The Effects of the American Dream Academy on Hispanic Parents’ Beliefs, Knowledge, and Behaviors Regarding Pre-Kinder to Post-Secondary Education

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The high percentage and the steady growth of Hispanic/Latino students in Arizona demand that special attention be placed on improving academic achievement and attainment. The need to support Hispanic/Latino parents in becoming meaningful positive contributors to their children’s schooling continues to surface as a critical issue in school improvement efforts in many Arizona districts.

American Dream Academy, part of the Center for Community Development and Civil Rights at Arizona State University, has aimed to address this critical issue. Their focus has been to change Latino parents’ beliefs about, knowledge of, and behaviors related to their children’s education from pre-kindergarten to the post-secondary level. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model, Realizing the American Dream, for parental involvement was the basis for the design of the curriculum used by the American Dream Academy.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the efficacy of the American Dream Academy in changing the beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors of parents. The data sources were demographic and pre- and post-academy surveys taken by 719 parents representing 42 Title 1 school districts throughout Maricopa County, Arizona during the spring semester of 2012.

Two tailed t tests and the significant p values revealed statistically significant changes after participation in the academy for each one of the survey statement constructs, beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors. A computation of the effect sizes using Cohen’s d revealed that there were moderate to large effect sizes for each of the constructs. The knowledge construct had the largest effect size. Pearson correlation
coefficients revealed that the gains for each construct were positively correlated with each of the other constructs and that the relationships were statistically significant.

The significant effects of the American Dream Academy’s curriculum were considerable in changing parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors as to pre-kindergarten and post-secondary education. Of special notice is the effect that the academy had on parents’ knowledge of how to help their children as they navigate through the United States’ educational system. It is recommended that school districts partner with the American Dream Academy in efforts to engage parents in meaningful participation.
Dedicated to my mother Reina Santos de Portillo
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The academic attainment of Hispanic/Latino students in Arizona is alarming. In 2011, 43% of the under-18 population of Arizona identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino; that is equivalent to 706,571. That same year, the high school graduation rate for the Hispanic/Latino subgroup reached only 72.2%, compared to 85% for White students. The English Learner (EL) subgroup graduation rate loomed even lower, dropping from 43.2% in 2010 to an alarming 24.8% in 2011.

The high percentage of Hispanic/Latino students in Arizona, and the steady growth of the subgroup, demands that special attention be placed on improving the academic achievement and attainment of the subgroup. The need to support Hispanic/Latino parents in becoming meaningful positive contributors to their children’s schooling continues to surface as a critical issue in school improvement efforts in many Arizona districts.

The American Dream Academy is a program designed to address this critical issue. The program leads parents through the Realizing the American Dream Family Engagement curriculum developed by the Parent Institute. The focus of the American Dream Academy is to change Latino parents’ beliefs about knowledge of and behaviors related to their children’s education from pre-kindergarten to the post-secondary level. By doing so, the program expects the subsequent effects to be improved student achievement, increased high school graduation rates, and increased college graduation rates for the children of parents who complete the 10-week course.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the efficacy of the American Dream Academy in changing the beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors of parents who participated in the program during the spring 2012 semester. The data sources for this study were a survey of 32 questions categorized into three constructs that is taken by the program participants on the first session of the academy; and an identical survey taken the ninth session. The statement constructs for the surveys were beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the analyses of data:

1. What are the differences in parents’ self-reported beliefs regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

2. What are the differences in parents’ knowledge about their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

3. What are the differences in parents’ behaviors regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

4. If differences in parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education are found, how are these differences related to one another?
Hypotheses

To answer the primary research questions, three research and three null hypotheses were developed and tested for each statement construct and for each of the statements within the constructs. The constructs are beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors. The following are the research and null hypotheses developed for the beliefs construct:

*Research Hypothesis 1a:* If differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct beliefs before and after participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the effectiveness of the program.

*Null Hypothesis 1b:* There will be no statistically significant differences in the construct beliefs after participation in the American Dream Academy.

The following are the research and null hypotheses that were developed for the knowledge construct:

*Research Hypothesis 2a:* If differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct knowledge before after participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the effectiveness of the program.

*Null Hypothesis 2b:* There will be no statistically significant differences in the construct knowledge after participation in the American Dream Academy.

The following are the research and null hypotheses that were developed for the behaviors construct:

*Research Hypothesis 3a:* If differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct behaviors after
participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the effectiveness of the program.

Null Hypothesis 3b: There will be no statistically significant differences in the construct behaviors after participation in the American Dream Academy.

Significance of the Study

The population of Hispanic/Latinos in the country and in Arizona rose steadily over the last decades. According to the 2010 Census, there were 308.7 million people living in the United States, growing almost 10% from the 2000 Census. The Hispanic population accounted for more than half of the total growth in the total U.S. population during the first decade of the 21st century.

Table 1

Changes in Population (Pop) for Hispanic/Latino (H/L) in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H/L</td>
<td>22,354,059</td>
<td>35,305,818</td>
<td>50,740,089</td>
<td>15,171,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not H/L</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>246,116,088</td>
<td>258,267,944</td>
<td>12,151,856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Hispanic or Latino is not available for 1990 census. The question on race for Census 2000 was different from the one for the 1990 census in several ways. Because of these changes, the Census 2000 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 1990 census or earlier censuses. Adapted from 1990 Census and Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010 Census Brief, by K. R. Humes, N. A. Jones, and R. R. Ramirez, 2011. Retrieved from www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf

Table 1 shows the total growth in population of the United States, that of non-Hispanic/Latinos, that of the Hispanic/Latinos since 1990, and the changes in population.
between the 2000 and 2010 Census. The growth of Hispanic/Latinos in Arizona in the last decade was significant as well. According to Census 2010, Hispanic/Latinos (of any race) composed 30.1% of the population residing in Arizona; Non-Hispanics (of any race) composed 57.4% of the population.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pop</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,130,632</td>
<td>6,392,017</td>
<td>1,261,385</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H/L</td>
<td>H/L</td>
<td>1,295,617</td>
<td>1,895,149</td>
<td>599,532</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not H/L</td>
<td>Not H/L</td>
<td>3,873,611</td>
<td>4,496,868</td>
<td>623,257</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 47.5% of the change in the total population between the 2000 and 2010 census composed by the increase in the Hispanic/Latino (of any race) subgroup. Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau current population reports. Income, Poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2012, by C. DeNavas-Walt, B. Proctor & J. Smith, 2013. Government Printing Office, Washington DC.

Since the economy and future of the state is closely related to the educational success of its residents, Arizona must improve the K-12 system and increase postsecondary attainment of students currently enrolled. Education improvement efforts cover a gamete of issues proven to positively affect students’ educational experiences. The focus of this study, parent involvement, is one of those issues.

Low achieving students, high dropout rates, and low college enrollment are negative outcomes directly associated with low levels of parent involvement. These three outcomes have significant impacts not only on children’s K-12 educational experiences; they are also likely to have secondary impacts on the students’ entire lives and
perpetually on the lives of their children. Further research on these outcomes is critical to school districts, because as the state’s number of Hispanic/Latino families continues to grow, the negative impact of their parents’ lack of participation maximizes. Districts must be informed when selecting programs that claim to improve parent involvement.

There are many parent involvement programs available to school districts. An analyses of the effectiveness of the American Dream Academy and the relationship that might exist between parent demographics and the program’s attainment of objective can help school districts in deciding if the program is likely to meet the needs of the population they serve. Further, school districts will benefit from further research on the model for parental involvement used as the basis for the curricular design of Realizing the American Dream curriculum. The intent of this study was to provide additional research for school districts to draw upon when analyzing and adapting existing parent involvement programs, or when choosing whether or not to adopt the American Dream Academy in their school improvement efforts.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This study has limitations. The program served Title 1 schools only. Because Title 1 schools have high numbers of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, though individual family incomes vary, this study is representative only of schools with high levels of poverty. Also, though the American Dream Academy is open to parents of all ethnic and racial backgrounds, the percentage of parents who took the coursework and surveys in Spanish was much higher than those who took it in English. This implies that this study is representative only of schools with a high Hispanic/Latino population. This study’s analysis was limited to parents who answered all the survey questions on both the
pre- and post-surveys. Also, this analysis is limited to parents who participated in the academy during the 2012 spring semester.

This study has delimitations also. The primary sources of data for the analyses were self-reported pre- and post-program participation surveys. The responses of the survey participants may have varied depending on their perceptions, opinions, and experiences with regards to disclosing their personal information. Also, an objective source of data was not analyzed to compare parents’ self-reported changes in beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education before and after participation in the program. Another delimitation was that only parents who took a pre- and a post-program survey were included in the analyses. This means that only the self-reported responses of parents who attended the entire course were included.

Definition of Terms

*Hispanic/Latino* is defined as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or another Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

*Parent* is defined as the adult that the child lives with who is primarily responsible for that child’s well-being and safety, regardless of family relation or legal authority.

*Parental involvement* is defined as the level of participation that a parent has in his or her child’s education at home and at school.

*Title 1 School* is defined as having at least 40% of the school’s students who qualify under the United States Census's definition of low-income and living in poverty.

*Poverty* is defined as a total family income that is below the poverty threshold issued by the U.S. Census and that meets the poverty guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Human Services.
English Learner (EL) refers to a student who is learning to speak, read, and write English and has a different native language. Other terms used in Arizona and in the United States are English as a second language students (ESL), Limited English Proficient Students (LEP), and English Language Learners (ELL). For consistency in this study, the term EL is used.

Student achievement is defined as the test scores a student receives on state and national assessments of reading and math standards.

Educational attainment is defined as the highest level of education that an individual has completed.

Postsecondary education is defined as education beyond high school, such as trade, community college, and university degrees.

Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first is the introduction, focusing on the significance of researching parent involvement programs that target schools that have a high Hispanic/Latino population. Chapter 1 clearly states the purpose and the key research questions that guided this study. This chapter introduces the reader to the American Dream Academy, a parent involvement program targeting schools with high poverty rates. The chapter concludes with the limitations and delimitations of the study and the operational definition of terms subsequently used. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature and statistics related to the negative outcomes of low parent achievement in the U.S. and Arizona. Chapter 2 also defines different types of parent involvement. The chapter focuses on the American Dream Academy and the model of the parental involvement process that the program’s curriculum is based on. Chapter 3 defines the
methodology that was used to analyze the American Dream Academy’s effectiveness in changing parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors about their children’s education. Chapter 3 also defines the methodology that was used to explore relationships between those changes. Chapter 4 is the analyses of the data and discussions of the findings. Conclusions and recommendations for practice are discussed in Chapter 5. Next, the appendix includes a visual representation of the model used as the basis for the Realizing the American Dream curriculum, an outline of the Realizing the American Dream curriculum and a sample unit of the course, and all the surveys used in the collection of data. The study concludes with a complete bibliography.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review consists of three sections that explore the existing body of research on parental involvement in education. The initial section brings to light the negative outcomes that result from lack of meaningful parent involvement, and the ramifications of these outcomes. This section also touches upon the Common Core Standards’ claim that parents act as significant partners in education. The second section defines parental involvement, outlines some barriers to meaningful parental involvement, and describes different types of parental involvement. The third section of the literature review details the American Dream Academy, part of the Center for Community Development and Civil Rights at Arizona State University. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model for parental involvement, which is the basis for the design of the Realizing the American Dream curriculum used in the American Dream Academy. The subjects of this dissertation were parents who attended the entire Realizing the American Dream Academy during the spring semester of 2012.

