and resources that schools could offer to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. The modes of service delivery were: a) printed information, b) workshops, c) parent conferences, and d) websites. A sample item was: *Provide parents with printed information on how to support students in decision-making and career planning.*

Subscale four, *assisting parents with student post-secondary planning information*, consisted of various modes of providing information to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's planning for post-secondary education. The modes of delivery were: a) online services, b) printed information, c) presentations from post-secondary schools, and d) workshops. A sample item was: *Coordinate with state and/or district staff to provide families with access to online services to assist in post secondary planning for college or career training programs.*

Subscale five, *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level*, contained activities to actively involve parents in the career guidance program at school through volunteering and opportunities to have input on career curriculum decisions. These activities involved surveys, committee membership, and volunteer activities such as classroom and career fair presentations in their area of expertise. A sample item was: *Cooperate with school staff to conduct an annual survey to identify available parent talents and skills.*

Subscale six, *facilitating parent/school communication*, contained items that depicted activities and resources schools can provide to parents to maintain effective communication from

school-to-home and home-to-school regarding student progress, educational planning, high school registration, school policies, career planning, and post-secondary planning. The means of communication addressed and/or translated print. A sample item was: *Collaborate with school staff to provide parents with current information about school* were providing: a) printed information, b) online services, c) formal parent meetings, d) informal gatherings, e) translators *programs via brochures, emails, web pages, or letters home.*

Subscale seven, *collaborating with community and parents*, contained items that promote the involvement of school, parents, and community as a team. This collaboration provides support and information to parents that can positively affect the physical, mental, and social development of adolescents and, therefore, enhances their chance of career success. These items addressed: a) developing community and business partnerships, b) promoting service integration, c) developing community service programs, and d) providing information on available resources. A sample item was: *Encourage school staff to develop community service programs that involve students, parents, and community members.*

As a second step, a panel of three professors from the school counseling field evaluated the items to determine if they were suitable indicators of the subscale for which they were developed. The panel members completed an item sort. They were each given an envelope containing 37 slips of paper. Each slip of paper contained one of the 37 student career planning activities. The panel members were also given seven sheets of paper. At the top of each piece of paper was written one of the seven subscales. Panel members were instructed to place each activity item under the subscale for which they judged it to be an indicator. The panel members were asked to tape the activities on the appropriate page. They were also asked for their input on

the appropriateness of the activity and the wording used to describe it. Once this task was completed the panel members mailed their responses to the researcher in the envelope provided.

The researcher compiled the panelists' responses and established acceptance criteria of 66% agreement among panel members as the requirement for an item to remain unaltered in that subscale. If two out of the three panel members placed an item in the same subscale as the researcher, then the item remained. If an item did not rate two out of three, then it was discarded, moved, or rewritten depending on the input of the panel members.

Items 1-6 in the first subscale, *assisting parents with student personal/social development*, all rated 66% or 100% agreement with the researcher. Those items remained unchanged in the first subscale. Items 7-9 in the second subscale, *assisting parents with student career exploration*, also rated 66% or 100% agreement with the researcher and remained unchanged.

In the third subscale, *assisting parents with student career planning and decision-making*, items 10 and 11 rated 100% and 66% agreement, respectively, with the researcher and remained unchanged. All three panel members disagreed with the placement of item 12, *Coordinate with school staff to conduct an annual survey to determine student and parent needs for career and educational planning*. Upon closer examination of the wording of the item the researcher determined that it was more appropriately placed in subscale five, *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level*. Item 13, *Provide parents with opportunities for conferences each year with the school counselor to discuss their adolescent's educational and career planning*, rated a 66% disagreement with the researcher. It was reworded by omitting the word "educational" which made it clearer to the reader that the researcher was asking about career planning. Item 14, *Collaborate with school staff to provide parents with current information about career opportunities via printed material such as newsletters, school websites,*

brochures and letters, was placed unanimously by the panel members under the second subscale, *assisting parents with student career exploration*. This placement did appear to be a much better fit and it was moved to that subscale by the researcher. Items 15-18 in subscale four, *assisting parents with student post secondary planning*, rated a 66% or 100% agreement with the researcher and they remained unchanged.

Subscale five was *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level*. Items 19, 21, 24, and 25 rated either 66% or 100% agreement with the researcher and remained unchanged in that subscale. Item 20, *collaborate with school staff to conduct an annual survey to identify available parent talents and skills*, was placed by two of the panel members in subscale seven, *collaborating with community and parents*. It was reworded to make it clearer that only parents were being surveyed and it remained in subscale five. The revised item is: *coordinate with school to conduct an annual survey of parents to identify available parent talents and skills*. Two of the panel members placed item 22, *collaborate with school staff to provide a school career fair for students and parents*, in subscale two, *assisting parents with student career exploration*. The researcher agreed this was a more appropriate placement for the item. The word *collaborate* was changed to *coordinate* for purposes of clarity and the item was moved to subscale two. Item 23, *encourage the involvement of parents at school career fairs*, rated a 66% disagreement and the researcher determined that it was not clear to readers that parents were to participate in the career fair. The item was revised to *promote the use of parents in making presentations about their careers at school career fairs* and remained in subscale five.

In subscale six, *facilitating parent/school communications*, items 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34 rated a 66% or 100% agreement with the researcher and remained unchanged. Two of the panel members disagreed with the researcher on item 28, *provide parents with opportunities for*

conferences with the school counselor regarding their adolescent's academic progress and personal/social development. They placed the item in subscale one, *assisting parents with personal/social development.* The researcher determined that this item could be placed in several subscales and decided to eliminate it from the survey. All three panel members disagreed with the placement of item 29, *provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on career planning and post-secondary education.* Upon further examination of the item, the researcher determined that it actually addressed subscales three and four; hence the item was revised and placed under each of those subscales.

All items in subscale seven rated 100% agreement with the researcher and remained unchanged.

Upon further examination of the responses from the panel of experts, it was determined that the item, *provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on career planning and post-secondary education,* was unnecessary because it was addressed in previous items. This item was omitted. In addition, subscale six, *facilitating parent/school communications,* was divided into two separate subscales to more efficiently measure types of parent/school communications. Subscale six was changed to *facilitating general parent/school communications* and contained the following four items:

- Encourage school staff to provide translators for parents when needed.
- Encourage school staff to provide translated print material for parents when needed.
- Provide parents with current information about school programs via brochures, emails, web pages, or letters home.
- Provide parents with opportunities for informal discussions with staff members such as lunch with the counselor, breakfast with the principal or informal meetings with teachers.

Subscale seven became *facilitating parent/school communications about academic matters* and contained the following three items:

- Provide parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress.
- Provide information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning.
- Conduct meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures.

With the addition of another subscale, the previous subscale seven, *collaborating with community and parents*, became subscale eight.

After the revision of section two of the survey was completed, this section contained 37 items with two parts. The first part addressed the importance of activities and the second part addressed the provision of the activity by the participants' schools. Each part was numbered separately (See Appendix F). The next step of establishing a valid survey instrument was to conduct a pilot test of the online survey format. Four recent graduates of the University of Florida's counselor education doctoral program piloted the instrument. The students provided feedback regarding the appropriateness of the items, the readability of the questions, the ease of completion, the length of time required to complete the survey, and the manageability of the web-based technology. The feedback included a time element of not more than 15 minutes to complete the survey. There were no concerns expressed regarding readability, appropriateness of the items or ease of completion. One concern was raised regarding the manageability of the web-based technology. The survey was set up to require an answer to each item before a participant can move to the next item. This requirement caused confusion for one of the pilot participants. She evidently skipped a question and was unable to move through the survey and stopped the instrument prematurely. The survey was revised to allow participants to move through the survey even though they may have skipped a question. This revision would allow participants to skip questions they did not feel comfortable answering and would better ensure that participants moved through the entire survey.

Data Collection Procedures

After securing approval from the University Institutional Research Board, participants were contacted in the following manner. Each participant was invited to participate via an email letter (See Appendices A, B and C for samples of the letters to the school counselors, career specialists and the Directors of Student Services) in which the purpose of the research, the time involved, the informed consent, and the data collection process were explained. The conditions of the informed consent were described and directions for accessing the link to the survey were explained. Potential participants were informed that only the researcher would have access to the data and that there would be no identifying information. They were also assured that their identities would not be revealed in the final research report. The potential participants were informed that they did not have to answer any question that they did not wish to answer and that they were free to withdraw their consent and discontinue their participation at any time. They were informed that there were no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits.

In return for participating in the survey, participants were given the opportunity to request copies of the resulting study data and articles that might be written by the researcher regarding. The researcher's email address was provided so that interested participants could contact her for the results. Two participants have requested results of the study.

The study survey was delivered electronically using SurveyMonkey.com. (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/home.asp>). SurveyMonkey.com is a secure and confidential site through which researchers can design surveys, collect responses, and analyze results. Access to the results is limited to the researcher and is password protected. SurveyMonkey.com states in their privacy policy that data collected are kept private and confidential. Servers are owned and maintained by SurveyMonkey staff and are kept at Berbee Networks (www.berbee.com).

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were established for this research study:

- **HO1:** High school counselors and career specialists assign a low degree of importance to activities designed to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.
- **HO2:** There are no significant differences among rural, urban, and suburban high schools counselors and career specialists in the degree of importance they assigned to activities designed to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.
- **HO3:** Schools provide no activities to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.
- **HO4:** There are no significant differences among rural, urban, and suburban high schools in the number of activities they provide to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.
- **HO5:** There is no significant association between the level of importance and the number of activities reported by counselors for each of the eight subscales.
- **HO6:** There are no significant differences among rural, urban, and suburban high school counselors and career specialists in the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for schools in preventing the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making.
- **HO7:** There are no significant differences among rural, urban, and suburban high school counselors and career specialists in the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for parents in preventing the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making.

Data Analytic Procedures

The following demographic data was computed for the participants in the study and the student population they served during the 2007-08 school year: a) participant's gender, b) participant's age, c) participant's years as a high school counselor, career coach or Career Development Facilitator (CDF), d) participant's highest degree in counseling, e) participant's state of employment, f) the geographic setting of the participant's school (rural, urban, or suburban), g) the percentage of students on free and reduced lunch, and h) the percentage of students who are a minority.

To determine the reliability of the survey instrument, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed. Alpha coefficients ranging from 0-1 can be used to describe the reliability of an instrument consisting of questions with two answers or scaled answers. The higher the score, the more reliable the instrument is. Coefficients over .70 are generally considered adequate (Santos, 1999). For the total survey instrument of eight subscales, a Cronbach's alpha of .919 indicated good reliability. Table 3-5 illustrates the individual subscale correlation with the total instrument and Cronbach's alpha should the subscale be deleted. It is interesting to note that the subscale, *academic communication*, had a very low correlation with the total instrument. When that was deleted, Cronbach's alpha increased to .932.

Table 3-5. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient with deleted variable

Deleted Subscale	Correlation with the total instrument	Cronbach's Alpha
Personal/social	.845704	.900074
Career exploration	.833362	.900350
Career planning	.867363	.897288
Post secondary planning	.732332	.910604
Parent volunteering	.825656	.901399
General communication	.666506	.914288
Academic communication	.357560	.932054
Collaboration	.758336	.906759

To determine the importance that participants attributed to parent involvement in career planning and decision-making and the degree to which their schools involved parents in this

area, means and standard deviations were computed. In addition, to determine if the participants' ratings of importance of parental involvement activities and the number of parent involvement activities provided varied across geographic school settings (rural, urban, and suburban) a series of Kruskal-Wallis one-way analyses of variance of ranks (KWANOVA) was computed. In this analysis the dependent variables for the study were the eight types of parental involvement and the independent variable was the school setting (rural, urban and suburban). A criterion p-value of .05 was used to determine the overall significance of the tests. To determine if a relationship existed between the ratings of importance and the number of activities that schools provide, Spearman correlation coefficients were computed for each subscale. Lastly, a comparison of rural, urban, and suburban participants' perceived barriers to parental involvement was computed by means of Fisher's Exact Test.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented in two sections, hypotheses testing and a summary of the findings. The first section answers each hypothesis individually and includes descriptive data and the results of the data analysis. The second section provides a summary of the findings. A discussion based on those results follows in Chapter Five.

Hypotheses Testing

The variables of interest for hypotheses one through five were the eight subscales scores for depicting different types of parent involvement activities for student career planning. These eight subscales were utilized in two different ways. First, the participants ranked the importance of each parent involvement activity depicted by an item by means of the following four point scale: 1) unimportant, 2) not too important, 3) relatively important, and 4) important. Second, the participants indicated, by choosing a *yes* or *no* response, whether each activity depicted in an item was currently being provided by their school. Data was compiled to determine the importance and actual number of activities schools provided from each of the eight subscales.

The variables of interest for hypotheses six and seven were the barriers that counselors believe that schools and parents must overcome in their efforts to increase parent involvement in career planning and decision-making. The survey instrument included two items regarding these barriers. In the first item participants completed a multiple-choice question by indicating which of the six listed barriers they believed to be the most significant barrier for counselors to overcome in their efforts to involve parents in career planning and decision-making. In the second item participants completed a multiple-choice question by indicating which of the four listed barriers was in their opinion the most significant barrier for parents to overcome in their effort to become involved in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making.