Low achieving students, high dropout rates, and low college enrollment are amongst the negative outcomes associated with low family involvement in schools. These three outcomes have significant impacts not only on children’s K-12 educational experiences, but are also likely to negatively impact the students’ entire lives and perpetually the lives of their children. As the state’s number of Hispanic/Latino families continues to grow, the negative impact of low family involvement in schools has reached a critical point. The following sections discuss the fore-mentioned negative outcomes of low parent involvement in depth.
Negative Outcomes of Low Parent Involvement: Low Academic Achievement

There are numerous positive outcomes attributed to increased parental involvement. These include increased school attendance, enhanced levels of participation, improved behavior, and further development of social skills both in and out of the school setting (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parent involvement in children’s education at home has a considerable effect on student achievement at school (Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000). Many studies have concluded a positive relationship between high levels of parent involvement and student performance (Cummings & Davis, 1994; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Muller, 1993).

National Comparisons through NAEP

Students in Arizona achieve significantly lower on academic achievement tests when compared to students across the United States. Every year students from a representative sample in public schools take the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP allows for comparisons of student achievement and academic growth across all of the states because it is a common summative yearly assessment. The NAEP categorizes achievement results into four groups, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Basic means that the student demonstrates mastery of knowledge and skills that are fundamental for work at a certain grade level. Proficient means that the student demonstrates competency over challenging material.

Table 3 shows the results of the 2009 NAEP. Only 71% of Arizona fourth-grade students reached the basic level in math, compared with 82% of fourth-grade students in the Nation. Of the 50 states, only Alabama scored lower than Arizona, with only 70% of their students reaching basic. Only 56% of Arizona’s fourth graders reached the basic
level in reading, compared with 67% of the fourth graders in the Nation. As the grade level progresses, the achievement gap between Arizona and the Nation improves just slightly. On the eighth grade NAEP, 67% of Arizona’s students reached the basic level in math while 73% of the Nations’ eighth graders did. In reading, 68% of Arizona’s eighth graders reached basic, compared to 75% nationally.

Table 3

*Percentage of Students Scoring Basic on NAEP 2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade and Subject</th>
<th>Arizona</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Math</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Reading</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Math 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Reading</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*State Comparisons through NAEP*

In Arizona, students in the EL subgroup and Hispanic subgroup have significantly lower achievement than their White peers. As shown in Table 4, in 2011, 84% of Hispanic fourth graders in Arizona scored less than proficient on reading compared to only 62% of White students who scored at the same level. Most alarmingly, 99% of students with English Learner (EL) status scored less than proficient.
Table 4

*Percentage of Students in Arizona Scoring Less Than Proficient on NAEP 2011*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade and Subject</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>EL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading 4th grade</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the results of Arizona students on the 2012 NAEP. According to the Department of Education, only 7% of Arizona’s fourth-grade ELs scored proficient in math. Only 20% of Hispanics as a whole compared to 41% of White students were proficient. The results on the math tests may be influenced by students’ difficulties with reading.

Table 5

*Percentage of Students in Arizona Scoring Proficient on NAEP 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade and Subject</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>EL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math 4th grade</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows 87% of ELs scored at the below basic level. Only 28% of the White students taking the fourth grade test were at the below basic reading level. Only 1% of ELs were proficient and only 12% reached the basic level. As quoted from the State of Arizona Department of Education State Report Card (2012c), “There were not enough ELs in the 8th grade NAEP reading or math samples to permit a reliable estimate of their performance. Actions are being taken to ensure that this problem does not happen again.”
Table 6

*Percentage of Students in Arizona Scoring Below Basic on NAEP 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade and Subject</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>EL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State Comparisons through AIMS**

Arizona has a statewide assessment that is used to measure academic achievement on the standards adopted by the state. The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is proctored to all Arizona students in third through eighth grade every spring. AIMS is also taken at the high school level, though students only need to pass it once during their high school stay. Student scores on AIMS are sorted into four categories: *exceeds the standard, meets the standard, approaches the standard, and falls far below the standard*. Various subgroups must be tracked on AIMS, including Hispanic and EL. Since it is a yearly common assessment, AIMS is used to compare public schools and student achievement in Arizona schools in a multitude of ways. Due to the fact that AIMS has been taken since the year 2000, longitudinal comparisons are also possible.

Due to the national trend towards one national exam, students in Arizona will no longer take AIMS; they will take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test. This means that comparisons for AIMS will not be possible after 2014.
Shown in Table 7, achievement levels of ELs as measured on AIMS 2012 are dismal when compared to Hispanics as a whole group along with Whites. In third grade for example, 50% of ELs met or exceeded on the math subtest, 63% of Hispanics and 81% of White students met or exceeded. The third grade reading subtest had similar results: 52% of EL students met or exceeded, 68% of Hispanics, and 87% of Whites met or exceeded. The same trend occurs when comparing seventh grade scores: 77% of White students met or exceeded on the math subtest, compared to only 55% of Hispanic students and 48% of ELs. The reading subtest for seventh grade resulted in a relatively higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding, though the achievement gap persisted: 91% of White students, 80% of Hispanic students, and 71% of ELs reached meets or exceeds.

Table 7

Percentage of Students Scoring Meets or Exceeds on AIMS 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade and Subject</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>EL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Math</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Reading</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Math</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Reading</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2001, the Morrison Institute for Public Policy studied five issues that were expected to jeopardize the future of Arizona. The study named *Five Shoes Waiting to Drop on Arizona’s Future* identified one of those shoes as Arizona’s Latinos. Now in 2013, the educational achievement gap between White students and Hispanic students has
yet to improve. In the followup to the before-mentioned Morris Institute’s (2001), *Five Shoes Ready to Drop on Arizona’s Future*, Rick Fry analyzed in *Dropped* (cited by Hagar & Hart, 2012) trends of low academic achievement in the English Learner subgroup. *Dropped* also called attention to the gap in achievement between Hispanics and ELs: “A large part of [the gap] is simply due to the fact that so many kids come to school not speaking academically related English and a home Spanish language that is not bolstered with academic vocabularies and discourse” (cited by Hagar & Hart, 2012, p. 17), said Gene Garcia, emeritus professor of education and Vice President for Education Partnerships at Arizona State University. “Second, there’s immigrant status—so many kids are living with parents born outside the U.S. who have no experience or knowledge of the U.S. school system and limited schooling in their own country” (cited by Hagar & Hart, 2012, p. 19) *Dropped* refers to a third factor, a lack of “educational capital” (cited by Hagar & Hart, 2012). This factor focuses on Hispanic parents who have lower levels of education and therefore experience difficulty in guiding their children to perform behaviors that will result in high academic achievement. Garcia made a point to distinguish between the factors above and Hispanic parents’ aspirations for their children’s academic achievement.

**Negative Outcomes of Low Parent Involvement: Dropping out of High School**

Many students who experience perpetual low achievement in elementary school decide to drop out of high school. According to the Arizona Department of Education, 4.69% of Hispanic students in Arizona public high schools in 2012 chose to drop out; that is equivalent to 10,113 students. White students dropped out at a rate of 2.27; that is
5,001 students. The dropout rate for ELs surpassed both groups at 6.39% (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013a).

The U.S. Census distinguished between two types of dropouts: event dropouts and status dropouts. Event dropouts are students who drop out in a single year without completing Grades through 10 through 12 in high school. Status dropouts are the percentage of the population who are not enrolled in high school and have not completed high school between the ages of 18 to 24. Nationally, the percentage of event dropouts for Whites recorded at 3% compared to 5.3% for Hispanics. Status dropouts were much higher at 9.1 of the White population ages 18 to 24, and 20.8 of the Hispanic population of the same age.

The decision to drop out of high school has some serious ramifications. Teenagers may not be developmentally able to, or mature enough to comprehend that dropping out may result in a daunting future. Students who drop out are not only choosing to limit their education, they are also making a choice that may negatively impact their entire life. Following are a few examples of outcomes associated with dropping out.

**Poor Health**

According to the U.S. Census, high school dropouts live nine years less than people who are high school graduates (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith). A recent article on differences in life expectancy (Olshansky et al., 2012) stated, “In 2008, U.S. adult men and women with fewer than twelve years of education had life expectancies not much better than those of all adults in the 1950s and 1960s.” They are more likely to live in poverty and have associated risks for poor health. Low-income families are less likely to
afford nutritious meals; hence their children have yet another disadvantage when trying to fully participate in the school day’s learning.

According to the U.S. Census, only 10% of college graduates are uninsured. Most Americans access health insurance for themselves and their children through employer-provided plans. Many high school dropouts are either unemployed or working jobs that pay them just enough to prevent them from qualifying for public sponsored health insurance programs. This means that many high school dropouts are not able to access preventative and sometimes necessary health care, dental care, or mental health support for themselves or for their families. Also alarming is that 23.9% of women giving birth in Arizona in 2009 did not have a high school degree (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013b).

**Low Earnings**

High school dropouts can expect to earn significantly less than high school graduates. According to the U.S. Census, nationally in 2010, 22.7% of high school graduates were not part of the labor force, 35.5% of dropouts were not part of the labor force. In our fragile economy, not only are high school dropouts less likely to have the skill set to compete for the ever-shrinking number of jobs, they are competing for the lowest wage jobs.

Low educational attainment usually goes hand in hand with low-income levels, regardless of race (Cheeseman & Newburger, 2002). According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, for full-time employed individuals who worked the whole year, Arizona high school graduates between the ages of 21 and 64 earned an average of $26,430. For those without a high school diploma, the average earnings were $19,611. In 2010, 18% of the state’s population lived below the poverty level (Hart & Hager, 2012). The federal
government defines poverty as an income no more than $11,170 for a single person and
no more than $23,050 for a family of four. Nearly half of the state’s residents living in
poverty are Hispanic. According to Arizona Kids Count Data Center, in 2011, 299,000
children lived in a household where the head of the household did not complete high
school. The number of children in Arizona who live in poverty has grown steadily over
the last few years, reaching 342,607 in 2010. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino children
living in poverty rose to 37% in 2011.

In Arizona, there is not only an educational level and earnings gap, but also a
White and Hispanic earning gap. Unemployment rates are 8.6 for Whites and 12.1% for
Hispanics. The Hispanic population in Arizona is steadily increasing. Less income for
this significant subgroup of the population may result in less economic growth, lower
sales tax revenues, and lower income tax revenues. In Dropped (Hart & Hager, 2012), it
states that “if Arizona reduced its number of Latino high school dropouts by half, those
additional graduates would earn an additional $31 million a year, allowing them to spend
an additional $23 million annually” (p. 8).

**Incarceration**

Also, there appears to be a relationship between dropping out and incarceration.
Prisoners have lower levels of educational attainment than the rest of the population
(Ewart & Wildhagen, 2011). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ Survey of
Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities, over 40% of prisoners have not
completed high school (Harlow, 2003). Hispanic prisoners have the lowest average level
of education in the correctional population (Jackson, 1997). Criminal activity is an
appealing way for young people to make money without needing to have a high academic
skill set. Educational attainment allows young people another avenue to make money. High school graduates are likely to make more money than high school dropouts without the risk of incarceration. They are more likely to provide resources for their families without choosing risky and/or illegal behaviors.

**Not Earning Post-Secondary Degrees**

The problems associated with the low academic attainment of many children enrolled in Arizona’s schools today is often compounded by the problems experienced by their low academic attaining parents. Their parent’s lack of education can be a predictor for the poor academic attainment of the next generation of students. In *Latinos and Education: Exploring the Attainment Gap*, it is reported that 90% of young Hispanics believe that going to college is important, but less than half expect to go to college (Lopez, 2009).

There are many reasons why Hispanic students do not expect to go to college: self perception, financial inability, and lack of motivation or role models. Unfortunately, many Hispanic students are simply not as academically prepared to pursue post-secondary education as their White peers. Participation in and scores on high school Advanced Placement (AP) exams are one way to measure college readiness. Students who take AP classes are eligible to take AP exams. Students can earn college credit for the AP course, if their performance on the AP exam is high enough.

As shown in Table 8, the Arizonan Mexican-American participation in AP exams for 2012 grew to 8,559 test takers, from 885 test takers in the 2000 school year; however, the mean score for Mexican American students dropped from 2.92 in 2000 to 2.42 in 2012 (The College Board, Advanced Placement Program, 2012a).
Table 8

*Arizona Mexican-American Students Taking the Advanced Placement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Test Takers</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP 2000</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP 2012</td>
<td>8,559</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is another assessment of college readiness. Table 9 shows the means of White students’ SAT scores in comparison to Mexican-Americans’ test scores. In Arizona, 3,309 test takers identified themselves as Mexican-Americans on the SAT in 2012 compared to 13,355 who identified themselves as White. The Mexican-American subgroup scored 480 as the mean on the critical reading subtest, compared to 538 for Whites. On the mathematics subtest Mexican-Americans scored 487 compared to 543 for Whites, and in writing Mexican-Americans scored 466 compared to 518 for Whites (The College Board, Scholastic Aptitude Test, 2012b).

Table 9

*Arizona Mexican-American Students Taking the SAT in 2012*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Test takers</th>
<th>Reading mean</th>
<th>Math mean</th>
<th>Writing mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13,355</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>3,309</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College Enrollment**

There were 828,631 students enrolled in Arizona’s degree granting two-year and four-year post-secondary institutions. Only 101,617 of the students enrolled were
Hispanic, though more than a third of the college-age population in Arizona is Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics, State Education Data Profiles, 2010). Arizona Hispanic students who do make it to college graduate at a much lower rate than Whites. The post-secondary graduation rate in Arizona, from either a two-year or a four-year institution within a six-year period based on the 2004 cohort, was 58% for Whites and 50% for Hispanics. Nationally, the graduation rate was 69% for Whites and 50% for Hispanics (National Center for Education Statistics, Post-Secondary Graduation Rates, 2007). Of the 158,882 degrees awarded in Arizona’s post-secondary institutions in 2011, only 19,270 were awarded to Hispanics.

**Earnings**

Post-secondary degrees are the key to sustained financial progress for many Hispanics in Arizona. The earnings of Arizonans who have at least some post-secondary education and those who only have a high school diploma are estimated to differ by $8,000; college graduates earn twice as much as high school graduates (Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Sum, 2009). Nationally, income increases as education attainment increases, across all demographic groups. In fact, education impacted earnings five times more than any other demographic factor over a work-life span. The estimated impact on annual earnings between a professional degree and an eighth grade education was about $72,000 a year (Julian, 2011, p. 4). In a study regarding the relationship between educational attainment and earnings between 2006 and 2009, average incomes ranged from $27,470 for high school dropouts to $34,197 for high school graduates, $57,026 for college graduates, $88,867 for doctoral degrees, to $103,411 for professional degrees (Julian, 2012).
Common Core Standards

The new Common Core Standards are designed to bring consistent improvement and standards in curriculum across the nation. They are rigorous, “reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2013, Lines 7, 8, and 9 under title Mission Statement), and were created to guide school systems in knowing exactly what students need to know at every grade level so that they are prepared to move beyond the attainment of a high school diploma. Increasing the number of students who are ready to enroll in a post-secondary educational institution is the goal of the Common Core Standards. Improving the overall education of Arizonans, Hispanics specifically, is critical to the economic future of Arizona. The third policy recommendation from the Five Shoes Waiting to Drop on Arizona report was “Improve the pipeline that moves Latino students from high school into higher education, particularly in the technical fields” (Hart & Hager, 2012, p. 34). This pipeline needs to be strengthened grade level by grade level across the preschool to 12th grade system. In the mission statement, the Common Core State Standards specifically mention parents to improve the preparedness of their students for college and career: “The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them” (Common Core State Standards, 2012). Downey (2002) stated, “Children whose parents provide structured, adult-supervised activities at home tend to do better on cognitive tests and earn better grades” (Chapter 6, p. 9)
Parental Involvement

It is common sense that children who are academically successful count on parents who are involved in their education. Conversely, children whose parents are not actively involved in their education experience a multitude of challenges with their educational experience. When it comes to getting involved in their children’s education, the actions of parents who did not experience academic success are unlikely to resemble those of parents who did experience academic success. “Parents with higher levels of education often encourage behaviors or routines that lead to long-term academic success, such as reading outside of the school or visiting teachers when a question arises” (Davis-Kean, 2005, p. 295).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB Act) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Title I, Part A of the ESEA stresses guidelines for writing and implementing parental involvement policies. Title 1 is designed to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and the mainstream student group. Part A does not directly address the needs of Spanish-speaking families, other than to specify the requirements for translations.

The No Child Left Behind Act defines parental involvement as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities” (p. 3). It requires that schools implement policies which ensure that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; that parents are full partners in their child’s education; and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.
Parents are the most influential adults in a student’s life. The insight that parents hold, if capitalized on, could be used to make changes in children’s educational experiences at school and home. Partnering with parents could greatly improve their children’s likelihood of acquiring high scores on assessments of college readiness. The upcoming national exam, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), assesses the child’s learning of the new Common Core Standards, which are designed to ensure that children are indeed ready to participate in postsecondary study.

In the Morrison Institute report, *Dropped* (Hager & Hart, 2012), it states that the home environment is one of two categories of factors affecting the educational attainment gap between Arizona’s White and Hispanic students. The other category is comprised of factors in the school environment. Parents have great aspirations for their children’s futures. There are a number of issues schools must consider when planning how to translate parents’ aspirations into results. These issues include unstable or poor family incomes, the lower chance that young children are being read to and spoken to frequently, the unlikelihood that parents have availability of books and internet at home, lack of schedule and activities to reduce the amount of non-educational television watching, lack of summer enrichment opportunities such as camp or visits to museums/libraries, and frequent school mobility due to low family income. Parent involvement planning must adapt to the changing needs of families. Until recently, parent involvement meant planning for how parents could fundraise and volunteer to support the school; now parent involvement focuses on planning ways the school can help parents help their children.

In Title 1, Section A, Non-Regulatory Guidance, it states that
students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to earn high grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs; pass their classes, earn credits, and be promoted; attend school regularly; graduate and go on to post-secondary education. (2004)

There is an abundance of evidence as to the positive impact that highly involved parents have on children’s attainment of academic goals. Parents are a child’s first teacher. They know more about their child’s experiences and environment than anybody else. This knowledge can be leveraged by teachers to explicitly link new learning with existing knowledge. Making connections across home and school, between academic and social learning, and throughout topics/subjects is one of the most effective instructional strategies used to increase retention of new learning (Fitzsimmons, 2003).

Numerous studies conducted in the last decade have parental involvement as their focus. The mass of these studies comes to a single conclusion: A strong positive correlation exists between parental involvement and academic achievement. The link between parental involvement and high academic achievement proves more significant than the relationship commonly assumed between low academic achievement and socio-economic issues. There are other benefits attributed to increased parental involvement such as improved school attendance, participation, behavior, and more developed social skills, both in and out of school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

**Parent Involvement: Barriers**

It is unfortunate that parents and educators do not work together regularly to meet their common interest of student achievement. According to the Center of Educational Statistics (2007), there is a huge discrepancy between the participation of parents who have dropped out of high school and those who have a bachelor’s degree (Table 10). Seventy-five percent of parents who did not have a high school diploma reported going to
a PTA/PTO meeting, 94% of parents with bachelor’s degrees did; 70% of non-high school diploma parents reported going to parent-teacher conferences, while 81% of bachelor degree parents did. Forty-three percent of non-high school diploma parents went to a school event the past month, 83% of bachelor degree parents did.

Table 10

Percentage of Parents Attending School Functions by Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational attainment</th>
<th>PTA Meeting</th>
<th>Parent-teacher conferences</th>
<th>School event in last month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No high school diploma</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Logistical Barriers

There are many reasons why parents and educators do not partner productively. These are generally categorized into two major groups: logistical and attitudinal. Logistical barriers include the time that families have to actively participate in school events; the missed opportunity for income while taking time to attend school events or support instruction at home; the lack of energy after an often physically laborious day at work; the safety of the neighborhood that the school is located at, especially when attending events after dark; and finding someone to care for the student’s siblings while the adults are at the school event (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986).

Many parents have a great deal of anxiety about how their presence and input at school will be received. However, with assistance with the logistical barriers mentioned above and with the school setting up an environment that is welcoming and accepting, that anxiety can be overcome. Attitudinal barriers are more difficult to address. They are
often triggered by a lack of understanding of roles; curriculum; policy; and incongruence in values/needs, lack of self-efficacy, and communication issues.

**Attitudinal Barriers**

Most parents understand and value formal education in helping their child be successful in school. They certainly recognize the connection between school success and future life success. They are simply uncertain in their role in supporting education at home. They may lack the confidence to contribute to educational tasks or decisions. They may not feel that they are capable of supporting older students with homework, reading to them in English, or establishing routines for reading/study time. Many Mexican-American children report that they ask for help with homework or projects from their older siblings, while most White students report they ask for help directly from their parents (Minicucci & Olsen, 1993). Many Hispanic parents promote the completion of homework, but do not recognize that children talking to adults, reading and writing for fun, playing board games, and playing organized sports are also valuable in promoting school success. These activities are often not culturally valuable or a priority to immigrant Hispanic parents (Navarette, 1996). According to the Center for Educational Statistics, School Readiness Survey for 2007, 91% of White mothers reported reading a story to their 3 to 5 years old not enrolled in kindergarten two or three times over the last week; whereas, only 68% of Hispanic mothers reported doing the same. Forty-one percent of White mothers reported taking their child to the public library in the last month; only 27% of Hispanic mothers reported they did the same (Noel, Stark, & Redford (2012).
Lack of self-efficacy is one of the most difficult attitudinal barriers to overcome. People with a higher sense of self-efficacy are more likely to take actions towards meeting a goal and will be more persistent when they face obstacles meeting that goal (Bandura, 1989). Parents who have had positive experiences with the school system will most likely have self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to help their child be successful in school. They are likely to attend school events, express when they disagree with a teacher or administration, and will most likely contribute to their child’s education at school and at home (Bandura, 1989).

Schools must be careful to encourage parent self-efficacy by not placing unintended barriers to communication, such as lack of translations or excessive use of educational jargon in both meetings and in written communication. This is especially true of parent-teacher conferences and reporting of grades in general. According to Nicolau and Ramos (1990), many low-income Hispanic parents view the school system as “a bureaucracy governed by educated non Hispanics whom they have no right to question” (p. 13).

Barriers between school and home can appear overwhelming, especially when focusing on the EL subgroup. About 80% of EL parents are Latinos (Kindler, 2002). In Arizona, the number of Hispanic students is reaching the tipping point, with minorities as a whole outnumbering the number of students identified as White. Often, educators believe that parents of English language learners have low academic expectations for their children, or that culturally, Latinos do not value being involved in their child’s education (Azmitia & Cooper, 2002). However, in “Cause or Effect? A Longitudinal Study of Latino Parents’ Aspirations and Expectations, and their Children’s School
Performance,” Claude Goldenberg, Dean of the College of Education at California State University, Long Beach, argued that Latinos generally do not have lower aspirations for their children’s academic achievement; and if they do, it is not because they believe their children have less potential or capacity. According to Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, and Garnier (2001), Latino immigrant parents’ challenges with discrimination and the type of jobs opportunities that they experience can change their beliefs about the benefits that formal schooling will have for their children.