Hypotheses One

HO1: High school counselors assign a low degree of importance to activities designed to assist parents with a) student personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.

To test this hypothesis means and standard deviations were computed for each subscale. The eight subscales consisted of different numbers of items. Table 4-1 illustrates the range of possible scores for each subscale, the subscale mean, the standard deviation (SD), and the total subscale mean based on the possible range of scores per subscale. Although the total subscale means are provided, the subscale means are more meaningful to the reader when considering the 4.0 scale that was used.

Only three subscales had a subscale mean below 3.50. These were *personal/social*, *career exploration* and *parent volunteering*. *Academic communication* had the highest mean of 3.94 and *parent volunteering* had the lowest mean with 3.21. In summary, all eight subscales were rated to be either *relatively important* or *important* to the total group of participants. In view of these results, Hypothesis One was rejected.

Table 4-1. Subscale means and standard deviations of the importance of parent involvement activities

Subscale	Range of possible scores per subscale	Subscale mean	Standard deviation	Total subscale mean
Personal/social	6-24	3.34	.607	19.489
Career exploration	5-20	3.46	.563	16.783
Career planning	4-16	3.52	.497	13.770
Post-secondary planning	5-20	3.67	.374	17.897
Parent volunteering	7-28	3.21	.578	21.880
General communication	4-16	3.61	.398	14.043
Academic communication	3-12	3.94	.187	11.587
Collaboration	3-12	3.58	.475	10.571

Hypothesis Two

HO2: There are no significant differences among urban, suburban and rural high school counselors in the degree of importance they assign to activities designed to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.

To test Hypothesis Two, a series of Kruskal-Wallis one-way analyses of variance of ranks (KWANOVA) was computed to assess the differences in counselors' ratings of importance for each subscale across the geographic settings. The KWANOVA is a nonparametric statistical test used in analyzing data from two or more independent samples. The test's purpose is to determine whether or not the average differences between the groups are due to chance or to a treatment effect (Shavelson, 1996). The KWANOVA does not assume normality and it is not necessary to have the same number of subjects or measurements in each group (Shavelson, 1996; McDonald, 2008). The skewed nature of the study data and the difference in subject number supported the use of this test. The Kruskal-Wallis test has a chi-square distribution with two degrees of freedom. A criterion p-value of .05 was used. The results of these analyses are depicted in Table 4-2.

Subscale one, *assisting parents with student personal/social development*, contained six items regarding activities schools could offer to parents to assist them in supporting and guiding their adolescent children in their personal and social development. The rural mean for this subscale was 3.41 and the standard deviation was .587. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.30, and the standard deviation was .682. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.31 and the standard deviation was .576. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in

the responses of the three groups as there was a chi-square value of 1.14 at a level of significance of .566. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to assisting parents with student personal/social development among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale two, *assisting parents with student career exploration*, contained five items regarding activities and resources to assist parents in helping their adolescents to identify their own unique career interests and skills. The rural mean for this was 3.46 and the standard deviation was .553. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.40 and the standard deviation was .635. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.50 and the standard deviation was .528. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in the responses of the three groups as the chi-square value was .60 at a level of significance of .741. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to assisting parents with student career exploration among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale three, *assisting parents with student career planning and decision-making*, contained four items regarding activities and resources that schools could offer to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. The rural mean for this subscale was 3.55 and the standard deviation was .480. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.46 and the standard deviation was .551. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.54 and the standard deviation was .479. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in the responses of the three groups as the chi-square value was .590 at a level of significance of .745. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to assisting parents with student career planning and decision making among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale four, *assisting parents with student post-secondary planning information*, contained five items regarding various modes of providing information to parents to assist them

in guiding their adolescent's planning for post-secondary education. The rural mean for this subscale was 3.62 and the standard deviation was .395. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.67 and the standard deviation was .385. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.71 and the standard deviation was .352. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in the responses of the three groups as the chi-square value was 1.61 at a level of significance of .448. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to assisting parents with student post-secondary planning information among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale five, *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level*, contained seven items regarding activities to actively involve parents in the career guidance program at school through volunteering and opportunities to have input on career curriculum decisions. The rural mean for this subscale was 3.18 and the standard deviation was .592. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.20 and the standard deviation was .602. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.25 and the standard deviation was .560. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in the responses of the three groups as the chi-square value was .461 at a level of significance of .794. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to facilitating parent volunteering/decision making among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale six, *facilitating general parent/school communications*, contained four items on activities and resources schools can provide to parents to maintain effective communication from school-to-home and home-to-school regarding all aspects of the school program. The rural mean for this subscale was 3.62 and the standard deviation was .397. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.59 and the standard deviation was .415. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.62 and the standard deviation was .394. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in the responses of the three groups as the chi-square value was .220 at a level of significance of

.897. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to facilitating general parent/school communications among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale seven, *facilitating parent/school communications about academic matters*, contained three items on the importance of schools providing parents with effective communication from school-to-home and home-to-school regarding student progress, educational planning, high school registration, and school policies and procedures. The rural mean for this subscale was 3.92 and the standard deviation was .246. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.98 and the standard deviation was .082. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.93 and the standard deviation was .183. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in the responses of the three groups as the chi-square value was .232 at a level of significance of .313. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to facilitating parent/school communications about academic matters among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale eight, *collaborating with community and parents*, contained three items that promote the involvement of school, parents and community as a team. The rural mean for this subscale was 3.63 and the standard deviation was .455. The urban mean for this subscale was 3.60 and the standard deviation was .444. The suburban mean for this subscale was 3.54 and the standard deviation was .508. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a significant difference in the responses of the three groups as the chi-square value was .800 at a level of significance of .671. Hence, the difference in importance attributed to collaborating with community and parents among the three groups was not significant.

Given these results, there appear to be no significant differences among participating counselors and career specialists from rural, urban, and suburban high schools in the degree of importance they assigned to activities to assist parents with a) students' personal/social

development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration. Hence, Hypothesis Two failed to be rejected.

Table 4-2. Parent involvement subscales importance ratings by geographic setting

Subscale	Rural (N=56)		Urban (N=48)		Suburban (N=80)		χ^2 (df=2)	p=*
	means	S.D.	means	S.D.	means	S.D.		
Personal/Social (6 items)	3.41	.587	3.30	.682	3.31	.576	1.14	.566
Career exploration (5 items)	3.46	.553	3.40	.635	3.50	.528	0.60	.741
Career planning (4 items)	3.55	.480	3.46	.551	3.54	.479	0.59	.745
Post-secondary planning (7 items)	3.62	.395	3.67	.385	3.71	.352	1.61	.448
Parent volunteering (4 items)	3.18	.592	3.20	.602	3.25	.560	0.46	.794
General communication (3 items)	3.62	.397	3.59	.415	3.62	.394	0.22	.897
Academic communication (3 items)	3.92	.246	3.98	.082	3.93	.183	2.32	.313
Collaboration (3 items)	3.63	.455	3.60	.444	3.54	.508	0.80	.671

*p=.05

Hypothesis Three

HO3: Schools provide no activities to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.

To test this hypothesis means and standard deviations were computed for each subscale. To determine if the schools provided these types of parent involvement activities, any subscale score higher than zero would indicate that the activities were provided. Each of the eight subscales consisted of a different number of items which resulted in a different range of scores for each subscale. For example, in the area of *parent volunteering*, schools had a possibility of

providing from zero to seven activities. The subscale mean for the number of activities provided in this subscale is 3.12. This indicates that an average of 3.12 of the seven activities was provided by the participants' schools. To make this figure more meaningful a percentage of total activities provided was also computed for each item by dividing the total number of *yes* responses by the total number of possible *yes* responses for each subscale. These percentages ranged from 38% to 97%. The subscale of *parent volunteering* had a percentage of 45. This means that 45% of the participants reported that their schools provided that activity. Table 4-3 illustrates the possible range of scores, the means, the standard deviations (SD) and the percentages of activities provided for each subscale.

The subscale with the highest percentage of activities was *academic communication* (97%). This subscale had a range of zero to three and a mean of 2.89. These results indicated that most schools provided these three activities. The subscale with the second highest mean was *post-secondary planning*. This subscale which had a range of zero to five had a mean of 4.07 and the percentage of activities provided was 82%. *Personal/social* activities resulted in the lowest mean of 2.24 out of a possible six activities and the lowest percentage of activities provided at 38%. The results show participants believed their schools provided activities to involve parents in student career planning and decision-making as evidenced by the subscale percentages ranging from 38% to 97% of activities provided. Hence, Hypothesis Three was rejected.

Table 4-3. Subscale means, standard deviations and percentages for parent involvement activities provided

Subscale (possible range of scores)	Mean	Standard deviation	% of possible activities provided
Personal/social (0-6)	2.24	1.90	38%
Career exploration (0-5)	3.22	1.53	66%
Career planning (0-4)	2.64	1.04	67%
Post-secondary planning (0-5)	4.07	1.06	82%
Parent volunteering (0-7)	3.12	1.76	45%
General communication (0-4)	3.14	.72	80%
Academic communication (0-3)	2.89	.34	97%
Collaboration (0-3)	2.30	.93	80%

Hypothesis Four

HO4: There are no significant differences among urban, suburban and rural high schools in the number of activities they provide to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.

To test Hypothesis Four, a series of Kruskal-Wallis one-way analyses of variance of ranks (KWANOVA) was computed to assess the differences in counselors' ratings of importance for each subscale across the geographic settings. The KWANOVA is a nonparametric statistical test used to analyze data from two or more independent samples. The test's purpose is to determine whether or not the average differences between the groups are due to chance or to a treatment effect (Shavelson, 1996). The KWANOVA does not assume normality and it is not necessary to have the same number of subjects or measurements in each group (Shavelson, 1996; McDonald, 2008). The Kruskal-Wallis test has a chi-square distribution with two degrees of freedom. A criterion p-value .05 was used. The results are illustrated in Table 4-4.

Subscale one, *assisting parents with student personal/social development*, contained six items and the range of possible scores was 0-6. The rural mean was 2.45 and the standard deviation was 1.96. The urban mean was 2.31 and the standard deviation was 1.87. The suburban mean was 2.05 and the standard deviation was 1.88. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with a chi-square value of 1.70 at a level of significance of .432. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale two, *assisting parents with student career exploration*, contained five items and the range of possible scores was 0-5. The rural mean was 3.32 and the standard deviation was 1.53. The urban mean was 3.30 and the standard deviation was 1.43. The suburban mean was 3.11 and the standard deviation was 1.61. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with a chi-square value of .65 at a level of significance of .721. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale three, *assisting parents with student career planning and decision-making*, contained four items and the range of possible scores was 0-4. The rural mean was 2.73 and the standard deviation was 1.05. The urban mean was 2.42 and the standard deviation was 1.01. The suburban mean was 2.70 and the standard deviation was 1.05. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with a chi-square value of 3.28 with a level of significance of .194. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale four, *assisting parents with student post-secondary planning information*, contained five items and the range of possible scores was 0-5. The rural mean was 3.88 and the standard deviation was 1.03. The urban mean was 4.00 and the standard deviation was 1.19. The suburban mean was 4.25 and the standard deviation was .99. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with a chi-square value of 5.78 at a level of significance of .056. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided among the three groups approached significance.

Subscale five, *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level*, contained seven items and the range of possible scores was 0-7. The rural mean was 3.20 and the

standard deviation was 1.72. The urban mean was 2.92 and the standard deviation was 1.70. The suburban mean was 3.19 and the standard deviation was 1.84. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with a chi-square value of .48 at a level of significance of .786. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided to facilitate parent volunteering and decision-making among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale six, *facilitating general parent/school communications*, contained four items and the range of possible scores was 0-4. The rural mean was 3.25 and the standard deviation was .67. The urban mean was 3.02 and the standard deviation was .73. The suburban mean was 3.13 and the standard deviation was .75. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with chi-square value of 2.27 at a level of significance of .321. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided to facilitate general parent/school communications among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale seven, *facilitating parent/school communications about academic matters*, contained four items and had a range of possible score of 0-3. The rural mean was 2.88 and the standard deviation was .33. The urban mean was 2.88 and the standard deviation was .39. The suburban mean was 2.91 and the standard deviation was .33. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with a chi-square value of .90 at a level of significance of .637. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided to facilitate parent/school communications about academic matters among the three groups was not significant.

Subscale eight, *collaborating with community and parents*, contained three items and the range of possible scores was 0-3. The rural mean was 2.27 and the standard deviation was .94. The urban mean was 2.23 and the standard deviation was .97. The suburban mean was 2.36 and

the standard deviation was .92. The KWANOVA revealed there was not a difference in the responses of the three groups with a chi-square value of .86 a level of significance of .651. Hence, the difference in the number of activities schools provided for collaboration with community and parents among the three groups was not significant.

Given these results, there appear to be no significant differences among rural, urban, and suburban high schools in the number of activities they provided to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration. Hence, Hypothesis Four failed to be rejected.