**Parent Involvement: Types**

When discussing parental involvement, it is important to keep in mind that the term may be defined differently in elementary, middle school, and high school; and that various types of parental involvement may have different purposes, thus yielding different results. Table 11 is an adaptation of a study by Sophia Catsambis (1998) from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory Synthesis Report 2002; it frames some of the most common definitions of parental involvement by both school levels and types.
### Table 11

*Common Definitions of Parent Involvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>Supervising children and monitoring how they spend their time out of school</td>
<td>Establishing clear expectations about education. Limiting television viewing. Supervising time use and behavior</td>
<td>Discussing interests, issues, and studies at school; doing things together (shopping, vacations, movies, meals); supervising behavior; knowing what courses student is taking; supervising academic work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>Parent-initiated contacts with the school; response to school-initiated contacts with the parent</td>
<td>Parent-initiated contacts with the school; response to school-initiated contacts with the parent</td>
<td>School-initiated contacts about academics; parent-initiated contacts on student’s academic program; parent-school contacts on postsecondary plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school</td>
<td>Attending school events Going to parent-teacher conferences; meeting with teachers; volunteering in the classroom or school</td>
<td>Volunteering and fundraising</td>
<td>Volunteering at school and attending school activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Helping with reading skills and checking homework. Talking about school and what children are learning</td>
<td>Providing academic support; providing non-academic classes/ involvement; talking about school and the future</td>
<td>Encourage going to college; encourage HS graduation; Learning about post-secondary education taking on private educational expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School decision-making</td>
<td>Participating in PTA/PTO</td>
<td>Participating in PTA/PTO</td>
<td>Participating in PTA/PTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of community resources</td>
<td>Using community resources (library, museum, etc.); participating in community groups (sports, religious, etc.)</td>
<td>Using community resources (library, museum, etc.); participating in community groups (sports, religious, etc.)</td>
<td>Communicating parent-to-parent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As schools consider the types of parental involvement that they should address, it is useful to refer to the growing body of research regarding parental involvement in education at home. This research especially holds true for middle school students, a time of both biological and experiential change. According to Downey (2002), “Programs designed to promote parent/teacher interaction should be continued, but with greater emphasis on initiatives designed to improve the parent/child relationship.” Cultural trends in parent-child relationships must be respected, though we should encourage families to learn about characteristics traditionally valued in the school system. One target area may be to educate parents about the influence that exposure to oral and print stories, especially in the home language, has on reading readiness (Collier, 1997). Another target may be educating parents about the influence that they have on academic retention during seasonal “‘off times” such as winter and summer breaks (Downey, 2002). Yet another target should be educating our district personnel and school board about parental involvement.

Respecting parents’ role as the principal educator in their child’s life is important. However, sometimes parents need help. This especially applies when parents are preparing their children for the behaviors expected in the postsecondary workplace. After all, parents must be partners in getting their children ready for the type of work they will do after they graduate from college, not just after they graduate from high school. Marvin Kohn’s 1969 book, Class and Conformity, imparts that the type of performance expectations that a parent experiences at their workplace greatly affect various aspects of the parent/child relationship. According to his research, working class parents emphasize respect for authority and obedience; whereas, middle and upper class parents tend to
emphasize self-control. Parents who have not experienced the work environment of careers necessitating a postsecondary degree will need assistance in preparing their children to succeed in said environment.

**The American Dream Academy**

The American Dream Academy (ADA) works to advance each child’s educational experience through education and empowerment of their parents. The ADA is part of Arizona State University’s (ASU) Center for Community Development and Civil Rights. The program began in 2006 and has since “graduated” 16,000 parents from the course, at no cost to the parents. The ADA serves approximately 141 high-poverty, high-minority schools in the Phoenix Valley. Partner district profile descriptions include high percentages of low-income families, low academic performance, high dropout rates, and relatively low college readiness. These descriptors are the disadvantages of low parent involvement mentioned in the first section of this dissertation. Over 85% of the ADA participants are Spanish monolinguals; nearly all are immigrants to the United States (Yzaguirre, 2010). At many of the participating schools, 90% of the students are Hispanic or another minority. All participating schools have been designated Title I schools. Title 1 schools must have a high number of the student population qualify for the Federal School Feeding Program, meaning that a high percentage of the school’s families are experiencing the challenges and disadvantages associated with poverty.

The ADA teaches parents to become partners with the school, advocates for their children, and advocates of postsecondary education. The Academy’s director is Alejandro Perilla. He stated,
The heart of the program is education, because we believe that is the key to the American dream. In order to really transform education, we have to give families the skills and tools that help to support and further develop what their children are learning in school. (Alejandro Perilla, personal communication, 2013, February)

The ADA is grounded in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1997) model of the parent involvement process. A visual of the model is included in Appendix A. The model yields results not only for the participants and their children, but also has reported benefits to the school. School administrators report that the learning climate is visibly enhanced after a class graduates and begins to implement their new skills through meaningful parental involvement. Surveys show increased parent satisfaction with the school and higher participation levels by low-income minority parents. Parents report increased knowledge about how to navigate the school system, use effective communication with teachers and principals, create a positive learning environment, and support their child’s emotional and social development.

The ADA serves three different groups: parents of elementary school-age children, parents of middle school-aged children, and parents of high school aged-children. The curriculum is reflective of the unique needs of each of the groups mentioned above. It is a nine-session course, presented over the span of 10 weeks. The 10th session includes a graduation ceremony for the participants. Parents learn the knowledge necessary to improve the academic and behavioral development of their children. The ADA curriculum also works to transcend beliefs that parents carry with them regarding education, and uses self-efficacy to harness the new or altered set of beliefs into actions benefiting the over 24,000 students indirectly served. The programs claims that parents learn to take a proactive role that enriches their relationship with their child, improves student achievement, increases the likelihood that their child will
graduate from high school, and increases the possibility that their child will go on to
graduate from postsecondary education. This knowledge and subsequent action can result
in families breaking out of the poverty cycle through the attainment of advanced
education.

The ADA instills the value of education in parents and reconnects them with the
hope that their dream for their child to succeed academically is within grasp. It paves a
clear path for parents, refocusing the locus of control to them. Parents are empowered to
believe that they are the catalyst for their child’s future post-secondary graduation. They
in turn instill the same sense of self-efficacy in their children.

There are more schools requesting the ADA’s services than those that the
program has the capacity to partner with. The response from parents and school
administrators has been extremely positive, and loud. Two other courses are in the
process of development and piloting, one focuses on financial literacy; the other on health
and wellness.

The classes are 90 minutes long, have a scripted curriculum that is professionally
delivered in English or Spanish by facilitators who are often graduates of the ADA
themselves. The participant group is divided in cohorts of about 20 parents. Each group’s
facilitator actively forms a relationship with the parent participants, calling each parent
weekly to encourage them to come to the next session and to offer one-on-one support.
The close contact between facilitator and participant is directly correlated to participant
retention and graduation. Over 80% of the parents enrolled go on to graduate from the
program. Regular attendance and participation in the program activities is mandatory for
graduation.
The American Dream Academy is a “life education” program, meaning that it not only delivers the curriculum developed by the Parent Institute, it also promotes other family educational activities. A sample facilitator’s guide is included in Appendix B. The classes revolve around changing parents’ knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors. Each participant completes a pre- and post self-reported survey during the first and last class session. The following are the titles of the lessons: Orientation, YOU Make the Difference, Be a Partner with Your School; Academic Standards and Performance Requirements; Success Factors: Communication and Discipline; Success Factors: Self-esteem and Motivation; Success Factors: Reading and Spending Time Together; Your Academic Success Plan, Q&A Forum with the Principal; and finally, the Graduation Ceremony.

The graduation ceremony is, for some parents, the first time that they have graduated from any program. Each class has a valedictorian, who delivers a speech to the entire audience. The school principal and district level officials, such as the superintendent and school board members, award the diplomas. The audience is filled with teachers, family members, and the children of the participants cheering loudly as the graduate walks across the stage. The children of each participant receive a “future Sun Devil” identification card and a “Certificate of Admission” to ASU, signed by the university president Michael Crow. Through the ASU Advantage program, ASU covers the costs of eligible low-income freshmen attending the university for eight full-time consecutive semesters. Parents in the ADA are informed about this program, and other financial support opportunities, to better support their children to focus on academic achievement, not the cost of going to the university. The 2009 incoming freshman class at
ASU included at least 20 Dream Scholars, or the first children of parents participating in the American Dream Academy who reached the goal of enrolling in postsecondary education by enrolling at ASU.

The ADA is modeled after the also highly successful Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). PIQE began in California in 1987. A study of the long-term effects of PIQE done by the College of Business Administration at San Diego State University found that PIQE’s goals of improving student attendance, reducing drop-out rates, and increasing post-secondary participation were met. The high school graduation rate for children of program participants resulted in 30% higher than the national average. The study surveyed 271 of the 700 parents who graduated from the program in 1997, 1998, and 1999.

Of the 351 children indirectly impacted who were 18 and older at the time of the study, 93% had graduated from high school, compared to 47% for other Hispanic students in San Diego. Of the children who graduated high school, 79.2% went on to postsecondary education; whereas, only 52% of high school graduates in San Diego enrolled in college or university. Another success attained by the program is that 19% of the parents who participated in the study also attended a four-year college!

**The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of the Parental Involvement Process**

The ADA is grounded in Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1997, 2005) model of the parent involvement process. A visual of the model is included in Appendix A of this study. The model yields results not only for the participants and their children, but also has reported benefits to the school. School administrators report that the learning climate is visibly enhanced after a class graduates and begins to implement their new skills.
through meaningful parental involvement. Surveys show increased parent satisfaction with the school and higher participation levels by low income minority parents. Parents report increased knowledge about how to navigate the school system, use effective communication with teachers and principals, create a positive learning environment, and support their child’s emotional and social development. Level 1 of the model explores parents’ personal motivators. According to the model, parents construct their beliefs about their role in their child’s education and their self-efficacy for helping their children achieve based on their own experiences as a child and their recent experiences in the schools that their children attend. Also, parents are motivated by “invitations” to become involved. The likelihood to become involved differs according to their perception of the school’s welcoming (or not) atmosphere, the requests presented by their child’s teachers, and the expressed or implied requests of their children. The last motivator of Level 1 is life. There are many variables that affect this motivator, including parents’ self-perception of their own knowledge and academic skills; their time and energy circumstances; and finally, their cultural norms regarding the role that parents traditionally play in education. Level 1.5 defines several forms of parent involvement. The four forms defined in the model are personal effects such as values and aspirations, involvement at home, two-way communication, and involvement at school.

Level 2 argues that parents are critical in helping students display attributes that are necessary for high academic achievement through encouragement, modeling, reinforcement, and instruction. Level 3 states that students must be aware of their parents’ beliefs and behaviors regarding Level 2 in order for their parents’ efforts to result in the student attributes for academic achievement noted in Level 4. The attributes
conducive to academic achievement are students’ academic self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation to learn, self-regulatory strategies, and self-efficacy in their relationships with peers and teachers. Level 5 is the final outcome of the parental involvement process—high student academic achievement and attainment.

Summary

This literature review consists of three sections that explore the existing body of research on parental involvement in education. The initial section brings to light the negative outcomes that result from the lack of meaningful parent involvement. These negative outcomes include low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and low attainment of postsecondary degrees. These outcomes are associated with secondary ramifications, such as high poverty, poor health perspectives, and higher rates of incarceration. This section of the literature review closes by touching upon the Common Core Standards’ goal that all children will finish high school ready for college and career and their claim that parents act as significant partners in reaching said goal. The second section defines parental involvement, outlines some barriers to meaningful parental involvement, and describes different types of parental involvement. Finally, the literature review details the American Dream Academy, part of the Center for Community Development and Civil Rights at Arizona State University. This section concludes with a discussion of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model for the parental involvement, which is the basis for the design of the Realizing the American Dream curriculum. The subjects of this dissertation are parents who attended the entire Realizing the American Dream curriculum during the spring semester of 2012.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter explains the research methodology used to evaluate the effectiveness of the American Dream Academy in changing parent’s beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors related to their children’s pre-kindergarten to post-secondary education. The chapter begins by restating the purpose, research questions and hypotheses. The next section focuses on the methods of research used and the design of the study. Section three describes the sampling and case selection. Section four details the data collection tools and processes used. Finally, section five concludes the chapter by explaining the procedures used for data analyses.

Introduction

The academic attainment of Hispanic/Latino students in Arizona is alarming. In 2011, 43% of the under 18 population of Arizona identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino. That same year, the high school graduation rate for the Hispanic/Latino subgroup reached only 72.2%, compared to 85% for white students.

The high percentage of Hispanic/Latino students in Arizona, and the steady growth of the subgroup, demands that special attention be placed on improving their academic achievement. Of equal importance is the need to support Hispanic/Latino parents in poor Arizona Districts to become meaningful positive contributors to their children’s schooling. The American Dream Academy, sponsored by the Center for Community Development and Civil Rights in the College of Public Programs at Arizona State University, is designed to reach the goal of changing parent’s beliefs about, knowledge of, and behaviors related to their children’s education. The purpose of this
study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the American Dream Academy in meeting the previously stated goal.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the differences in parents’ self-reported beliefs regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

2. What are the differences in parents’ knowledge about their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

3. What are the differences in parents’ behaviors regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

4. If differences in parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education are found, how are these differences related to one another?

**Hypotheses**

To answer the first three research questions, three research and three null hypotheses were developed and tested for each statement construct and for each of the statements within the constructs. The constructs are beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors.

The following are the research and null hypotheses developed for the beliefs construct:

*Research Hypothesis 1a:* If differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct beliefs after
participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the
effectiveness of the program.

Null Hypothesis 1b: There will be no statistically significant differences in the
construct beliefs after participation in the American Dream Academy.

The following are the research and null hypotheses that were developed for the
knowledge construct:

Research Hypothesis 2a: if differences exist between parents’
agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct knowledge
after participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to
the effectiveness of the program.

Null Hypothesis 2b: there will be no statistically significant differences in the
construct knowledge after participation in the American Dream Academy.

Research Hypothesis 3a: if differences exist between parents’
agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct behaviors after
participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the
effectiveness of the program.

Null Hypothesis 3b: There will be no statistically significant differences in the
construct behaviors after participation in the American Dream Academy.

The following are the research and null hypotheses that were developed for the
correlation question:

Research hypothesis 4a: There is a relationship between parents’ beliefs and
knowledge on posttest scores.
**Research hypothesis 5a:** There is a relationship between parents’ beliefs and behaviors on posttest scores.

**Research hypothesis 6a:** There is a relationship between parents’ knowledge and behaviors on posttest scores.

**Null hypothesis 4b:** There is no relationship between parents’ beliefs and knowledge on posttest scores.

**Null hypothesis 5b:** There is no relationship between parents’ beliefs and behaviors on posttest scores.

**Null hypothesis 5c:** There is no relationship between parents’ knowledge and behaviors on posttest scores.

**Research Design**

This quantitative study compared the pre-program (Appendix C) and post-program surveys (Appendix D) that asked parents’ level of agreement with statements about their beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education. The Likert questionnaire items required respondents to share their level of agreement or disagreement on an agree-disagree scale. The statements were categorized into three constructs: belief, knowledge, and behavior.

Surveys were an appropriate means of data collection for the purpose of measuring the efficacy of the American Dream Academy because surveys are regularly used to gather information that cannot be observed, such as attitudes and beliefs. Surveys are a common method used for assessing opinions in both public and private sectors. A couple of examples of well-known surveys are the U.S. Census and Gallup polls. One of the advantages of using surveys is that they provide relatively quick access to data and
that they consistently ask the same question of all the respondents, therefore making them generalizable.

This study was a secondary data analyses. Another researcher administered the survey, for another purpose (Appendix E). Secondary data analyses have several disadvantages. The first disadvantage of using existing data is that the survey questions have already been responded to. Only existing responses can be analyzed, without the ability to include follow-up questions that might have been asked during the administration of the survey. Another disadvantage to using secondary data analyses was that the survey was designed by another researcher. The survey was specifically designed to meet the needs of the original study. The survey design did not include any open-ended questions; therefore, conclusions could not be made to explain why the participants responded how they did.

**Sampling and Case Selection**

The surveys were administered to parents in 42 public school districts across Maricopa County, Arizona during the spring semester of 2012. All schools used in this study qualified for Title 1 funding, which was established by the United States Department of Education to provide extra resources to schools and school districts with the highest concentration of poverty. The intent of Title 1 is to support schools improve the academic achievement of poor students. One area of focus for Title 1 schools was the improvement of parental involvement.

Because the study sought to find changes in parents’ perceptions of education pre- and post-program, only complete sets of data were used. The analyses were limited to cases that included most of the demographic information, and responses for all questions
on both the pre- and post-program surveys. These cases were chosen to allow for less variability when applying statistical tests. They were relevant because they were representative of parents who participated in the entire nine-session program, and because they allowed for future research regarding the relationship between demographic factors and responses within and across the three constructs of statements (beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors).

**Data Collection**

The first day of the academy parents also took the demographic survey. Instructions for the demographic survey were included at the top of the page. There were 15 questions on the demographic survey; most were forced responses, though a few were open responses. Questions included participant’s gender, job, spouse/partner’s job, hours worked by the participant and the spouse/partner, highest level of education for the participant and the spouse/partner, average family income, participant ethnicity, participant age, number of school aged children in the home, number of children under five years of age in the home, if any of those children had received schooling outside the U.S., their country of origin, and the number of years that the participant had lived in the U.S. (Appendix F—demographic survey). Though this dissertation did not analyze the relationships between demographic factors and differences in the pre- and post-survey responses of individual statements and across constructs of statements, the demographics of the cohort group was relevant and of interest. The frequency distributions of the demographic survey are discussed in Chapter 4.

On the first day of class parents also filled out a survey consisting of 29 statements that were designed to assess their beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding
their involvement in their children’s education. The survey used a Likert scale with a range of four: disagree very strongly, disagree, agree, and agree very strongly. The survey consisted of three constructs of statements labeled this is what I believe, this is what I know, and this is what I do. The first construct had 13 statements, the second had 10 statements, and the last had 9 statements (Appendix C). The pre- and post-program surveys were identical except for 5 additional statements on the post-program survey, labeled This is what I think of the program (Appendix D).

The family information form, demographic survey, and program survey were administered on the first day of the academy. One parent per family read and responded to the survey during the class session, using pencil and printed out paper surveys. The post-program survey was taken in the same manner, on the ninth class session. All surveys and class materials were available in both English and Spanish.

Logistical challenges included the level of literacy of the participating parents. Another challenge cited by the original researcher was that the demographic survey had a potential risk for disclosure of private demographic information. An additional potential risk cited by the principal investigator was the potential for a break in the confidentiality of the participants’ pre- and post-program responses.

To avoid these potential risks, the principal investigator designed the surveys to include safeguards for anonymity. A perforated section at the top of the pre-program survey carried a number and an associated bar code. The participant wrote his or her name on that section of the pre-program survey. The participant’s name and associated number were loaded into the program’s database. A label printed with the number and associated bar code was part of the demographic survey. The post-program survey was
pre-printed with the participant’s name on the perforated section. The facilitator then
distributed the post-program survey to the appropriate participant by reading the name
printed. The perforated section containing the participant’s name was removed from all
surveys, but the corresponding number and bar code were printed on the bottom of both
surveys. The survey results were scanned using the number and bar code only, allowing
for matching of pre- and post-program surveys and demographic surveys while guarding
the anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of their responses.

**Data Analysis**

The following descriptive statistics were used to obtain a clear picture of the data:
the minimum and maximum levels of agreement with each of the three statement
constructs (beliefs, knowledge, behaviors) on the Likert scale on both the pre- and the
post-surveys; the mean of the level of agreement on the Likert scale for each construct
along with the standard error for both pre- and post-surveys; and the standard deviation of
the mean of the level of agreement on the Likert scale for each construct for both pre- and
post-surveys.

Two tailed $t$ tests were used to further analyze the data at the individual statement
level and were also used to analyze the data at the statement construct (beliefs,
knowledge, behaviors) level. This test facilitated a response for the first three research
questions of this dissertation (the test used to answer the fourth research question is
addressed later in this section). The first three research questions were:

1. What are the differences in parents’ self-reported beliefs regarding their children’s
pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the
American Dream Academy program?
2. What are the differences in parents’ knowledge about their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

3. What are the differences in parents’ behaviors regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

Two tailed $t$ tests for dependent samples were an appropriate statistical analysis because they indicated that the same group of responses is being studied under two conditions. In this case those conditions were before participation in the academy and after participation in the academy. This analysis reveals if the mean difference for each of the statements and for the statement constructs after participation in the program is statistically significant. This result is called the $t$ score. The $t$ score is used to calculate the $p$ value. The $p$ value is an estimate of the difference between two means expressed in standard deviation units. It allows an interpretation if the difference found is likely to have occurred due to sampling errors, chance, or variability within the group. A $p$ value < .05 is accepted to be an indicator of low probability of chance; a $p$ value < .01 is accepted to be an indicator of a high unlikely probability of chance. If the $t$ score is large enough and the $p$ value is low enough, then the research hypotheses is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected, thus concluding that the differences in each of the statements and the statement constructs on the pre- and post-surveys are significant and were, in fact, due to participation in the American Dream Academy.

To test if the differences found in statement constructs after participation in the program were not only statistically significant, but also meaningful, a computation of the
effect size using Cohen’s $d$ was also run. The effect size tells if the effect from participating in the academy was of a significant magnitude when analyzed independently from the scale that was used to make the measurements of the difference. A small effect size ranges from 0 to .2, a medium effect size ranges from .2 to .5, and a large effect size is any value above .5.

Finally, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed for each pair of constructs to determine the strength and direction (positive or negative) of the relationship. Tests of statistical significance were also computed. These tests facilitated a response to the fourth research question of this dissertation, which asked, “If differences in parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education are found, how are these differences related to one another?”

Summary

This chapter focused on the quantitative methodology used to answer the research questions. It began by restating the purpose and need for the study. The high percentage of Hispanic/Latino students in Arizona and the steady growth of the subgroup demands that special attention be placed on improving their academic achievement. Of equal importance is the need to support Hispanic/Latino parents in poor Arizona districts to become meaningful and positive contributors to their children’s schooling. The chapter went on to restate the research questions and explain that the design of the research was based on surveys and responses using a Likert scale. The sampling and case selection are discussed in the next section. The data collection tools and procedures are explained in detail. Finally, the statistics used for data analyses were reviewed. The statistics used were descriptive statistics, two tailed $t$ tests, Cohen’s $d$, Pearson’s correlation coefficient,
and tests of statistical significance of the correlation. The use of multiple statistics 
allowed for a thorough examination of collected data. The research results are reported in 
Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the data analyses conducted to ascertain if the American Dream Academy was effective in changing parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors related to their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary education. The chapter begins by restating the purpose and research questions. The next section briefly describes the sample and data sources. The third section describes the sampling and case selection. The findings are detailed in the fourth section. Finally, the last section concludes the chapter by summarizing the conclusions drawn from the analyses.