Table 4-4. Provision of parent involvement activities by subscale (using 1=yes, 0=no)

Subscale (score range)	Rural (N=56)		Urban (N=48)		Suburban (N=80)		x ² (df=2)	p=*
	means	S.D.	means	S.D.	means	S.D.		
Personal/Social (0-6)	2.45	1.96	2.31	1.87	2.05	1.88	1.70	.432
Career exploration (0-5)	3.32	1.53	3.30	1.43	3.11	1.61	0.65	.721
Career planning (0-4)	2.73	1.05	2.42	1.01	2.70	1.05	3.28	.194
Post planning (0-5)	3.88	1.03	4.00	1.19	4.25	0.99	5.78	.056
Parent volunteering (0-7)	3.20	1.72	2.92	1.70	3.19	1.84	0.48	.786
General communication (0-4)	3.25	0.67	3.02	0.73	3.13	0.75	2.27	.321
Academic communication (0-3)	2.88	0.33	2.88	0.39	2.91	0.33	0.90	.637
Collaboration (0-3)	2.27	0.94	2.23	0.97	2.36	0.92	0.86	.651

*p=.05

Hypothesis Five

HO5: There is no significant association between the level of importance and the number of activities reported by participants for each of the eight subscales. A series of Spearman correlation coefficients was computed to determine if a relationship existed between the eight subscales for importance and the eight subscales for activities. The Spearman Rho is a non-

parametric procedure of correlation and can be used without making any assumptions about the frequency of the variables (McDonald, 2008). The skewed nature of the study data supports the use of this procedure. There were high correlations at $p=.001$ between importance ratings and activities for seven of the subscales (*personal/social, career exploration, career planning, post-secondary planning, parent volunteering, general communication, and collaboration*) indicating a significant association between the importance attributed to the activities and the provision of the activities. The Spearman procedure indicated no correlation between the importance subscale and the activity subscale for *academic communication*. The data shows this subscale had a mean of 3.94 for importance which was the highest of all the subscales. It also had the highest percentage of activities provided, 97%, with a mean of 2.89 for a three item subscale. This data would indicate a strong relationship between the importance and activities provided. Although the Spearman was an appropriate procedure to use for the other subscales, it did not yield reliable results for this subscale due to the low number of items (3) and the skewed nature of the responses. The results of the Spearman correlations for all subscales are shown in Table 4-5. Table 4-6 illustrates the frequencies and percentages for the importance questions and Table 4-7 illustrates frequencies and percentages for the activities provided for this subscale. Together the tables demonstrate the skewed nature of the data.

The correlations for seven of the subscales indicate a clear relationship between the parent involvement activities participants believe are important and the activities schools provide for parents. Hence, Hypothesis Five is rejected.

Table 4-5. Spearman Correlations of importance and implementation for the eight parent involvement subscales

	PS Importance	CE Importance	CP Importance	PSP Importance	PV Importance	GC Importance	AC Importance	C Importance	PS Activities	CE Activities	CP Activities	PSP Activities	PV Activities	GC Activities	AC Activities	C Activities
PS Importance	1.00															
CE Importance	.792***	1.00														
CP Importance	.806***	.815***	1.00													
PSP Importance	.679***	.690***	.698***	1.00												
PV Importance	.782***	.796***	.757***	.630***	1.00											
GC Importance	.591***	.583***	.597***	.571***	.641***	1.00										
AC Importance	.270***	.288***	.331***	.280*	.236***	.293***	1.00									
C Importance	.734***	.665***	.699***	.623***	.701*	.575***	.272***	1.00								
PS Activities	.454***	.312***	.363***	.318***	.332*	.159*	.025	.389***	1.00							
CE Activities	.373***	.540***	.446***	.337***	.404*	.190**	.152*	.305***	.477***	1.00						
CP Activities	.262***	.303***	.432***	.291***	.278*	.218**	.141	.292***	.517***	.625***	1.00					
PSP Activities	.161	.188**	.186**	.424***	.192**	.145*	.078	.218**	.291***	.345***	.426***	1.00				
PV Activities	.304***	.332***	.280***	.231**	.455***	.203**	.004	.286***	.473***	.506***	.450***	.381***	1.00			
GC Activities	.094	-0.004	.075	.061	.073	.256***	-.013	.115	.235***	.195**	.352***	.279***	.247***	1.00		
AC Activities	.067	-.027	.061	.068	.021	.024	NA	.115	.212**	.153*	.274***	.309***	.198**	.277***	1.00	
C Activities	.189**	.162	.201**	.243***	.220**	.035	.022	.395***	.447***	.403***	.417***	.405***	.408***	.238***	.252***	1.00

Key: ***<.001
 **<.01
 *<.05

PS = personal/social
 CE = career exploration
 CP = career planning
 PSP = post secondary planning

PV = parent volunteering
 AC = academic communication
 GC = general communication
 C = collaboration

Table 4-6. Frequencies and percentages of the importance of the academic communication subscale activities

Question (number)	Rating	Frequency	%
1. What is the importance of providing parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress? (13)	3	9	5.00
	4	171	95.00
2. What is the importance of conducting meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures? (19)	3	11	6.08
	4	170	93.92
3. What is the importance of providing information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning? (45)	2	1	.56
	3	0	5.56
	4	169	93.89

Table 4-7. Frequencies and percentages of the activities provided in the academic communication subscale

Question (number)	Yes/no	Frequency	%
1. Does your school provide parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress? (14)	yes	183	99.46
	no	1	.54
2. Does your school conduct meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures? (20)	yes	172	4.97
	no	9	95.03
3. Does your school provide information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning? (46)	yes	177	2.21
	no	4	97.79

Hypothesis Six

HO6: There are no significant differences among urban, rural, and suburban high school counselors in the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for schools in preventing the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making. This hypothesis was evaluated first by using Chi-square difference tests. Chi-square is a nonparametric procedure used to compare frequencies occurring in different categories or groups (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). A comparative analysis was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the types of barriers reported by counselors in diverse settings. Since 67% of the cells had expected counts less than five, Chi-Square may not be a valid test. Fisher's Exact Test was used as an alternative test since it does not depend on the expected values. This procedure computed a p-value of 0.3698. Using a level of significance of .05, the results indicated that there were no significant differences among the three settings as to

most significant barrier to their schools in the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making. Hence, Hypothesis Six failed to be rejected.

As illustrated in Table 4-8, the majority of participants from the rural and suburban settings reported that the most significant school-based barrier to the involvement of parents in career planning was a *lack of counselor time* (53% and 50%, respectively) and the second highest in significance was *limited parent interest* (40% and 37%, respectively). For urban participants the numbers were exactly reversed with the most significant barrier reported as *limited parent interest* (46%) and the second highest in significance was *lack of counselor time* (33%). The other four barriers regarding administrative support, financial resources, technological resources, and counselor training had very few responses from participants indicating relatively little concern about these factors as barriers.

Table 4-8. School barriers to parent involvement in career planning

Setting	Lack of administrative support	Lack of counselor time	Limited parent interest	Limited financial resources	Limited technological resources	Lack of counselor training	Total responses
Rural	1 (2%)	29 (53%)	22 (40%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	55
Urban	3 (6%)	15 (33%)	21 (46%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	46
Suburban	3 (4%)	40 (50%)	30 (37%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	80
Total	7 (4%)	84 (47%)	73 (40%)	11 (6%)	2 (1%)	4 (2%)	181

Hypothesis Seven

HO7: There are no significant differences among urban, rural, and suburban high school counselors in the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for parents in preventing their involvement in their adolescent’s career planning and decision-making. This hypothesis was evaluated first by using Chi-square difference tests. A comparative analysis was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the types of barriers reported by counselors in diverse settings. Since 50% of the cells had expected counts less than five, Chi-Square may not be a valid test. Fisher’s Exact Test was an alternative test used since it

does not depend on the expected values. This procedure computed a p-value of 0.0616. Using a level of significance was of .05, the results indicated that there were no significant differences in the opinions of participants from the three settings as to the most significant barrier to parents in their ability to become involved in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making.

Hence, Hypothesis Seven failed to be rejected.

As illustrated in Table 4-9, participants from all three settings reported *lack of time* as the number one barrier for parents in their efforts to become involved in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. For rural and suburban participants, *not feeling competent to help their adolescent* ranked second in significance at 25% and 24%, respectively. For urban participants *not feeling welcome by the school* ranked second (11%).

Table 4-9. Parental barriers to involvement in their adolescent's career planning

Setting	Not feeling competent to help	Not feeling welcome by the school	Not feeling wanted by the student	Lack of time to become involved	Total
Rural	14 (25%)	3 (5%)	6 (11%)	33 (59%)	56
Urban	4 (9%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)	35 (78%)	45
Suburban	19 (24%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	54 (68%)	79
Total	37 (21%)	11 (6%)	10 (5%)	122 (68%)	180

Summary of Results

Table 4-10 provides a summary of the research findings. Hypothesis One was rejected as the results indicated that participants rated all eight subscales in the relatively important or important range. These results indicated that participants believed that involving parents in student career planning and decision-making was an important component of the school program.

Hypothesis Two failed to be rejected as the analyses of variance procedures indicated no significant differences among the eight subscales of the various parent involvement activities. These results indicated that the participants from rural, urban and suburban geographic areas had similar ratings of importance for the eight subscales of parent involvement activities. Despite the

differences in their school populations regarding minority composition and socioeconomic status, all three settings agreed academic communication is the most important parent involvement activity and parent volunteering is the least important activity. . subinHypothesis Three was rejected as the results indicated that the participants' schools did indeed provide parent involvement activities to assist parents with student career planning and decision-making. All three geographic settings provided parent involvement activities from each of the eight subscales. The percentage of activities provided for the subscales ranged from a low of 38% for personal/social to a high of 97% for academic communication. The results show participants believe their schools are providing activities to assist parents in helping their adolescents with personal/social development, career exploration, career planning and decision-making, post-secondary planning and provide parents with home/school communication and home/school/community collaboration.

Hypothesis Four failed to be rejected as the analysis of variance procedures indicated no significant differences among the eight subscales of the various parent involvement activities. These results indicated that the frequency of parent involvement activities for each subscale was similar across all three geographic areas.

Hypothesis Five was rejected as the Spearman Correlation Coefficients demonstrated that there were relationships between the participants' ratings of importance and the activities schools provided for seven of the eight subscales.

Hypothesis Six failed to be rejected as the results from the comparative analysis indicated that there were no significant differences among the three settings as to the most significant barrier to their schools in the involvement of parents in career planning and decision-making.

Hypothesis Seven failed to be rejected as the results from the comparative analysis indicated that there were no significant differences in the opinions of participants from the three settings as to the most significant barrier to parents in their ability to become involved in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making.

Table 4-10. Hypotheses Table

Hypotheses	Conclusion
HO1: High school counselors assign a low degree of importance to activities designed to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.	Rejected
HO2: There are no significant differences among rural, urban and suburban high schools counselors in the degree of importance they assign to activities designed to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.	Failed to reject
HO3: Schools provide no activities to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.	Rejected
HO4: There are no significant differences among rural, urban and suburban high schools in the number of activities they provide to assist parents with a) students' personal/social development, b) student career exploration, c) student career planning and decision-making, d) student post-secondary planning, e) parent volunteering/decision-making, f) general parent/school communication, g) parent/school communication about academic matters, and h) school/community/parent collaboration.	Failed to reject
HO5: There is no significant association between the level of importance and the number of activities reported by counselors for each of the eight subscales.	Rejected
HO6: There are no significant differences among rural, urban and suburban high school counselors in the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for schools in preventing the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making.	Failed to reject
HO7: There are no significant differences among rural, urban and suburban high school counselors in the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for parents in preventing their involvement in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making.	Failed to reject

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

Discussion of Results

This chapter includes a discussion of the results for each research question. This discussion is followed by a review of the study's limitations, the implications of the study findings for theory and practice, and recommendations for future research on this topic.

Question One

What degree of importance do high school counselors and career specialists give to the eight types of parental involvement activities for student career planning and decision-making? All eight subscales had importance means above 3.0 indicating that the study participants believed that all eight types of parent involvement activities were important.

These results support ideas in the career planning literature that state it is very important for parents to understand their role in their adolescent's career development and to be involved in career planning and decision-making (Sage, 2004; Smith, 2009; Whiston & Keller, 2004). For example, Sage (2004) states that in educating parents on their role of helping their adolescent in career planning and decision-making schools should:

- Teach effective parenting skills with adolescents.
- Assist parents in developing attitudes that convey high expectations, positive attitudes toward their adolescent, a belief in the importance of education, and a willingness to collaborate with their adolescent in career planning.
- Provide parents with knowledge of the developmental needs of high school students.
- Provide parents with knowledge of career management skills needed by high school students.
- Provide parents with knowledge of the school's curricular and extra-curricular programs.
- Provide parents with knowledge of the school's school-to-career program.

- Provide parents with an understanding of postsecondary preparation, environments, and opportunities.
- Provide parents with the knowledge of the steps to career planning.

Many of Sage's suggestions for parent involvement in career planning can be found embedded in Epstein's six types of parent involvement (Epstein, 1995b). The types are 1) parenting, 2) communicating, 3) volunteering, 4) learning at home, 5) decision making, and 6) collaborating with communities (Epstein, 1995b). The research conducted by Epstein and her colleagues revealed that high schools with strong programs of family-school partnership that included these different types of parent involvement practices were more likely to improve parental attitudes toward the school and encourage family involvement at school and home (Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999).