Introduction

There are many negative outcomes that result from the lack of meaningful parent involvement in children’s schooling. These outcomes include low student achievement, high dropout rates, and low attainment of post-secondary education. The ramifications associated with these outcomes include having a high likelihood of living in poverty, having poor health, and higher incidents of incarceration. The American Dream Academy, part of the Center for Community Development and Civil Rights at Arizona State University has the mission of meaningfully changing the beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors of parents regarding the education of their children. The subjects of this dissertation are parents who attended the entire Realizing the American Dream Academy during the spring semester of 2012.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the analyses of data:
1. What are the differences in parents’ self-reported beliefs regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

2. What are the differences in parents’ knowledge about their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

3. What are the differences in parents’ behaviors regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

4. If differences in parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education are found, how are these differences related to one another?

**Hypotheses**

To answer the first three research questions, three research and three null hypotheses were developed and tested for each statement construct and for each of the statements within the constructs. The constructs are beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors. The following are the research and null hypotheses developed for the beliefs construct:

*Research Hypothesis 1a:* If differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct beliefs after participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the effectiveness of the program.

*Null Hypothesis 1b:* There will be no statistically significant differences in the construct beliefs after participation in the American Dream Academy.
The following are the research and null hypotheses that were developed for the

*knowledge* construct:

*Research Hypothesis 2a*: If differences exist between parents’
agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct *knowledge* after participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the
effectiveness of the program.

*Null Hypothesis 2b*: There will be no statistically significant differences in the
construct *knowledge* after participation in the American Dream Academy.

The following are the research and null hypotheses that were developed for the *behaviors*
construct:

*Research Hypothesis 3a*: If differences exist between parents’
agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct *behaviors* after participation in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the
effectiveness of the program.

*Null Hypothesis 3b*: There will be no statistically significant differences in the
construct *behaviors* after participation in the American Dream Academy.

In an attempt to answer the fourth research question, correlation tests were run for
each pair of constructs, determining the strength and direction (positive or negative) of
their relationships. Tests of statistical significance were also run. The following are the
research and null hypotheses that were developed for the correlation question:

*Research Hypothesis 4a*: There is a relationship between parents’ beliefs and
knowledge on post-test scores.
Research Hypothesis 5a: There is a relationship between parents’ beliefs and behaviors on post-test scores.

Research hypothesis 6a: There is a relationship between parents’ knowledge and behaviors on post-test scores.

Null hypothesis 4b: There is no relationship between parents’ beliefs and knowledge on post-test scores.

Null hypothesis 5b: There is no relationship between parents’ beliefs and behaviors on post-test scores.

Null hypothesis 6b: There is no relationship between parents’ knowledge and behaviors on post-test scores.

Sample and Data Sources

The data were extracted from the American Dream Academy’s Realizing the American Dream database. The data sources for this study were surveys regarding participating parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education taken before and after participation in the academy. The surveys were administered to parents in 37 public school districts across Maricopa County, Arizona during the fall semesters of 2011 and 2012, and the spring semesters of 2012 and 2013.

This scope of the study was limited to data collected during the spring 2012 semester. The cases analyzed represent data from 42 schools. As shown in Table 12, initially there were 1,750 pre-program surveys. The number of cases was reduced to 1,204 parents who attended the entire program and took the post-program survey. The number of cases was further reduced because the analyses were limited to paired cases with 100% of both surveys completed.
Table 12

Data Cases for the Spring 2012 Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available cases</th>
<th>Pre-surveys</th>
<th>Paired pre- and post-surveys</th>
<th>Paired Pre- and post-surveys with 100% completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>1204</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographics

In order to better understand the demographic composition of the 719 cases, the data from the demographic surveys were organized into frequency distribution tables. Almost 80% of the participants were female, and about 20% were male (Table 13). As seen in Table 14, there were many more mothers who took the academy. Almost a third of the participants reported that they did not have a spouse. As shown in Table 15, 13% of the respondents said that they were not employed. The most frequent employment categories were labor, custodial, maintenance, warehouse, factory worker, construction, food services, and restaurant. These categories were grouped because they are jobs that do not typically require post-secondary education. Of the participants, 73% worked in jobs that did not require a postsecondary education. Spouses (87%) were generally more educated than the parent who filled out the survey. Of the respondents, 67.7% had some level of post-secondary education, as did 87.4% of their spouses.
Table 13

*Gender Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14

*Job Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobs do not require post-secondary study</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs do require post-secondary study</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No spouse or partner</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouses jobs do not require post-secondary study</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouses jobs do require post-secondary study</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

*Education Level Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse less than high school</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse high school</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or vocational</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse some college or vocational</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or more</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse bachelor’s degree or more</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The federal government defines poverty as an income no more than $23,050 for a family of four. As shown in Table 16, this exact figure was not an option for the family income question of the demographic survey. When the respondents who reported that their family income was between $20,000 and $30,000 were distributed on a normal bell and those on the lower end of the bell curve was added to those who reported that they made $20,000 or less, it was plausible that more than half of the total respondents had incomes that fell below the national definition of poverty.

Table 16

*Family Income Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$30,000</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $30,000</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of the participants reported they were Hispanic or Hispanic American and that their country of origin was a country where the official language was Spanish (Table 17). Almost 73% of the participants reported that they were more than 31 years old (Table 18). The demographic description for the majority of the parents was Hispanic, possibly immigrants, with a higher level of age maturity, and had at least a high school education, if not more.

Table 17

*Race-Ethnicity and Country of Origin Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Hispanic American</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/prefer not to say</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin United States</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin other Spanish-speaking country</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18

*Age Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 or younger</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 plus</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Differences in Responses**

In order to explore the differences for each individual statement before and after the program, frequency distributions for the data were calculated for each statement. There were gains in most statements before and after participating in the Academy, with one exception. Statement #12 was the only statement that yielded a negative difference (Table 19).

The 32 statements were categorized into three statement constructs. The statement constructs were beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors. The data were entered into the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, two tailed t tests, and tests of significance were calculated.

**Table 19**

*Agreement/Strongly Agree With the Statement Before and After the Academy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th># Pre</th>
<th>% Pre</th>
<th># Post</th>
<th>% Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs Statements Construct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>99.2</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20 (continued)

Agreement/Strongly Agree With the Statement Before and After the Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th># Pre</th>
<th>% Pre</th>
<th># Post</th>
<th>% Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge Statements Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th># Pre</th>
<th>% Pre</th>
<th># Post</th>
<th>% Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#16</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#17</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#18</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#19</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#20</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>98.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#21</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#22</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#23</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behavior Statements Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th># Pre</th>
<th>% Pre</th>
<th># Post</th>
<th>% Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#24</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#25</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20 (continued)

Agreement/Strongly Agree With the Statement Before and After the Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th># Pre</th>
<th>% Pre</th>
<th># Post</th>
<th>% Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#26</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#27</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#28</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#29</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#30</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#31</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#32</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 shows that there were increases in the mean of each statement construct after the participants finished the academy. To determine if the differences in the pre- and post-program survey results for each construct were statistically significant, a two tailed $t$ test was run. All three of the constructs showed positive differences that had a .000 level of significance. This was a very strong result for significance because a $p$ value less than .05 was set as good and a $p$ value of less than .01 was set as great. This means it is very unlikely that the differences were due to chance.

- The paired samples $t$ test for the construct of parent beliefs showed a statistically significant increase in scores from the pretest ($M = 3.51, SD = .302$) to posttest ($M = 3.65, SD = .262$), $t(718) = –11.861$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed).
• The paired samples $t$ test for the construct of parent knowledge showed a statistically significant increase in scores from the pretest ($M = 3.12, SD = .569$) to posttest ($M = 3.70, SD = .349$), $t(718) = -26.5553, p < .001$ (two-tailed).

• The paired samples $t$ test for the construct of parent behaviors showed a statistically significant increase in scores from the pretest ($M = 3.29, SD = .497$) to posttest ($M = 3.63, SD = .383$), $t(718) = -19.475, p < .001$ (two-tailed).

The paired sample tests of the differences showed that the greatest mean differences occurred in the knowledge statement construct. The knowledge statement construct resulted in the highest $t$ score as well. The responses in the behaviors statement construct differed the least. When the two tailed $t$ tests were run for each of the 32 statements, a similar result occurred. Most of the differences in the statements were positive, with one exception, Statement 12 (Table 2).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test of the Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construct</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs pre and post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge pre and post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior pre and post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22 shows the results for statements that resulted in the highest paired difference mean and largest effect size. It also includes the results for Statement 12, because it was inconsistent with the results of all of the other statements.
Table 22

**Remarkable Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement construct and survey number</th>
<th>Pre mean</th>
<th>Pre sd</th>
<th>Post mean</th>
<th>Post sd</th>
<th>Paired differences 95% confidence interval</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief #1</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.262</td>
<td>-.143</td>
<td>-6.43</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs #2</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.921</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>-.679</td>
<td>-17.52</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs #8</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.648</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td>-.177</td>
<td>-6.78</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs #12</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>.932</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge #15</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>-.708</td>
<td>-20.22</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge #22</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td>-.953</td>
<td>-26.24</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge #23</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.582</td>
<td>-.855</td>
<td>-24.31</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors #24</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>-.412</td>
<td>-13.02</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors #25</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.845</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>-.394</td>
<td>-12.75</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors #27</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.918</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td>-.733</td>
<td>-20.21</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Beliefs Construct**

Twelve of the 13 items in the *beliefs* scale showed a statistically significant increase in scores from pretest to posttest for participants. Eleven of the paired samples *t* tests were significant at the *p* < .001 level, and one at the *p* < .01 level. The items with the largest effect sizes were “My child spends more of his or her learning time at home than at school” (Statement 2, Beliefs): E.S. = .65, pretest (*M* = 2.69, *SD* = .921) to posttest (*M* = 3.37, *SD* = .801), *t*(718) = -17.52, *p* < .001); “It’s important to talk with
other parents from my child’s school” (Statement 8, Beliefs): E.S. = .25, pretest (M = 3.22, SD = .648) to posttest (M = 3.39, SD = .601), t(718) = –6.778, p < .001; and “I am my child’s most important teacher” (Statement 1, Beliefs): E.S. = .24, pretest (M = 3.72, SD = .561) to posttest (M = 3.86, SD = .388), t(718) = –6.43, p < .001).

**Knowledge Construct**

All 10 items in the knowledge scale showed a statistically significant increase in scores from pretest to posttest for participants at the p < .001 level. The items with the largest effect sizes were “I know the steps required to help my child succeed academically and go to a university” (Statement 23, Knowledge): E.S. = .98, pretest (M = 2.78, SD = .912) to posttest (M = 3.74, SD = .468), t(718) = –26.243, p < .001; “I know how to work with my child’s teacher(s), principal, counselor and parent liaison” (Statement 23, Knowledge): E.S. = .91, pretest (M = 2.68, SD = .855) to post test (M = 3.54, SD = .582), t(718) = –24.313, p < .001; and “I understand the important academic standards and requirements my child must meet to succeed academically” (Statement 15, Knowledge): E.S. = .75, pretest (M = 3.02, SD = .892) to post test (M = 3.73, SD = .461), t(718) = –20.222, p < .001).

**Behaviors Construct**

All 9 items in the “behaviors scale showed a statistically significant increase in scores from pretest to posttest for participants at the p < .001 level. The items with the largest effect sizes were “I have made a plan to make sure my child succeeds academically and graduates from high school prepared to get a university education” (Statement 27, Behaviors): E.S. = .75, pretest (M = 2.81, SD = .918) to post test (M = 3.55, SD = .593), t(718) = –0.214, p < .001; “I keep in touch with the teacher(s)
about my child’s academic performance” (Statement 24, Behaviors): E.S. = .49, pretest
($M = 3.04, SD = .874$) to posttest ($M = 3.45, SD = .642$), $t(718) = -13.02, p < .001$; and
“I keep in touch with the teacher(s) about my child’s classroom behavior” (Statement 25,
Behaviors): E.S. = .48, pretest ($M = 3.06, SD = .845$) to posttest ($M = 3.46, SD = .658$),
$t(718) = -12.755, p < .001$).

To test if the differences found in the statement constructs were not only
statistically significant, but also meaningful, a computation of the effect size using
Cohen’s $d$ was also run. A small effect size ranges from 0 to .2, a moderate effect size
ranges from .2 to .5, and a large effect size is any value above .5. Table 23 summarizes
the effect size that the American Dream Academy had on the three statement constructs.
The largest effect size was in the knowledge statements construct. In fact, only two of the
statements in this construct resulted in a moderate effect; the rest of the statements had
large effect sizes.

Table 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Construct</th>
<th>Effect Size calculated by Cohen’s $d$</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>Moderately large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statements with the largest effect sizes for the entire survey were #22 and 23,
at .979 and .907 respectively. The effect size on the beliefs statements construct was the
lowest, though still within the moderate effect range. The effect sizes of the statements in
the behaviors construct were mostly moderate except for statement #27, which had a
large effect at .754. Statement #22 (I make sure my child attends school everyday) was
already very high on the pre-program survey at 3.81, growing only to 3.9 on the post-
program survey.

Relationships in Differences Amongst Constructs

To test for the strength and direction (positive or negative) amongst the
differences of the three constructs, before and after participation in the academy, a
Pearson correlation coefficient was computed for each pair of constructs. Tests of
statistical significance were also computed.

As shown in Table 24, there was a positive correlation amongst all three of the
statement constructs (beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors). They “went or varied together”
in the same direction. The statistical tests were significant for all three of the correlation
pairs at the $p < .01$ level. This means the relationships were statistically significant. The
strongest relationship was between parents’ knowledge and behaviors, followed by
beliefs and knowledge. The weakest relationship was between beliefs and behaviors.
Table 24

*Correlations Between the Post Scores of the Statement Constructs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2tail)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2tail)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.721</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (2tail)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

This chapter reported the results of the data analyses done to ascertain if the American Dream Academy was effective in changing parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors related to their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary education. The data sources were representative of parents in 42 schools who participated in the academy during the spring of 2012. Only cases with complete responses on both the pre-program and post-program surveys were selected for this study. This limited the study further to 719 cases. Many of the participants were women, with jobs that did not require post-secondary education, though many of them reported that they and/or their spouse had post-secondary education. Many of the families reported incomes at or below the federal definition of poverty. The majority of the parents self-reported as Hispanic/Hispanic American. Most of them reported their country of origin being a country that has Spanish as the official language. This suggests that many of the participants were immigrants. More than half of the participants reported that they were older than 31 years old.
The beliefs statements construct had the highest pre-program mean score. Though the effect size for this construct was moderate, the actual paired differences were the lowest. The knowledge statements construct had the lowest pre-program mean and the highest post-program mean. The effect size of participation in the program was especially high for this construct. The self-reported behaviors statement construct had a moderate large effect size. The differences on the pre- and post-surveys for each construct were positively correlated with each of the other constructs. The relationships were statistically significant.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the study and conclusions. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the problem, purpose, and research questions. The next section briefly describes the methodology. The third section details the findings. Finally, the fourth section concludes the implications for practitioners, the recommendations for future research, and closing remarks.

Summary of the Study

According to the Arizona Department of Education, in 2011, 43% of the under-18 population of Arizona identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino; that is equivalent to 706,571. That same year, the high school graduation rate for the Hispanic/Latino subgroup was 72.2%, compared to 85% for White students. The English Learner (EL) subgroup graduation rate was an alarming 24.8% (Arizona Department of Education, 2012a).

The future of the state of Arizona will be greatly affected by the college and career readiness of Hispanic/Latino children. The high percentage of Hispanic/Latino students in Arizona, and the steady growth of the subgroup, demands that special attention be placed on improving the academic achievement and attainment of the subgroup. The need to support Hispanic/Latino parents in becoming meaningful positive contributors to their children’s schooling continues to surface as a critical issue in school improvement efforts in many Arizona school districts.

The American Dream Academy (ADA) is a program designed to address this critical issue. The program leads parents through the Realizing the American Dream
family engagement curriculum developed by the Parent Institute. The focus of the ADA is to change Latino parents’ beliefs about, knowledge of, and behaviors related to their children’s education from pre-kindergarten to the post-secondary level. By doing so, the program expects the subsequent effects to be improved student achievement, increased high school graduation rates, and increased college graduation rates for the children of parents who complete the 10-week course.

The program leads parents through the Realizing the American Dream family engagement curriculum developed by the Parent Institute. The ADA works to advance each child’s educational experience through education and empowerment of their parents. “Parents with higher levels of education often encourage behaviors or routines that lead to long-term academic success, such as reading outside of the school or visiting teachers when a question arises” (Davis-Kean, 2005, p. 295).

The ADA serves three different groups: parents of elementary school-aged children, parents of middle school-aged children, and parents of high school-aged children. It is a nine-session course. Parents learn the knowledge necessary to improve the academic and behavioral development of their children. The ADA curriculum also works to transcend beliefs that parents carry with them regarding education, and uses self-efficacy to harness the new or altered set of beliefs into actions.

This curriculum is designed based on the model of the parental involvement process presented by Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler (1997). A visual representation of the model is included in Appendix A.
Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The ADA, part of the Center for Community Development and Civil Rights (2013) at Arizona State University, has the mission of meaningfully impacting the engagement of parents in their children’s education. The purpose of this study was to analyze the efficacy of the American Dream Academy in changing the beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors of parents who participated in the program during the spring 2012 semester.

The following research questions guided the analyses of data:

1. What are the differences in parents’ self-reported beliefs regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

2. What are the differences in parents’ knowledge about their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

3. What are the differences in parents’ behaviors regarding their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary schooling before and after participation in the American Dream Academy program?

4. If differences in parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education are found, how are these differences related to one another?

Review of the Methodology

The data sources for this study were a survey of 32 questions categorized into three constructs that were taken by the program participants during the first session of the academy; and an identical survey taken the ninth session. The statement constructs for the
surveys were beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education. To answer the first three research questions, two tailed \( t \) tests for dependent samples and Cohen’s \( d \) test of effect size, were used to test the following research hypotheses:

*Research Hypothesis 1*: If differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct beliefs regarding their involvement in their child’s schooling, before and after participating in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the effectiveness of the program.

*Research Hypothesis 2*: If differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct knowledge regarding their involvement in their child’s schooling, before and after participating in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the effectiveness of the program.

*Research Hypothesis 3*: if differences exist between parents’ agreement/disagreement levels on statements relating to the construct behaviors regarding their involvement in their child’s schooling, before and after participating in the American Dream Academy, those differences were due to the effectiveness of the program.

To test for the strength and direction (positive or negative) amongst the differences of the three constructs before and after participation in the academy, a Pearson’s correlation coefficient was computed for each pair of constructs. Tests of statistical significance were also computed. Following are the research hypotheses that were developed for the correlation question:

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Research Hypothesis 4a: There is a relationship between parents’ beliefs and knowledge on post-test scores.

Research Hypothesis 5a: There is a relationship between parents’ beliefs and behaviors on post-test scores.

Research Hypothesis 6a: There is a relationship between parents’ knowledge and behaviors on post-test scores.

**Findings**

The mean differences for each of the statements, and for the three statement constructs, after participation in the academy were positive and statistically significant. Cohen’s $d$ confirmed that the effect sizes of participating in the program were significant and meaningful. Thus, we accept research Hypotheses 1 through 3. Participation in the American Dream Academy is an effective way for parents to improve their beliefs, knowledge, and behavior regarding their children’s pre-kinder through post-secondary education.

There was a positive correlation amongst the pre- and post-academy differences for each of the three statement constructs. The relationships were statistically significant. The strongest relationship was between parents’ knowledge and behaviors, followed by parents’ beliefs and knowledge. The weakest relationship was between parents’ beliefs and behaviors.

The demographic surveys yielded unanticipated results. The frequency distribution found that 67.7% of the respondents had some level of post-secondary education, as did 87.4% of their spouses. The high level of education of the participants
did not suggest that the majority of the families would report their income level as falling at or below the federal poverty level established for families of four.

**Conclusions**

The gains shown on the overall constructs and on the individual statements there was a clear indicator of the high levels of efficacy that the ADA demonstrated in changing parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors regarding their children’s education. Following are references to the review of literature (Chapter 2); along with the corresponding survey statements that are directly connected to the literature and had statistically significant gains and/or moderately large effect sizes:

**Statistically Significant Statements or Moderately Large Effect Sizes**

Many Hispanic parents promoted the completion of homework, but did not recognize that children talking to adults, reading and writing for fun, playing board games, and playing organized sports outside of school are also valuable in promoting school success. These activities are often not culturally valuable or a priority to immigrant Hispanic parents (Navarette 1996).

Statement 2: My child spends more of his or her learning time at home than at school. This statement had the highest growth in the beliefs category.

Statement 16: I know good ways to maintain two-way communication with my child.

Statement 18: I know some good ways to build my child’s self esteem at home.

Statement 21: I know some good ways to spend time with my child.

Statement 26: I talk with my child about the importance of continuing his or her education beyond high school.
Statement 29: I talk with my child about my expectations for his or her success.

Statements by Parents With Lower Levels of Education

In the Morrison Institute report, *Dropped*, Hager and Hart (2012) made reference to a lack of “educational capital.” This factor focuses on Hispanic parents who have lower levels of education and, therefore, experience difficulty in guiding their children to perform behaviors that will result in high academic achievement.

Statement 14: I understand the important terms and concepts necessary to help my child graduate from high school prepared to get a university education.

Statement 15: I understand the important academic standards and requirements my child must meet to succeed academically.

Statement 22: I know the steps required to help my child succeed academically and go to a university.

Statement 27: I have made a plan to make sure my child succeeds academically and graduates from high school prepared to get a university education.

Statements Concerning Reading Habits

According to the Center for Educational Statistics, School Readiness Survey for 2007 (3-5 year olds not enrolled in kindergarten), 91% of White mothers reported reading a story to their child two or three times over the last week; whereas, only 68% of Hispanic mothers reported doing the same. Forty-one percent of White mothers reported taking their child to the public library in the last month; whereas, only 27% of Hispanic mothers reported that they did the same.

Statement 20: I know some good ways to build my child’s reading skills at home.

Statement 31: I encourage my child to read regularly.
Statements Regarding Involvement in Children’s Education

“Parents will most likely become involved when they feel their involvement will make a difference for their children” (Bandura, 1989).

Statement 23: I know how to work with my child’s teacher(s), principal, counselor, and parent liaison.

Statement 24: I keep in touch with the teacher(s) about my child’s academic performance.

Statement 25: I keep in touch with the teacher(s) about my child’s classroom behavior.

Statement 32: I help my child practice vocabulary, math, and other skills regularly.

Approximately 67.7% of Respondents Reported Some Level of Post-secondary Education

The frequency distribution of the participants yielded an unanticipated result: 67.7% of the respondents reported that they had some level of post-secondary education, as did 87.4% of their spouses. This relatively high level of education explains why the beliefs construct showed a smaller effect size. The group had a high mean on most statements as to the beliefs construct to begin with. They believed that they were critical to their child achieving academic success; they just did not know how to help their children achieve that success in the United States educational system. The high scores on the pre-program survey and subsequent small effect size connect directly to this quote from the literature review and the following survey statements:

Parents will most likely become involved when they feel their involvement will make a difference for their children. (Bandura, 1989)
Parents who have had positive experiences with the school system will most likely have self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to help their child be successful in school.