Subscale seven, *facilitating parent/school communications about academic matters*, had the highest ranking item mean of 3.94 and was composed of the following items: a) provide parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress, b) provide information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning, and c) conduct meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures. A subscale standard deviation of .187 indicated very little variance between the items. Ninety-five percent of participants rated as important the item, *provide parents with regular communication about their adolescent's progress*. Ninety-three percent of participants rated the other two items as important. Even though researchers report that parent involvement generally declines as students get older (Harvard Family Research Project, 2007) and become more independent, the counselors and career development specialists surveyed believed that *facilitating parent/school communications about academic matters* was the most important parent involvement subscale. Moreover,

research has shown parents of high school students want to be involved in their adolescent's school performance, activities and programs (Sanders, Epstein, and Connors-Tadros, 1999).

The importance of counselor support for academic involvement is highlighted throughout the literature (Bemak & Chung, 2008; Bemak & Cornely, 2002; House & Hayes, 2002) and The American School Counselor Association's National Model (ASCA, 2005) emphasizes the need for professional school counselors to play a significant role in promoting academic achievement and success for all students. This challenge coupled with research that has demonstrated that specific school communications practices can increase many forms of parent involvement (Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999; Watkins, 1997) supports the belief that communication about academic progress deserves to be a high priority for participants. In addition, the study participants reported that their schools provided the greatest percentage of activities for this subscale. Thus, not only did the participants report this subscale to be highly important, they also reported that their schools provided these activities more frequently than they did activities related to other subscales.

Subscale Four, *assisting parents with student post-secondary planning information*, had the second highest ranking item mean of 3.67 and was composed of the following items:

- Provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student post-secondary planning.
- Invite parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school.
- Coordinate with state or district staff to provide families with access to online services to assist in post-secondary planning for college or job training programs.
- Conduct meetings or workshops for parents on post-secondary training opportunities, college entrance requirements and financial aid.
- Provide parents with printed information on college entrance requirements and financial aid.

There was little variance between the items with a standard deviation of .374. Eighty-three percent of the participants rated *provide parents with printed information on college entrance requirements and financial aid* as important. Eighty-two percent rated *conduct meetings or workshops for parents on post-secondary training opportunities, college entrance requirements and financial aid* as important. The lowest rated activity in importance for this subscale was *invite parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school* with 55.3% rating it as important and 32.4% rating it as relatively important. These results indicated that the counselors and career development specialists surveyed believed that involving parents in post-secondary planning was important. In addition, the counselors and career specialists believed conducting workshops and providing printed information on post-secondary training, college requirements, and financial aid were more important than inviting parents to attend college recruitment presentations at their school.

The importance of parent involvement in post-secondary planning is documented throughout the literature. Research shows parent involvement is positively related to academic preparation for college and college aspirations and enrollment (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Horn & Chen, 1998; Perna, 2000). As a matter of fact, Perna (2006) developed a conceptual model that depicted students' college related decisions as shaped by multiple layers of context: a) students and their families, b) K-12 schools, c) higher education institutions, and d) societal, economic, and policy contexts. The model also assumes that the most important predictors of college enrollment are academic preparation and achievement, financial resources, knowledge about college, and family support. The literature also stresses that parental knowledge about college is an important factor in student college choice. Parents of low income and minority students are at a definite disadvantage in this area and their adolescent's high school can act as a

valuable source of information to them (Rowan-Keyon, Bell & Perna, 2008; Smith, 2009).

Inviting parents to college recruitment presentations could be an excellent avenue to increased understanding for parents as colleges are in the unique position of explaining curriculum planning as early as eighth grade. College representatives know the skills and knowledge needed for specific majors and can assist parents with curricular strategies and financial planning (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000).

Subscale Five, *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level*, had the lowest rated item mean of 3.21 and consisted of seven activities in which parents are actively engaged in the career guidance program at school through completing surveys, serving on committees, giving input on career curriculum decisions and volunteering for activities such as classroom and career fair presentations in their area of expertise. The individual item means ranged from 2.99 to 3.47 and the standard deviation for this subscale was .578 which indicated there was not a significant variance among the activities. The activity in this subscale which the participants rated as most important was *providing parents with opportunities for involvement on committees and in school leadership positions*. Sixty-seven percent of the participants rated this item as important and 30% ranked it as relatively important. Fifty-six percent of the participants rated *conducting an annual survey of parents to help determine student and parent needs for student career planning* as important. Thirty-four percent ranked it as relatively important. *Soliciting parent input in career guidance* and *conducting parent surveys to identify parent talent and skills* were both rated at the bottom with only 31% believing they were important.

It is not surprising that Subscale five, *parent volunteering and decision-making*, was rated by participants as the least important of the eight scales. The seven items in this subscale described parent activities that actively involve parents at the school level. These results are

consistent with parent involvement literature that states educators are often not welcoming to parent involvement at the school level (Trotman, 2001; Smrekar & Cohen Vogel, 2001). In contrast the subscales that rated the highest in importance, *academic communication*, *post-secondary planning* and *general communication*, contained activities that involve providing parents with information. These types of activities generally do not offer opportunities for interaction, discussion and possible conflicting views. The only item that offered any type of communication exchange was: *What is the importance of providing parents with opportunities for informal discussions with school staff members such as lunch with the counselor, breakfast with the principal or informal meetings with teachers?* This item had the lowest importance rating (3.21) in the subscale of *general communication*. These results suggest that although counselors and career specialists want parents involved, they may feel that it is more important for parents to be informed than to be actively involved. It is also possible that many of the participants feel more comfortable disseminating information rather than offering opportunities for an exchange of communication with parents.

Akos (2004) suggests that in order to strengthen the connections between families and schools and to maximize the resources available to promote learning, educators must go further than merely interacting with families on an “as needed” basis. They must replace the old model of educators as the “sole-expert” with a co-expert or collaborative model.

In summary all eight subscales were viewed as important by the participants. This shows that the counselors and career specialists surveyed believed that parents should be involved in the eight types of career planning. However, the participants believed that communicating with parents about academic matters and assisting parents in student post-secondary planning were the most important parent involvement activities.

Question Two

Is there a difference among high school counselors and career specialists in rural, urban and suburban geographic settings in the degree of importance they give to the eight types of parental involvement activities for student career and decision-making? A series of Kruskal-Wallis one-way analyses of variance of ranks (KWANOVA) was computed to assess the differences in counselors' ratings of importance for each subscale across the three geographic settings of rural, urban, and suburban. The series of eight KWANOVAS revealed that there were no significant differences among the three settings of rural, urban, and suburban in any of the eight subscales.

Subscale one, *assisting parents with student personal/social development*, contained six items regarding activities schools could offer to parents to assist them in supporting and guiding their adolescent children in their personal and social development. The rural schools (3.41) rated this subscale somewhat higher than the urban (3.30) and suburban (3.31). Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale showed that the item, *providing parents with printed information about helping them work with their adolescents to develop skills for getting along with others*, had the highest mean for all three settings. The item, *conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents develop skills for getting along with others*, had the lowest mean for the suburban and rural settings and was the second lowest mean for urban settings. The urban results for this subscale were lower than the rural and suburban with one exception, *providing parents with printed information about helping them work with their adolescents to develop skills for getting along with others*. These results suggest that counselors and career specialists from all three settings believed that assisting parents with student personal/social development is important. Since the items that ranked highest overall

were items involving the provision of printed information, it could be assumed the participants believed that providing printed information is more important than conducting workshops.

Subscale two, *assisting parents with student career exploration*, contained five items regarding activities and resources to assist parents in helping their adolescents to identify their own unique career interests and skills. Suburban schools (3.50) rated this subscale higher than the rural (3.46) and urban (3.40) schools. Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale showed that the different school settings varied in their rating of importance. Rural participants indicated the items, *provide a school career fair for parents and students* (3.50) and *provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills* (3.50), were the most important. Suburban participants indicated that the item, *provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills* (3.57), was most important. Urban participants indicated that the item, *conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills* (3.65), was most important. The lowest individual item mean for urban and suburban settings was *provide parents with information on assisting their adolescents in career exploration outside of the school setting* (3.20 and 3.44, respectively). Rural participants indicated that the item, *provide parents with current information about career opportunities via printed material such as newsletters, school websites, brochures and letters*, was least important. It is interesting to note that parent workshops and printed information on identifying student interests and skills were rated so high (3.65, 3.41) by the urban participants, yet career fairs (3.36), providing information on career exploration (3.20), and providing current information on career opportunities (3.33)

were ranked significantly lower. It appears that urban participants believed identifying interests and skills was more important than actually identifying potential careers. Although there is a definite difference between settings when items are viewed individually, these results demonstrate that counselors and career specialists from all three settings believed that assisting parents with student career exploration is important.

Subscale three, *assisting parents with student career planning and decision-making*, contained four items regarding activities and resources that schools could offer to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. The rural schools (3.55) and the suburban schools (3.54) rated the subscale higher than the urban (3.46). Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale showed that the item, *provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student career planning and decision-making*, had the highest mean for all three settings. The lowest individual item mean for all three settings was *provide parents with workshops on how to support students in career decision-making*. In addition there was more similarity in the individual item means for rural and suburban settings with the exception of providing parent conferences. This item was ranked second highest by all three settings. These results suggested that counselors and career specialists from all three settings believed that providing parents with a guidance website that contains current information on student career planning and decision-making and providing parents with opportunities for career planning conferences are more important than providing parents with workshops on how to support students in career decision-making.

Subscale four, *assisting parents with student post-secondary planning information*, contained five items regarding various modes of providing information to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's planning for post-secondary education. The suburban schools (3.71)

rated this subscale somewhat higher than the rural (3.62) and urban (3.67). Since only 5% of the suburban schools reported that 76-100% of their school population was on free and reduced lunch as compared to rural 17.9% and urban 14.6%, these results might indicate that the suburban schools tend to have a population that is more likely to seek post-secondary training due to their financial situation. Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale shows *providing parents with information on college entrance requirements and financial aid* had the highest mean for the rural and urban settings. Although the difference was slight, the rural participants rated workshops highest (3.81) and the urban participants rated printed materials highest (3.83). Suburban participants rated the item, *provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student post secondary planning*, as most important (3.86). Rural and urban settings also rated this item similarly with 3.75 and 3.79, respectively. The difference in these ratings may be the result of suburban parents having a higher socioeconomic status and perhaps having better access to technology and technological training. The item, *providing parents with printed information on college entrance requirements and financial aid*, was rated second in importance by the rural and suburban settings with 3.79 and 3.84, respectively. The item, *invite parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school*, was rated lowest by urban and suburban settings. In this subscale all three settings had similar means varying by no more than .07 with the exception of the item, *coordinate with state or district staff to provide families with access to online services to assist in post secondary planning for college or job training programs*. For this item the means were rural 3.33, urban 3.50, and suburban 3.61. This difference might possibly suggest that suburban settings may have better access to online services and rural areas may be lacking in this area. Overall these results suggested that the counselors and career specialists from the

suburban schools tend to view technology as a very important resource in post-secondary planning. The results also suggest that participants from all settings believed that providing parents with printed information, workshops and a guidance website are most important for post-secondary planning.

Subscale five, *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level*, contained seven items regarding activities to actively involve parents in the career guidance program at school through volunteering and opportunities to have input on career curriculum decisions. Although the difference was not great, the suburban schools (3.25) rated this subscale higher than the rural (3.18) and urban (3.20) schools. Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale shows the item, *providing opportunities for parental involvement on committees and in school leadership positions*, had the highest means in all three settings (rural 3.64, urban 3.73, suburban 3.63). *Conducting an annual survey of parents to help determine student and parent needs for student career planning* was rated second in importance by the rural and suburban settings (3.48 and 3.44, respectively) and *establishing a parent volunteer program to assist with activities such as career fairs, field trips, career presentations and mentoring* was rated second in importance for the urban settings (3.57). The item, *conduct an annual survey of parents to identify available parent talents and skills*, had the lowest mean for the rural and urban settings (2.94 and 2.87, respectively) and the item, *solicit parent input on the development of the career guidance curriculum*, had the lowest mean for the suburban settings (3.03).

The results for this subscale suggest that counselors and career specialists from all three settings believed that providing parents with opportunities for involvement on committees and in leadership positions was the most important activity in this subscale. It is interesting to note that

the suburban schools rated this as more important than did the rural and urban study participants. This could be a result of suburban schools having parents of a higher socioeconomic status who might be more available and more educated to assume such responsibilities. In addition, the results indicated that the participants believed that conducting a needs assessment of parents and students and using parent volunteers for career fairs, field trips, career presentations and mentoring were also important. However, surveying parents for talents and skills and soliciting parent input on the guidance career curriculum were not viewed very important. There could be numerous reasons for participants' lack of interest in parent abilities and input at the school level. Participants may not recognize a need for utilizing parents' talents and skills because they are not educated as to how parents can assist. They may not welcome parent input as they believe it may not fit with the school's goals or, perhaps, participants feel that having parent input on the curriculum is simply not needed. These results are consistent with the literature which states lack of involvement may include a territorial attitude from educators, a negative perception of the capacity of parents to assist, a lack of time and understanding as to how parents can contribute or a concern as to how to get parents involved (Bridgeland, Dilulio, Streeter & Mason, 2008; Giles, 2005; Swap, 1993; Trotman, 2001).

Subscale Six, *facilitating general parent/school communications*, contained four items of activities and resources schools can provide to parents to maintain effective communication from school-to-home and home-to-school regarding all aspects of the school program. The overall means for all three settings were very similar in this varying by only .03. Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale show that the item, *provide parents with current information about school programs via emails, web pages, or letters home*, had the highest mean for the rural and suburban settings. The item, *provide translators for parents when needed*, was

rated highest by the urban settings. Of the urban participants 54.2% reported their school population to be between 51-100% minority as compared to the suburban at 21.2% and the rural at 30.4%. The results for this item illustrate the need in urban schools for adequately communicating with non-English speaking parents. The results also indicated that all three settings believed that providing translators was more important than providing translated print materials, although both were rated as important. The item, *provide parents with opportunities for informal discussions with school staff members such as lunch with the counselor, breakfast with the principal, or informal meetings with teachers*, had the lowest means for all three settings. These results suggested that counselors and career specialists from all three settings believed that providing general information to parents through printed materials and translators was more important than providing parents with informal in-person opportunities to meet with school staff. In her article on recognizing the views of low-income parents, Lott (2003) stated that more opportunities should be provided for parents to communicate with school personnel. She pointed out that low-income parents generally prefer informal contacts rather than formal, institutionalized events. The lower rating of this item may be due to the time constraints participants reported feeling in Section III of the survey which discussed barriers to parent involvement. Participants indicated that lack of time was a significant barrier for schools and parents in efforts to improve parent involvement (See Table 4-8 and 4-9). Participants may view providing printed material as less time consuming than meeting in person for both parents and educators.

Subscale seven, *facilitating parents/school communications about academic matters*, contained three items on the importance of schools providing parents with effective communication from school-to-home and home-to-school regarding academic matters. Items

consisted of providing parents with information regarding student progress, academic requirements, educational planning, high school registration, and school policies and procedures. Of the eight subscales this one had the highest overall mean of 3.95. Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale showed that all the items ranked 3.91 or higher and did not vary more than .06 between settings. It is interesting to note that the urban participants rated all three items in this subscale higher than the rural and suburban participants. In addition the item, *provide parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress*, was rated 4.0 by the urban participants. Although the individual item means for the rural setting were slightly lower than the urban and suburban settings, the high rating of this subscale by all three settings indicated that this area is a priority for all the participants' schools. These results indicate schools from all three settings recognize the importance of promoting academic achievement and success for all students as supported by The American School Counselor Association's National Model (ASCA, 2005). While specific career related activities are needed and included in the national model, participants may feel that keeping parents informed of academic issues precedes career-related activities.

Subscale eight, *collaborating with community and parents*, contained three items that promote the involvement of school, parents and community as a team. The rural (3.63) and urban (3.60) participants rated this subscale higher than the suburban participants (3.54). These results may indicate that these schools settings, due to their lower socioeconomic status, have a greater need for community resources and support. Further examination of the means for individual items in this subscale showed that the item, *develop partnerships with the community (e.g., business, health, cultural, recreational) that will assist in service integration*, was rated as the highest for the rural and suburban schools. The item, *provide parents with information on*

resources and services within the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, student learning and career development, was rated highest for the urban schools. The item, *develop community service programs that involve students, parents, and community*, was the lowest in importance for all three settings. These results indicated that counselors and career specialists in all three settings believed that developing partnerships within the community and providing parents with community resources were important. Although they believed service learning was important, it does not appear to be as important as the partnerships and resources within the community.

In summary, although the KWANOVA procedures did not indicate significant differences across the three settings of rural, urban and suburban for the total means, there are individual differences by item that provide valuable information. One important discovery is that rural and suburban schools appear to have similar beliefs about the importance of many of the parental involvement activities. In addition the urban schools tend to have more variance in their scores within the subscales which may indicate a greater variance in their individual school populations.

Question Three

According to high school counselors and career specialists, to what extent do high schools implement the eight types of parental involvement activities in student career planning and decision-making? In the survey participants were asked to indicate whether or not their schools provided specific parent involvement activities by answering *yes* or *no*. Total counts of items were computed for each subscale.

The subscale of *academic communication* had the highest mean according to activities provided. Out of a total of three possible activities, the mean of provided activities was 2.89. This means that of the 184 participants surveyed regarding these three activities, there was a 97% response of *yes* to providing the activities. These results could indicate that counselors and career

specialists believed that their schools provided academic communication with parents more than any other subscale activity. In addition the standard deviation for this subscale (.34) is low compared to the other subscales.

The second highest subscale for activities provided is *post-secondary planning*. Out of a total of five possible activities, the mean of provided activities was 4.07. This indicates that of the participants surveyed regarding these three activities, there was an 82% response of *yes* to providing the activities. These results show that counselors and career specialists believed that their schools involved parents to a large extent in student post-secondary planning. The subscales of *general communication* (80%) and *collaboration* (80%) also had relatively high percentages of *yes* responses. The lowest percentage of *yes* responses was the subscale of *personal/social* with 38%.

Although these results demonstrate that the participants' schools definitely address all the subscales for parent involvement activities, there is much more involvement in the activities associated with some subscales than others. Since there is a significant difference in the percentage of activities provided, it appears that the participants believed that schools place less emphasis on parental involvement in activities to improve personal/social skills (38%) than on parental involvement in academic communication (97%) and post-secondary planning (82%). This may indicate that as students move to the higher grades, more importance is placed on academics and planning for the future than on improving personal/social skills. This is a significant finding since potential employers state that although writing, math and reading are still fundamental to any new employee's ability to do a job, person/social skills such as teamwork and collaboration are "very important" to success at work. In 2006 a national survey was conducted by The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, The

Partnership for 21st Century Skills and The Society for Human Resource Management to determine the most important skills for success in the workplace of the 21st century. They surveyed over 400 employers across the United States who indicated high school graduates are entering the workforce lacking in applied skills such as personal accountability, punctuality, working productively with others, and time management. Professionalism/work ethic, oral and written communications, teamwork/collaboration and critical thinking/problem solving are among the most important skills cited by these employers for new entrants into the workplace (Casner-Loto & Barrington, 2006).

Question Four

Is there a difference in the extent to which high schools in urban, suburban, and rural geographic settings implement the eight types of parent involvement activities in student career planning and decision-making? A series of Kruskal-Wallis one-way analyses of variance of ranks (KWANOVA) was computed to assess the differences in the provision of parent involvement activities for each subscale across the three geographic settings of rural, urban, and suburban. The KWANOVA procedure indicated that there were no significant differences among the three settings of rural, urban, and suburban in any of the eight subscales.

Subscale one: *assisting parents with student personal/social development* contained six items regarding activities schools could offer to parents to assist them in supporting and guiding their adolescent children in their personal and social development. The item, *provide parents with printed information about helping them work with their adolescents to develop skills for getting along with others*, had the highest percentage of “yes” responses in all three settings. The difference across the settings in the percentages for this item was very little with percentages for rural 64%, urban 70.8%, and suburban 68.8%. The item, *provide parents with printed information to assist them in helping their adolescents become more achievement-oriented*, had

the second highest percentage of “yes” responses in all settings. The difference in the percentages across the settings was more pronounced in this item with rural (63.6%) and urban (65.2%) percentages relatively close, but with the suburban percentage significantly different (48.1%). This difference would indicate that from the participants surveyed, the rural and urban participants believed that their schools provided significantly more printed information to parents about helping their students become more achievement oriented than the suburban participants. The item, *conduct workshops to provide parents with information on how adolescents develop positive work habits*, had the lowest percentage of “yes” responses in the rural (21.8%) and urban (19.1%). The result for suburban settings was 17.9%, but the item, *conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents to become more achievement-oriented*, was even lower with 17.7%. These results indicated that participants in all three settings were very similar in that their schools provided more printed information than workshops to assist parents in helping their adolescents with personal/social development.

Subscale two: *assisting parents with student career exploration* contained five items regarding activities and resources to assist parents in helping their adolescents to identify their own unique career interests and skills. The item, *provide parents with printed information to assist them in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills*, had the highest percentage of yes responses in all settings. The item, *provide parents with workshops about helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills*, had the lowest percentage of yes responses in the rural and suburban settings. The items, *provide a school career fair for students and parents*, and, *provide parents with information on assisting their adolescents in career exploration outside of the school setting*, had the lowest percentage in the urban settings.

Hence, the participants reported that their schools provided more printed information than workshops for parents about helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills.

Subscale three: *assisting parents with student career planning and decision-making*, contained four items regarding activities and resources that schools could offer to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. The item, *provide parents with opportunities for conferences each year with the school counselor or career coach to discuss their adolescent's career planning*, had the highest percentage in rural and urban settings (85.5% and 78.3%); however, the item, *provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student career planning and decision-making*, had the highest percentage in the suburban settings (87.5%). The item with the lowest percentage in all three settings was *providing parents with workshops on how to support students in career decision-making* with rural 40.1%, urban 21.3% and suburban 32.9%. There was significant difference in the percentage of activities provided across the settings. In contrast the item, *providing parents with printed information on how to support students in their career decision-making*, had a much higher percentage and was fairly consistent across settings (rural 76.6%, urban 77.1%, suburban 73.1%). These results indicated that schools in all three settings provided more printed information than workshops to parents to assist them in supporting their adolescents in career decision-making. In addition schools in all settings provide opportunities for conferences and more suburban schools utilize a guidance website than rural and urban schools.

Subscale four: *assisting parents with student post-secondary planning information* contained five items regarding various modes of providing information to parents to assist them in guiding their adolescent's planning for post-secondary education. These item percentages

ranged from 58.2% to 95.7%. The item, *provide parents with printed information on college entrance requirements and financial aid*, was the highest in all three settings. The percentages for this item were very consistent across the three settings (rural 94.6%, urban 95.7%, suburban 94.9%). The item with the second highest percentage for rural (94.6%) and urban (87%) was *conduct workshops for parents on post secondary training opportunities, entrance requirements and financial aid*. The second highest for suburban was *access to a guidance website that contains current information on student post secondary planning* (93.8%). The item with the lowest percentage in all settings was *invite parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school*. These scores were also fairly consistent across settings (rural 58.2%, urban 66%, suburban 66.3%). These results suggest that the participants believed their schools provided parents with a great deal of assistance in post-secondary planning, both in print and in workshops. Involving parents in college recruitments at school did not appear to be a priority since the overall average for this activity was only 63.7%.

Subscale five: *facilitating parent volunteering/decision-making at the school level* contained seven items regarding activities to actively involve parents in the career guidance program at school through volunteering and opportunities to have input on career curriculum decisions. This subscale had a significant amount of variation between items. The individual item percentages ranged from 8.5% to 94.9%. The percentages across the settings for most items were very similar, however, indicating that all the settings provided basically the same kind of activities. The item, *provide opportunities for parental involvement on committees and in school leadership positions*, had the highest percentage in all settings. The item with the lowest percentage in all three settings was *conduct an annual survey of parents to identify available parent talents and skills*. This is the one item that had significant differences across settings with

rural 25.5%, urban 8.5%, and suburban 15.4%. The participants from the urban schools indicated that their schools had the lowest socioeconomic status and had the greatest percentage of minorities of the three settings. The fact that the urban schools had such a low percentage on this item may indicate that the urban schools do not attempt to survey their parents because the schools believe that their parents do not have skills or talents that can benefit the school's career development program. The item, *solicit parent input on the development of the career guidance curriculum*, also had a very low total percentage across all settings which may suggest that schools do not want parent input on the career curriculum.

Subscale six: *facilitating general parent/school communications* contained four items on activities and resources schools can provide to parents to maintain effective communication from school-to-home and home-to-school regarding all aspects of the school program. The item, *provide parents with current information about school programs via emails, web pages, or letters home*, had the highest percentage in all settings (rural, 96.3%, urban 97.8, suburban 93.6). The item, *provide translators for parents when needed*, had the second highest percentage across all three settings (rural 94.5%, urban 93.8%, suburban 92.5%). The percentages for *provide translated print material when needed* had somewhat lower percentages (rural 89.3%, urban 87.2%, suburban 87.2%). The item, *provide parents with opportunities for informal discussions with school staff members*, had the lowest total percentage in all settings. Urban was the lowest at 29.8%. Rural was 50% and suburban was 44.3%. These results showed a significant difference in the opportunities that urban parents had to meet with school staff as compared to rural and suburban parents.

Subscale seven: *facilitating parent/school communications about academic matters* contained three items on the importance of schools providing parents with effective

communication from school-to-home and home-to-school about academic matters. Items consisted of providing parents with information regarding student progress, academic requirements, educational planning, high school registration, and school policies and procedures. This subscale had the highest percentage of activities provided of all subscales and there were no significant differences across settings. The individual item percentages ranged from 92.9% to 100%. The item, *provide parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress*, had the highest percentage (99.5%) and it is important to note that 100% of the urban and suburban schools reported providing the activity. These results indicate that schools in all settings are providing parents with regular communication about academic matters.

Subscale eight: *collaborating with community and parents*, contained three items that promote the involvement of school, parents and community as a team. The item, *develop partnerships with the community that will assist in service integration*, had the highest rating for rural and suburban schools. The item, *provide parents with information on resources and services within the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, student learning and career development*, had the highest rating for urban schools. The item, *develop community service programs that involve students, parents, and community*, had the lowest percentage in all three settings. These results suggest urban schools may have more difficulty developing partnerships than rural and suburban schools and urban schools may also find it necessary to provide their parents with more community resources than rural and suburban schools. It is also important to note that service learning programs were only provided by 71% of the schools.

For questions two and four the results indicated that there were no significant differences among the rural, urban and suburban participants in the importance they attributed to parental involvement activities and the extent to which their schools provided these activities. It is

possible that the similar responses may be due to the fact that all counselors are trained in the same general model. If they had been asked how they adapted their activities to meet the unique needs of their students, the results may have differed more.

Question Five

Is there a relationship between the degree of importance and the number of activities counselors and career specialists report for each of the eight types of parent involvement activities?

There were correlations between importance ratings and activities for seven of the subscales (*personal social, career exploration, career / planning, post-secondary planning, parent volunteering, general communication, and collaboration*) indicating a significant association between the importance attributed to the activities and the provision of the activities. Although the correlation performed did not indicate a relationship for the subscale, *academic communication*, it had highest mean of the eight subscales for importance and had the highest percentage of activities provided. Overall these results indicate there is clearly a relationship between the parent involvement activities that participants feel are important and the activities schools provide for parents

When comparing in order from highest to lowest, the means of the importance ratings of subscales to the frequency of activities provided by the schools, the order is exactly the same for the first six subscales. The subscale of academic planning was rated as the most important subscale by participants and it was also the subscale that had the highest percentage of schools providing the activities. The results were the same for all subscales except parent volunteering and personal/social which were reversed. Hence, these findings would suggest that the activities that counselors and career specialists found to be most important are generally provided by their

schools and those not deemed important are not provided as frequently. The subscales from highest to lowest are listed below:

<u>Importance</u>	<u>Activities Provided</u>
1. Academic Communication	1. Academic Communication
2. Post Secondary Planning	2. Post Secondary Planning
3. General Communication	3. General Communication
4. Collaboration	4. Collaboration
5. Career Planning	5. Career Planning
6. Career Exploration	6. Career Exploration
7. Parent Volunteering	7. Personal/Social
8. Personal/Social	8. Parent Volunteering

Question Six

What are the perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists in urban, suburban, and rural geographic settings regarding the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for schools in preventing the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making? According to the analysis there were no significant differences among rural, urban and suburban high school counselors and career specialists in the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant in preventing the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making. Overall the participants indicated that the lack of administrative support, financial resources, technological resources and counselor training were not issues for schools attempting to involve parents in student career planning and decision-making. The majority of participants from the rural and suburban settings reported that the most significant barrier to the involvement of parents in career planning was a lack of counselor time (53% and 50%, respectively) and the second highest in significance was limited parent interest (40% and 37%, respectively). For urban participants the numbers were exactly reversed with the most significant barrier reported as limited parent interest (46%) and the second highest in significance was lack of counselor time (33%).

It is encouraging to see that the participants do feel supported by their administration and competent in their ability to involve parents in career planning. In addition, in these days of budget cuts and limited financial resources, it is also encouraging to see that most participants did not feel that financial or technical barriers were very significant. It is not surprising that with the great number of demands placed on counselors these days (Bemak, 2000, 2008; Whiston, 2002) that lack of time was considered such a significant barrier. Urban participants appeared to be less concerned about their lack of time to involve parents and more concerned about the limited parent interest. Of the urban participants, 54.2% reported school populations consisting of 51-100% minority. In the survey limited parent interest is defined through the view of the participants and the findings are consistent with the literature that reports educators often view minority parents as not involved when in reality many feel incompetent, do not know how to be involved or feel unwanted (Auerbach, 2007; Smith, 2009; Trotman, 2001). Trotman (2001) states that parent involvement is hindered by schools taking on more parental responsibilities and by educators becoming territorial and assuming they are the sole decision makers on educational issues. She adds that educators must realize there are barriers that contribute to low levels of urban parent involvement such as family structure/socioeconomic status, parents' schedule, parents' educational level and the expectations of administrators and teachers.

With such an overwhelming majority of participants indicating that time constraints and limited parent interest are major concerns, it appears that to improve the involvement of parents in student career planning and decision-making, these two areas must be addressed.

Question Seven.

What are the perceptions of high school counselors and career specialists in urban, suburban, and rural geographic settings regarding the types of barriers they perceive to be the most significant for parents in preventing their involvement their adolescent's career planning

and decision-making? It is important to keep in mind that the study results are based on counselors and career specialists' opinions as to the greatest barriers to involvement for parents. If parents were surveyed, the results might differ. As illustrated in Table 4-9, participants from all three settings reported that they felt lack of time was the number one barrier for parents in their efforts to become involved in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making. This indicates an understanding on the part of the participants as to the time constraints for parents, but it also signals a problem schools must address in order to better meet the needs of students. Rural and suburban participants rated *not feeling competent to help their adolescent* second in significance at 25% and 24%, respectively. Considering the high minority population for urban schools, it is surprising that urban participants did not also rate this item higher for their parents. Urban participants ranked not feeling welcome by the school as second (11%). This result may indicate that some participants believe that their schools could become more welcoming and supportive of parents.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations inherent in this study. These were the nature of the study sample, the use of self-report measures, the method of data collection, and the technical development of the instrument. Because participants self-selected themselves for the study, the study sample may not have adequately represented high school counselors. In addition, counselors indicated whether their school was located in a rural, urban, or suburban geographic area. Although definitions for the geographic areas were provided on the survey, the participants categorized their own school setting as *rural*, *urban*, or *suburban* and their categorization may have been different from that of the researcher. In addition an online survey format was used. As a result, not only did the participants work in schools that had the financial support for

technology, but the participants were sophisticated in the use of technology. (The high number of suburban participants may reflect these differential resources.)

Another limitation inherent in the study methodology was the self-report format of the survey. This type of format can affect results in that participants may be inclined to respond in ways that present themselves in a more socially desirable light. Moreover, it may have been that those counselors most interested in career planning and with better career development programs were the ones who volunteered to participate in the study. These factors may make the results less applicable or generalizable to other high school counselor or career specialist populations.

Another limitation was the timing of the delivery of the survey and the process by which the participants were recruited. In Florida the majority of the participants were accessed through their school district's Director of Student Services and, therefore, access to the survey was controlled by the Director. Another concern was that the survey letters were sent out in the spring of 2008 which can be a very difficult time for counselors and career specialists as this was also the time they were coordinating statewide achievement testing and preparing for high school graduation. This may have affected the sample in that many potential participants may have opted not to respond due to time constraints.

Finally because the instrument was developed for use in this study, there were limitations associated with its technical quality. The development of the survey items was based on Epstein's (1995b) six types of parent involvement and the goals and objectives of The National Career Development Guidelines with emphasis placed on the three categories of personal/social development, academic and lifelong education and career management. It is possible that the organization of the survey items or the manner in which these items and subscales were conceptualized may have affected the survey results. Although content experts were involved in

the development of the instrument, some important career planning activities or barriers may have also been overlooked. In addition the subscale of *academic communication* may be considered a limitation since it had a low correlation with the total instrument due to skewed responses and only containing three items.

Implications

This study provided a wealth of implications for practice and theory and suggested several directions for future research. The findings confirm that counselors and career specialists considered parent involvement to be an important aspect of student career planning. Not only did the counselors and career specialists believe that parents could enhance the career development of their students, but they reported that their schools were putting this belief into practice by involving parents in a variety of different activities to support student career planning and decision-making.

One theoretical implication to be drawn from the study's results was that the interaction between the family and the school was an influential context for students' career planning. This study was based on the assumptions drawn from Social Cognitive Career Theory that contextual variables such as quality of home and educational experiences, real and perceived parental support, economic conditions, and parental behaviors can enhance or constrain career development (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000). Although the study focused on parents as contextual variables, it recognized that schools can also influence the quality of students' home experiences by virtue of their support of parents and the quality of their programs for parents.

This study also utilizes Epstein's theoretical model of types of parental involvement. This model emphasizes that family and school are the two major contexts in which students learn and grow and is based on the assumption that positive interactions between school and parent are essential to help students succeed in school and prepare for the future (Epstein, 1995b).

Moreover, the model suggests the particular types of activities that characterize optimal family-school relationships to enhance student career development. While the study participants demonstrated by their responses that they believed all eight types of involvement were important to adolescent career planning and decision-making, there was a clear priority as to the types of activities believed to be more salient. Most of the participants indicated that among the eight types of involvement, communicating with parents and assisting with post-secondary planning were the most important and facilitating parent volunteering and decision-making was the least important type of activity.

Obviously, communicating with parents is a prerequisite for developing any type of parent outreach program. In their study of rural, urban and suburban high schools in Maryland, Sanders, Epstein, and Connors-Tadros (1999) found that Epstein's Type 2 communication practices (communicating clearly about school programs and student progress through home-to-school and school-to-home communications) were essential for improvement in all of the six types of parent involvement. The results from the present study indicate that the participants' schools understood the importance of communication and of providing school-to-home communication, especially about academics. However, there may be a need for schools to expand their communication practices to offer parents more opportunity for expressing their needs and opinions.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are a number of recommendations for future research that grow out of this study. First, all but one of the activities in the two communication subscales and the post-secondary planning subscale involved providing parents with information. They did not offer parents opportunities for input. It could be assumed that these activities might be more appealing to educators since there would be little opportunity for disagreement or conflict. The subscale with the lowest importance rating, *parent volunteering and decision-making*, involved activities such

as surveying parents and students and soliciting parent input on career curriculum. These types of activities in which educators are soliciting input may make educators and school policy and procedures more vulnerable to differences in opinion. The participants who do not feel these activities are important may be resistant to change, territorial about their programs or may be unaware of the advantages of involving parents. Additional research regarding the types of parent volunteering activities that educators want and seek out may provide information on the comfort level of educators in working with parents. It is possible that school personnel are not aware of the many ways in which parents can assist them or may be fearful of venturing out to try new ways of utilizing parents due to school policies and practices or their own personal concerns.

Second because family involvement at the secondary level has been found to play a critical role in students' academic success, school attendance, and transition into post-secondary programs (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Harvard Family Research Project, 2007; Dornbusch and Ritter, 1988) and educators know little about the factors that lead parents to become involved (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005), future studies that examine the reasons parents participate in their child's career planning would provide educators with valuable insight for program development. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995) model of the parent involvement process could be utilized in an effort to explain why parents become involved in the career planning of their children. The model suggests that parental involvement is motivated by two beliefs: role construction for involvement and a sense of efficacy about helping their children succeed. A better understanding of parents' beliefs about what they are supposed to do (role construction) in relation to their adolescent's career planning would help guide educators in their efforts to involve parents. This is especially true of families of diverse youth where cultural,

socioeconomic and ethnic differences may cause misunderstanding and miscommunication between school and home. Role construction develops over time and is shaped by the personal experiences and expectations of individuals and social groups important to the parent. Since role construction can be influenced and changed, high schools have the potential of working with parents to develop programs and activities that can positively and significantly support family involvement in adolescents' learning, development and planning for their future (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 2005; Simon, 2001). In addition, conducting qualitative studies investigating how minorities and low SES families construct their roles for involvement in their adolescent's career planning may also provide more detailed information on the reasons why parents do not become more involved. This data could lead to a better understanding of how parents view their roles and guide schools in the development of their outreach programs.

Third, additional research using the individual survey subscales is warranted. Such research might enable researchers to strengthen the comprehensiveness of the instrument by further exploring or expanding the item pool. For example, dividing the subscale, *parent volunteering and decision/making*, into two separate subscales would enable researchers to examine more fully the types of parent volunteering and the factors that might influence parents to participate. The same type of examination of parent decision-making may provide educators with information to encourage parent involvement in decision-making that might ensure representation from all the various groups within the school (i.e., minorities, SES levels,).

Moreover, although the results indicated *academic communication* was rated as the most important subscale and the subscale with the highest provision of activities, further examination of the item, *provide parents with regular communications about students' academic progress*, may be needed to determine if participants were basing their responses on the typical report card

format or more individual contacts regarding students' academic progress or difficulties. Recent research by Civic Enterprises for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2008) found that parents of students in low-performing schools generally did not receive communication about academic difficulties. In addition high school dropouts surveyed in 2006 by the Gates Foundation indicated that improving communication between parents and school was one of the most important actions schools could take to keep students in school.

In 1992 the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) completed a report entitled Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance which was a guide for the nation to encourage a high performance economy with highly skilled workers and high wage employment. One of the five necessary competencies was *interpersonal skills* which included working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds. In addition one of the three foundation areas was the area of *personal qualities* which included individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity. The subscale of personal/social is an area of concern considering that recent research reports that many high school graduates are not prepared in this area. For example Casner-Loto & Barrington (2006) reported that the development of personal/social skills was not a priority for their study participants' schools. The counselors and career specialists in this study indicated that assisting parents with the development of personal /social skills was relatively important (mean of 3.14); however, the level of provision of the activities was 38%. Additional research to determine the reasons these services are not provided to parents could be valuable to schools and to the world of business.

An examination of potential barriers is critical to the development of any program. In this study of parental involvement, it became clear that the counselors and career specialists

perceived that time constraints and limited parent interest in student career planning were the major barriers to successful parent involvement programs for their schools. However, limited parent interest can be a very subjective term. The results of the study indicate that the participants assume that many parents are not interested in assisting with their student's career planning. Research has shown, however, that parents are often viewed as not interested when in reality they are unsure, uncomfortable, and possibly feeling inadequate. Schools must first reach out to parents and make them comfortable and needed.

The counselors and career specialists surveyed in this study also reported that a lack of time was the primary barrier for parents in becoming involved in their student's career planning. This indicates an understanding of the parents' world. Perhaps future studies of the types of time constraints that prevent parents from involvement with their student's career planning could provide educators with suggestions for strategies to assist parents.

Additional research on successful programs and strategies for developing parent involvement programs would be helpful to schools that have limited resources for developing outreach programs. Training programs designed to assist counselors and career specialists in facilitating parent involvement in career planning and decision-making would also be a valuable tool.

Summary

This study investigated the importance of parental involvement in career planning, the strategies used by high schools to involve parents in their child's career planning, and the most frequent barriers to involving parents in students' career planning. An Internet-based survey was distributed to counselors and career specialists in high schools in South Carolina and Florida. The findings revealed that all eight types of parental involvement activities were considered important to participants, and that activities from each of the eight types were provided by the

participants' high schools. In addition, the valuing and implementation of these activities did not differ significantly in schools located in rural, urban or suburban communities. Moreover, the participants reported that the most significant barriers for educators to the effective involvement of parents was a lack of time and limited parent interest while for parents the most significant barrier was lack of time. This study has implications for the role in enhancing parental involvement that high school counselors and career specialists might assume in schools as well as in the nature of the activities that might be offered by high school counselors, teachers and administrators.

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO THE FLORIDA STUDENT SERVICES DIRECTORS

Date

Dear Student Services Director,

My name is Trevelyn Alford-Davidson and I am a school guidance counselor in Clay County, Florida. I am also enrolled as a doctoral student in the Counselor Education Department at the University of Florida. I am writing to solicit your support in my research on career planning. I believe this to be a very timely project as the state of Florida has been working diligently to expand and improve our career education programs.

During my doctoral studies at the University of Florida, I studied and taught parent/school collaboration classes to undergraduates and I researched career education. Through my experience and research I have come to believe that parent involvement is a very important component of career development. The topic of my dissertation is High School Counselors' Perceptions of Parent Involvement in Student Career Planning.

My research will involve an online survey of high school counselors and career coaches from two southern states. I would like to get their perceptions of the importance of various parent involvement activities. I would also like to know what is currently being done in high schools to involve parents in career planning.

I am requesting your assistance in contacting the counselors from your district. Attached you will find a letter inviting high school counselors to participate in this survey. It explains confidentiality, the purpose of the research, benefits of participating, and provides them with a link to access the survey which should only take about 20 minutes to complete. Please consider

forwarding the letter to the high school counselors and career coaches in your district as I believe their input will be extremely valuable.

Thank you very much for your time and contribution to this project that will provide information to assist our counselors in planning for future students. I hope that you will read the letter and view the survey. I would welcome your input on this project. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Trevelyn Alford-Davidson
trevelyn@bellsouth.net
904-625-8176

APPENDIX B
LETTER TO THE FLORIDA COUNSELORS

Date

Dear Fellow Counselor,

My name is Trevelyn Alford-Davidson and I am a school guidance counselor in Clay County, Florida, and a doctoral student in the Counselor Education Department at the University of Florida. I am writing to solicit your participation in my dissertation research on career planning. The purpose of my study is to assess the perceptions of high school counselors and career coaches regarding the importance and implementation of parent involvement in student career planning.

My research will involve an online survey of high school counselors and career coaches from two southern states. In this survey you will be asked to rate your perceptions of the importance of 37 different high school parent involvement activities and to indicate if your school provides such an activity. Two multiple-choice questions are also provided for you to assess the types of barriers parents and educators may experience in their parent involvement efforts. The survey can be completed in about 20 minutes.

To participate in this study, you will need: a) a minimum of two years experience as a high school counselor or career coach, b) current employment as high school counselor or career coach, c) state certification as a school guidance counselor or career coach, and d) a minimum of a masters degree in school counseling.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating. There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to participants. All results will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. You may also discontinue your participation in this survey at any time without consequence.

By accessing the link below and completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in the study. It also serves as permission for your responses to be included in the research. I am including my email address and hope you will contact me if you would like to receive information regarding the results or any follow-up research.

Thank you so much for your time and your devotion to the students of Florida. It is my hope that this research will assist you in your efforts to adequately prepare our students for success.

Sincerely,
Trevelyn Alford-Davidson
trevelyn@bellsouth.net

Survey link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpAiJWIjXbBc5DWFF2zKHw_3d_3d

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA COUNSELORS

Date

Dear Fellow Counselor,

My name is Trevelyn Alford-Davidson and I am a school guidance counselor and doctoral student in the Counselor Education Department at the University of Florida. Prior to my moving here, I was employed as a school counselor for 12 years in South Carolina. I am writing to solicit your participation in my dissertation research, as I am well aware of the diligent efforts of South Carolina in the area of career development.

The purpose of my study is to assess the perceptions of high school counselors and career coaches regarding the importance and implementation of parent involvement in student career planning. My research will involve an online survey of high school counselors and career coaches from two southern states. In this survey you will be asked to rate your perceptions of the importance of 37 different high school parent involvement activities and to indicate if your school provides such an activity. Two multiple-choice questions are also included for you to assess the types of barriers parents and educators may experience in their parent involvement efforts. The survey can be completed in about 20 minutes.

To participate in the study you will need: a) a minimum of two years experience as a high school counselor or career coach (CDF), b) current employment as a high school counselor or career coach (CDF), c) state certification as a school guidance counselor or career coach (CDF), and d) a minimum of a masters degree in school counseling.

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating. There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to participants in this

survey. All results will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. You may discontinue your participation in this survey at any time without consequence.

By accessing the link below and completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in the study. It also serves as permission for your responses to be included in the research. I am including my email address and hope you will contact me if you would like to receive information regarding the results or any follow-up research.

Thank you so much for your time and your devotion to the students of South Carolina. It is my hope that this research will assist you in your efforts to adequately prepare our students for success.

Sincerely,
Trevelyn Alford-Davidson
trevelyn@bellsouth.net

Survey link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpAiJWIjXbBc5DWFF2zKHw_3d_3d

APPENDIX D
ITEM MEANS FOR IMPORTANCE RATING OF ACTIVITY GROUPED BY SUBSCALE

Table D-1. Items means for importance rating of activity grouped by subscale

Question	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Total
Subscale One: Personal/Social				
1. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) about helping them work with their adolescents to develop skills for getting along with others?	3.51	3.58	3.45	3.50
2. What is the importance of providing workshops to provide parents with information on how adolescents develop positive work habits?	3.35	3.22	3.36	3.32
3. What is the importance of conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents to become more achievement-oriented?	3.39	3.30	3.31	3.33
4. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents become more achievement-oriented?	3.45	3.31	3.34	3.37
5. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) on how adolescents develop positive work habits?	3.36	3.17	3.27	3.27
6. What is the importance of conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents develop skills for getting along with others	3.32	3.18	3.22	3.24
Subscale Two: Career Exploration				
1. What is the importance of conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?	3.43	3.65	3.47	3.51
2. What is the importance of providing a school career fair for students and parents?	3.50	3.36	3.49	3.46
3. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?	3.50	3.41	3.57	3.51
4. What is the importance of providing parents with information on assisting their adolescents in career exploration outside of the school setting?	3.47	3.20	3.44	3.39
5. What is the importance of providing parents with current information about career opportunities via printed material such as newsletters, school websites, brochures and letters?	3.38	3.33	3.52	3.43
Subscale Three: Career Planning				
1. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information on how to support students in their career decision-making?	3.54	3.47	3.52	3.51
2. What is the importance of providing parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student career planning and decision-making?	3.67	3.59	3.77	3.69
3. What is the importance of providing parents with workshops on how to support students in career decision-making?	3.41	3.21	3.33	3.32
4. What is the importance of providing parents with opportunities for conferences each year with the school counselor or career coach (CDF) to discuss their adolescent's career planning?	3.64	3.57	3.53	3.57

Table D-1. Continued

Question	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Total
Subscale Four: Post-Secondary Planning				
1. What is the importance of providing parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student post secondary planning?	3.75	3.79	3.86	3.81
2. What is the importance of inviting parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school?	3.40	3.40	3.44	3.42
3. What is the importance of coordinating with state or district staff to provide families with access to online services to assist in post secondary planning for college or job training programs?	3.33	3.50	3.61	3.49
4. What is the importance of conducting meetings or workshops for parents on post secondary training opportunities (e.g., college/technical school), entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?	3.81	3.78	3.83	3.81
5. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (websites, brochures, or newsletters) on college entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?	3.79	3.83	3.84	3.82
Subscale Five: Parent Volunteering				
1. What is the importance of establishing a parent volunteer program to assist with activities such as career fairs, field trips, career presentations, or mentoring?	3.05	3.57	3.34	3.31
2. What is the importance of conducting an annual survey of parents to help determine student and parent needs for student career planning?	3.48	3.49	3.44	3.47
3. What is the importance of conducting an annual survey of parents to identify available parent talents and skills?	2.94	2.87	3.09	2.99
4. What is the importance of promoting the use of parents to make classroom presentations about their careers?	3.00	2.93	3.11	3.03
5. How important is it to promote the use of parents in making presentations about their careers at school career fairs?	3.13	2.96	3.13	3.08
6. What is the importance of providing opportunities for parental involvement on committees and in school leadership positions?	3.64	3.73	3.63	3.66
7. What is the importance of soliciting parent input on the development of the career guidance curriculum?	3.00	2.91	3.03	2.99
Subscale Six: General Communication				
1. What is the importance of providing translators for parents when needed?	3.69	3.81	3.80	3.77
2. What is the importance of providing parents with opportunities for informal discussions with school staff members such as lunch with the counselor, breakfast with the principal or informal meetings with teachers?	3.36	3.04	3.20	3.21
3. What is the importance of providing translated print material for parents when needed?	3.65	3.68	3.66	3.66
4. What is the importance of providing parents with current information about school programs via emails, web pages, or letters home?	3.77	3.80	3.83	3.81
Subscale Seven: Academic Communication				
1. What is the importance of providing parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress?	3.95	4.00	3.92	3.95
2. What is the importance of conducting meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures?	3.91	3.98	3.94	3.94
3. What is the importance of providing information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning?	3.91	3.96	3.94	3.93

Table D-1. Continued

Question	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Total
Subscale Eight: Collaboration				
1. What is the importance of providing parents with information on resources and services within the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, student learning and career development?	3.64	3.75	3.53	3.62
2. What is the importance of developing community service programs that involve students, parents, and community?	3.59	3.50	3.47	3.51
3. What is the importance of developing partnerships with the community (e.g., business, health, cultural, recreational) that will assist in service integration?	3.65	3.55	3.67	3.63

APPENDIX E
ITEM PERCENTAGES FOR ACTIVITIES PROVIDED GROUPED BY SUBSCALE

Table E-1. Item percentages for activities provided grouped by subscale

Question	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Total
Subscale One: Personal/Social	%	% yes	% yes	%
1. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) about helping them work with their adolescents to develop skills for getting along with others?	64.3	70.8	68.8	67.9
2. Does your school provide workshops to provide parents with information on how adolescents develop positive work habits?	21.8	19.1	17.9	19.4
3. Does your school conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents to become more achievement-oriented?	28.6	23.4	17.7	22.5
4. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents become more achievement-oriented?	63.6	65.2	48.1	57.3
5. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) on how adolescents develop positive work habits?	44.6	37.8	33.3	38.0
6. Does your school conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents develop skills for getting along with others	23.6	22.2	22.8	22.9
Subscale Two: Career Exploration				
1. Does your school conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?	50.0	61.7	46.3	51.4
2. Does your school provide a school career fair for students and parents?	67.9	58.7	62.0	63.0
3. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?	87.3	78.7	82.7	83.1
4. Does your school provide parents with information on assisting their adolescents in career exploration outside of the school setting?	62.3	58.7	65.8	62.9
5. Does your school provide parents with current information about career opportunities via printed material such as newsletters, school websites, brochures and letters?	70.9	76.1	62.8	68.7
Subscale Three: Career Planning				
1. Does your school provide parents with printed information on how to support students in their career decision-making?	76.6	77.1	73.1	75.3
2. Does your school provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student career planning and decision-making?	74.5	70.2	87.5	79.1
3. Does your school provide parents with workshops on how to support students in career decision-making?	40.1	21.3	32.9	32.0
4. Does your school provide parents with opportunities for conferences each year with the school counselor or career coach (CDF) to discuss their adolescent's career planning?	85.5	78.3	79.7	81.1

Table E-1. Continued

Question	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Total
Subscale Four: Post-Secondary Planning				
1. Does your school provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student post secondary planning?	78.6	78.7	93.8	85.2
2. Does your school invite parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school?	58.2	66.0	66.3	63.7
3. Does your school coordinate with state or district staff to provide families with access to online services to assist in post secondary planning for college or job training programs?	62.5	85.1	79.7	75.8
4. Does your school conduct meetings or workshops for parents on post secondary training opportunities (e.g., college/technical school), entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?	94.6	87.0	93.7	92.3
5. Does your school provide parents with printed information (websites, brochures, or newsletters) on college entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?	94.6	95.7	94.9	95.0
Subscale Five: Parent Volunteering				
1. Does your school establish a parent volunteer program to assist with activities such as career fairs, field trips, career presentations, or mentoring?	42.9	54.2	54.4	50.8
2. Does your school conduct an annual survey of parents to help determine student and parent needs for student career planning?	47.3	38.3	40.0	41.8
3. Does your school conduct an annual survey of parents to identify available parent talents and skills?	25.5	8.5	15.4	16.7
4. Does your school promote the use of parents to make classroom presentations about their careers?	39.3	45.7	46.2	43.9
5. Does your school promote the use of parents in making presentations about their careers at school career fairs?	42.9	43.2	43.0	43.0
6. Does your school provide opportunities for parental involvement on committees and in school leadership positions?	94.4	86.7	94.9	93.3
7. Does your school solicit parent input on the development of the career guidance curriculum?	27.3	28.3	29.5	25.5
Subscale Six: General Communication				
1. Does your school provide translators for parents when needed?	94.5	93.8	92.5	93.4
2. Does your school provide parents with opportunities for informal discussions with school staff members such as lunch with the counselor, breakfast with the principal or informal meetings with teachers?	50.0	29.8	44.3	42.3
3. Does your school provide translated print material for parents when needed?	89.3	87.2	87.2	87.8
4. Does your school What is the importance of providing parents with current information about school programs via emails, web pages, or letters home?	96.3	97.8	93.6	95.5
Subscale Seven: Academic Communication				
1. Does your school provide parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress?	98.2	100	100	99.5
2. Does your school conduct meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures?	92.9	93.8	97.4	95.0
3. Does your school provide information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning?	98.2	97.9	97.5	97.8

Table E-1. Continued

Question	Rural	Urban	Suburban	Total
Subscale Eight: Collaboration				
1. Does your school provide parents with information on resources and services within the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, student learning and career development?	76.4	83.3	78.8	79.2
2. Does your school develop community service programs that involve students, parents, and community?	69.1	67.4	75.0	71.3
3. Does your school develop partnerships with the community (e.g., business, health, cultural, recreational) that will assist in service integration?	87.0	76.6	84.6	83.2

APPENDIX F
ONLINE SURVEY

1. Section I: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?

male

female

2. What is your age?

3. In which state are you employed?

Florida

South Carolina

4. What is the setting of your school?

rural (small town, countryside,
agricultural)

suburban (located on the outskirts of
a city or large town)

urban (located in a city with a
residential population of at least 50,000)

5. How many full-time counselors and career coaches (CDF's) are employed at your school?

1

2

3

4

5

more than 5

6. Does your high school have a career coach or career development facilitator (CDF)?

yes

no

7. How many students are enrolled in your school?

1-500

501-1000

1001-2000

2001-4000

more than 4000

8. What is the percentage of students at your school on free/reduced lunch?

0-25%

26-50%

51-75%

76-100%

9. What is the percentage of minority students at your school?

0-25%

26-50%

51-75%

76-100%

10. How many years have you been employed as a high school counselor and/or career coach (CDF)?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- more than 15

11. Do you have state certification as a school guidance counselor or career coach (CDF)?

- yes
- no

12. What is the highest counseling degree that you have earned?

- Masters
- Educational Specialist
- Doctorate

13. In which type of position are you currently employed?

- part-time high school guidance counselor
- full-time high school guidance counselor
- part-time high school career coach (CDF)
- full-time high school career coach (CDF)

2. Section II: Parent Involvement Activities in Student Career Development

It is understood that many staff members may be involved in your school's career development program. Below are listed some activities that your school may offer to parents of high school students. Please respond to each item in two ways. First, rate the activity in terms of its importance using the scale below it. Next indicate by marking "yes" or "no" whether your school provides this service to parents. The use of the term "parent" refers to any caregiver of the student.

1. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) about helping them work with their adolescents to develop skills for getting along with others?

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
Please rate the importance of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) about helping them work with their adolescents to develop skills for getting along with others?

- Yes
 No

3. What is the importance of conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
Please rate the importance of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Does your school conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?

- Yes
 No

5. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information on how to support students in their career decision-making?

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
Please rate the importance of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Does your school provide parents with printed information on how to support students in their career decision-making?

- Yes
 No

7. What is the importance of providing parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student post secondary planning?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>				

8. Does your school provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student post secondary planning?

- Yes
 No

9. What is the importance of establishing a parent volunteer program to assist with activities such as career fairs, field trips, career presentations, or mentoring?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>				

10. Does your school have a parent volunteer program to assist with activities such as career fairs, field trips, career presentations, or mentoring?

- Yes
 No

11. What is the importance of providing translators for parents when needed?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>				

12. Does your school provide translators for parents when needed?

- Yes
 No

13. What is the importance of providing parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>				

14. Does your school provide parents with regular communications about their adolescent's progress?

- Yes
 No

15. What is the importance of providing parents with information on resources and services within the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, student learning and career development?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Does your school provide parents with information on resources and services within the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, student learning and career development?

- Yes
 No

17. What is the importance of developing community service programs that involve students, parents, and community members?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Does your school provide community service programs that involve students, parents, and community members?

- Yes
 No

19. What is the importance of conducting meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Does your school conduct meetings for parents of entering ninth grade students to explain academic requirements, registration, course offerings and school policies and procedures?

- Yes
 No

21. What is the importance of providing parents with opportunities for informal discussions with school staff members such as lunch with the counselor, breakfast with the principal, or informal meetings with teachers?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Does your school provide parents with opportunities for informal discussions with school staff members such as lunch with the counselor, breakfast with the principal, or informal meetings with teachers?

- Yes
 No

23. What is the importance of conducting an annual survey of parents to help determine student and parent needs for student career planning?

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
Please rate the importance of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Does your school conduct an annual survey of parents to help determine student and parent needs for student career planning?

- Yes
 No

25. What is the importance of inviting parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school?

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
Please rate the importance of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. Does your school invite parents to attend college recruitment presentations held at your school?

- Yes
 No

27. What is the importance of providing parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student career planning and decision-making?

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
Please rate the importance of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Does your school provide parents with access to a guidance website that contains current information on student career planning and decision-making?

- Yes
 No

29. What is the importance of providing a school career fair for students and parents?

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
Please rate the importance of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. Does your school provide a school career fair for students and parents?

Yes

No

31. What is the importance of conducting workshops to provide parents with information on how adolescents develop positive work habits?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. Does your school conduct workshops to provide parents with information on how adolescents develop positive work habits?

Yes

No

33. What is the importance of conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents to become more achievement-oriented?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. Does your school conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents to become more achievement-oriented?

Yes

No

35. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents identify their career interests and skills?

Yes

No

37. What is the importance of providing parents with workshops on how to support students in career decision-making?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. Does your school provide parents with workshops on how to support students in career decision-making?

- Yes
 No

39. What is the importance of coordinating with state or district staff to provide families with access to online services to assist in post secondary planing for college or job training programs?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. Does your school coordinate with state or district staff to provide families with access to online services to assist in post secondary planing for college or job training programs?

- Yes
 No

41. What is the importance of conducting an annual survey of parents to identify available parent talents and skills?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. Does your school conduct an annual survey of parents to identify available parent talents and skills?

- Yes
 No

43. What is the importance of providing translated print material for parents when needed?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. Does your school provide translated print material for parents when needed?

- Yes
 No

45. What is the importance of providing information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

46. Does your school provide information to parents about course selection, registration, and educational planning?

- Yes
 No

47. What is the importance of developing partnerships with with the community (e.g., business, health, cultural, recreational) that will assist in service integration?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

48. Does your school develop partnerships with the community (e.g., business, health, cultural, recreational) that will assist in service integration?

- Yes
 No

49. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents become more achievement-oriented?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

50. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) to assist them in helping their adolescents become more achievement-oriented?

- Yes
 No

51. What is the importance of providing parents with information on assisting their adolescents in career exploration outside of the school setting?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

	unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

52. Does your school provide parents with information on assisting their adolescents in career exploration outside of the school setting?

- Yes
 No

53. What is the importance of providing parents with opportunities for conferences each year with the school counselor or career coach (CDF) to discuss their adolescent's career planning?

unimportant not too important relatively important important

Please rate the importance of this activity.

54. Does your school provide parents with opportunities for conferences each year with the school counselor or career coach (CDF) to discuss their adolescent's career planning?

Yes

No

55. What is the importance of conducting meetings or workshops for parents on post secondary training opportunities (e.g., college/technical school), entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?

unimportant not too important relatively important important

Please rate the importance of this activity.

56. Does your school conduct meetings or workshops for parents on post secondary training opportunities (e.g., college/technical school), entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?

Yes

No

57. What is the importance of promoting the use of parents to make classroom presentations about their careers?

unimportant not too important relatively important important

Please rate the importance of this activity.

58. Does your school promote the use of parents to make classroom presentations about their careers?

Yes

No

59. What is the importance of providing parents with current information about school programs via emails, web pages, or letters home?

unimportant not too important relatively important important

Please rate the importance of this activity.

60. Does your school provide parents with current information about school programs via emails, web pages, or letters home?

- Yes
 No

61. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (websites, brochures, or newsletters) on college entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

62. Does your school provide parents with printed information (websites, brochures, or newsletters) on college entrance requirements and financial aid (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.)?

- Yes
 No

63. How important is it to promote the use of parents in making presentations about their careers at school career fairs?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

64. Does your school promote the use of parents in making presentations about their careers at school career fairs?

- Yes
 No

65. What is the importance of providing parents with current information about career opportunities via printed material such as newsletters, school websites, brochures and letters?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

66. Does your school provide parents with current information about career opportunities via printed material such as newsletters, school websites, brochures and letters?

- Yes
 No

67. What is the importance of providing parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) on how adolescents develop positive work habits?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

68. Does your school provide parents with printed information (brochures, emails, web pages, Internet resources, etc.) on how adolescents develop positive work habits?

- Yes
 No

69. What is the importance of conducting workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents develop skills for getting along with others?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

70. Does your school conduct workshops to provide parents with information about helping their adolescents develop skills for getting along with others?

- Yes
 No

71. What is the importance of providing opportunities for parental involvement on committees and in school leadership positions?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

72. Does your school provide opportunities for parental involvement on committees and in school leadership positions?

- Yes
 No

73. What is the importance of soliciting parent input on the development of the career guidance curriculum?

Please rate the importance of this activity.

unimportant	not too important	relatively important	important
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

74. Does your school solicit parent input on the development of the career guidance curriculum?

Yes

No

3. Section III: Barriers to Parent Involvement in Student Career Planning and...

Please choose the one best response to answer the following two questions regarding barriers to parent involvement in student career planning and decision-making.

1. Which of the following conditions presents the most significant barrier to you in your efforts to involve parents in student career planning and decision-making?

- lack of administrative support
- lack of counselor time
- limited parent interest
- limited financial resources
- limited technological resources
- lack of counselor training in parent involvement skills

2. In your opinion, which of the following factors presents the most significant barrier to parents in their effort to be involved in their adolescent's career planning and decision-making?

- not feeling competent to help their adolescent
- not feeling welcomed by the school
- not feeling wanted by the student
- lack of time to become involved

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Trevelyn Alford-Davidson was born in St. Augustine, Florida. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in deaf education in 1977 from Lenoir-Rhyne College. She received her Master of Education in specific learning disabilities in 1981 from the University of Florida and her Education Specialist degree in school guidance and counseling from the University of South Carolina in 1990. She was invited to participate in the Spartanburg County Future Administrators program at Converse College and completed a second Master of Education degree in educational leadership in 2003.

Trevelyn began her teaching career at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, Florida. She later moved to Gainesville, Florida, and taught in a self-contained middle school program for hearing impaired children. After completing her Master's Degree, she accepted a position as a social worker at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. She later became employed as an Intervention Specialist for the Duval County Special Education Department.

In 1987, Trevelyn moved to South Carolina to begin work on her counseling degree. She taught self-contained, middle school, learning disabled students in Columbia, South Carolina. Upon receiving her specialist degree in school guidance and counseling, she began working as a guidance counselor in Greenwood, S.C. and Spartanburg, S.C. In 2003, she returned to Florida to complete her Ph.D. in school guidance and counseling. She is currently a guidance counselor in the Clay County School System of Florida.

Trevelyn is a trainer for the Second Step violence prevention program and is trained as a facilitator for Active Parenting. She is member of the American Counseling Association and the National Career Development Association.