Statement 4: It is my responsibility to make sure my child finishes high school.
Statement 5: It is my responsibility to talk with my child about the importance of continuing their education beyond high school.
Statement 6: It is my responsibility to communicate with my child’s teacher regularly.
Statement 9: It is my responsibility to talk to my child about school every day.
Statement 10: I can help my child learn.
Statement 11: A student’s motivation to do well in school depends on his or her parents.

Many of the participants were women with jobs that do not require post-secondary education, though many of them reported that they and/or their spouse have post-secondary education. Many of the families reported incomes at or below the federal definition of poverty. The majority of the parents self-reported as Hispanic/Hispanic American. Most of them reported their country of origin being a country that has Spanish as the official language. This suggests that many of the participants are immigrants. More than half of the participants reported that they were 31 one years or older.

Likely due to the participants’ immigration experiences, their maturity in age, the probability that they live in poverty, and their own experiences with post-secondary education; the beliefs statements construct had the highest pre-program mean score. Though the effect size for this construct was moderate, the actual paired difference was the lowest. This refutes the claim that parents who are newcomers to the United States
educational system are not motivated to help their students succeed academically or that they may not have high aspirations for their children’s education. They simply did not know how to help their children navigate through pre-kindergarten to post-secondary school. This was true, even when they had experience with post-secondary schools in their country of origin.

**Implications for Action**

Numerous studies conducted in the last decade have parental involvement as their focus. The mass of these studies comes to a single conclusion: a strong positive correlation exists between parental involvement and academic achievement. The *knowledge* construct of the ADA survey had the lowest pre-program mean and the highest post-program mean. The effect size after participation in the ADA was especially high for this construct (.990). The *behaviors* construct had one statement in particular with a very large effect size, Statement 27: *I have a plan to make sure my child succeeds academically and graduates from high school prepared to get a university education.* The large effect size of this statement (.754), coupled with the effect size of Statement 22 (.979), *I know the steps required to help my child succeed academically and go to a university,* clearly concludes that the American Dream Academy was effective in changing parents’ beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors related to their children’s pre-kinder to post-secondary education.

The intent of this study was to provide additional research for school districts to draw upon when analyzing and adapting existing parent involvement programs, or when choosing whether or not to adopt the American Dream Academy in their school improvement efforts. It is recommended that school districts partner with the American
Dream Academy in efforts to engage parents in meaningful participation. When adapting existing programs, it is recommended that school districts refer to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler model for parent involvement. The ADA utilizes the Realizing the American Dream curriculum, which uses the Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler model as its theoretical framework. The Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University developed the model.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

An analysis of the relationships between the effectiveness of the American Dream Academy and the parents’ demographic information could help school districts to predict if the program is likely to meet the needs of the population they serve. A study of the influence that specific demographic information has on the effectiveness of the Academy in yielding gains on each of the three constructs and on individual statements would be useful for school districts.

Also, school districts would benefit from an analyses of the results of other cohort groups; paying close attention to differences as to the results of cohort groups that participate in the fall versus the spring semesters, cohorts addressing elementary parents versus middle and high school parents, and English-speaking cohorts versus Spanish speaking cohorts. All of this information would be useful for districts when attempting to tailor interventions designed to improve parental involvement for specific populations.

Another recommendation for further research is a longitudinal study of the relationship between parents’ participation in the program and their children’s subsequent academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and college graduation rates. Also, a longitudinal study of the parents’ actual participation in school events and their
collaboration with the teachers, principal, and other staff members would be of value to districts and to the ADA.
REFERENCES


Khatiwada, I., McLaughlin, J., & Sum, A. (2009). *The labor market experiences and earnings fortunes of Arizona working age adults 18-64 years old by educational*


Olshansky, S. et al. (2012). Differences in life expectancy due to race and educational differences are widening, and many may not catch up. *Health Affairs, 31*(8), 1803-1813.

APPENDIX A

HOOVER-DEMPSEY AND SANDLER’S MODEL

**LEVEL 5: Child/Student Outcomes**

- Skills and Knowledge
- Efficacy for Doing Well in School

**LEVEL 4: Tempering/Mediating Variables**

| Parents' Use of Developmentally Appropriate Involvement Strategies | Fit between Parents' Involvement Actions & School Expectations |

**LEVEL 3: Mechanisms through Which Parent Involvement Influences Child/Student Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modeling</th>
<th>Reinforcement</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
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<td>Closed-Ended</td>
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</table>

**LEVEL 2: Parents' Choice of Involvement Forms**

Influenced by:

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<tr>
<th>Specific Domains of Parents' Skills &amp; Knowledge</th>
<th>Mix of Demands on Total Time &amp; Energy from:</th>
<th>Specific Invitations and Demands for Involvement from:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Demands</td>
<td>Employment Demands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEVEL 1: Parental Involvement Decision**

(The Parent's Positive Decision to Become Involved) Influenced by:

| Parents' Construction of the Parental Role | Parents' Sense of Efficacy for Helping Child(ren) Succeed in School | General Opportunities and Demands for Parental Involvement Presented by: The Parent's Child(ren) Child(ren)'s School(s) |

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Figure A1. Revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of the parental involvement process
Success Factors: Communication & Discipline

Facilitator’s Tasks for Class 4

Before class

- Arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of class.
- Display slide 1: “Elementary School Class 4.”
- Meet and greet parents with a smile as they arrive.

Materials for class

- Sign-in sheet
- Extra Pledge Forms for new parents
- Class 4 Lesson Books
- Slides 1–9 (PowerPoint, overhead projector or print copies)
- Copies of “Terms and Definitions” cards, cut apart (found on the last pages of this Facilitator’s Guide).
- Binders
- Extra sheets of paper, pens and pencils
- A bag of candies or other treats if you wish to give “prizes” for activities.

During class

- Begin class on time.
- Make sure all parents sign in.
- New parents MUST fill out a Pledge Form and sign exceptions report.
- Pass out remaining binders and distribute Class 4 Lesson Books.
- Distribute remaining and new Family Reports.

After class

- Be sure to leave the room clean and tidy, and exactly as you found it.
- Begin reminder calls to parents a few days after class.
Supplementary Materials

In addition to the Lesson Books, a wide range of supplementary materials is also available from The Parent Institute. Materials may be used as resources by facilitators in preparing to teach classes and in helping answer parents' questions. They may be distributed to parents in print or electronically from http://realizingtheamericandream.com

Titles recommended for this class include:

- 25 Ways Parents Can Talk & Listen to Children, Booklet, Stock #304A
- Helping Children Learn Self-Discipline, Booklet, Stock #333A
- Teaching Children Responsibility For Their Learning and Behavior, Booklet, Stock #331A
- Remember ... You Are the Adult and You Are in Charge, Booklet, Stock #338A
- Dealing With the Tough Issues ... Bullies, QuickTip, Stock #1164
- Ten Ways to Help Your Child Deal With Peer Pressure, QuickTip, Stock #1125
- Self-Discipline: A Key to Your Student’s Success, Stuffer, Stock #103F
**Success Factors: Communication & Discipline**

### Class 4 Goals

1. To give parents a general understanding of the middle school and high school requirements children must meet in the years ahead.

2. To teach parents how to use and maintain effective two-way communication with their child.

3. To help parents understand how to establish and maintain firm, fair and consistent discipline at home.

### Class 4 Overview & Administrative Tasks

- **Display slide #1:** “Elementary School Class 4.” Do this **before** parents start arriving.
- Make announcements and take care of administrative tasks.
- Distribute Lesson Books for Class 4.

### Review:

**Academic Standards and Performance Requirements:**

Choose from the following to review with the class:

- Review with parents why regular attendance is essential to their child's academic success (*Class 3 Lesson Book page 7*).

- Have a class discussion about ways parents can make their home a “learning-friendly” place (*Class 3 Lesson Book page 9*).

- Review what parents can do to help children prepare for and succeed on standardized tests (*Class 3 Lesson Book page 11*).
**Action Plan from Class 3:**

- Call on a few parents to talk about their experience telling friends or family members that their child is going to university. Were friends and family supportive? Surprised? Discuss the response parents received.

- Ask parents if they were able to make time to read with their child. Were they able to visit the library? How did their child like the reading time? Share and discuss these facts with parents:

  If you read to your child for half an hour a day, that’s 900 hours in just five years. If you read to your child for half an hour a week, that’s 130 hours in five years. If you spend fewer than 30 minutes a week reading to your child, that’s just 60 hours in five years.

**Activity 1: Terms, requirements and standards review**

**Procedure:**

1. Pass out the “Terms and Definitions” cards to parents. Each parent should receive one card—either a term or a definition. (The cards can be found on the last pages of this Facilitator’s Guide. If you have more than 18 parents in the class, make extra copies of the cards.)

2. Instruct parents to walk around the room to “Find Your Match.” Each parent should look for the person holding the term or definition that matches his or her card. (If you have more than 18 parents in the class, inform them that “matches” may be pairs of two parents or groups of four parents.)

3. Give parents five minutes to complete this task. Reward the pairs who have found their matches before time ran out. Consider giving extra candy to the pair who found each other first.

**Success Ladder**

- Display slide #2: “The Success Ladder.” Read and review each step or call on parents to read each step.

- Tell parents that today’s class will concentrate on Step 5, “Focus on success factors.”
About Today’s Class

Display slide #3: “In Today’s Class, You Will ...”

Explain that the goals of today’s class are to:

1. Develop a general understanding of the middle school and high school requirements your child must meet in the years ahead.

2. Learn how to use and maintain effective two-way communication with your child.

3. Understand how to establish and maintain firm, fair and consistent discipline for your child at home.

1. Important Middle School & High School Terms and Requirements

Talk to parents about how in elementary school children are assigned to classes and most students stick to the same curriculum. But in middle school and high school, students have more freedom in choosing their classes and shaping their course of study. It’s helpful for parents to know what options will be available to their child.

Display slide #4: “School Terms and Concepts.”

Ask parents, “Do any of these terms sound familiar? For example, does anyone know what Core Subjects are? How about AP Classes?”

Tell parents to turn to Lesson Book page 5. Then call on different parents to read the explanations provided for each term. Provide additional explanation if something is not clear.

When it’s time to work with your child to choose his middle school and high school classes, it’s important to have strong communication skills.
2. Communication is a Two-Way Street

Display slide #5: “Are You Listening?” Ask parents why they think it can be difficult to communicate effectively with their children. Have them read the “Are you listening?” section of Lesson Book page 7. Do parents think that these activities would help strengthen their communication with their child? Why or why not?

Activity 2: Practice active listening

Procedure:

1. Demonstrate “active listening.” Ask for a volunteer to come up to the front of the room and talk to you about something—what he or she did today, or what his or her weekend plans are. Respond by restating what the volunteer said to show that you are listening.

   Optional: Before demonstrating active listening, demonstrate how a typical busy parent may speak to their child—“I was so mad at school today because I couldn’t sit next to Maria.” “Uh-huh.” “And so I threw my chocolate pudding at her.” “That’s great.” “And that’s why I have detention.” “Wait—what?? How did you get detention again?”

2. Ask parents to get into pairs to practice active listening. Have them take turns, with one person being the “talker” and the other being the “active listener.” If parents are having trouble getting started, assign a topic to the class, like “your first day of school” or “how to make your favorite recipe” or “your favorite thing to do with your child.”

3. After a few minutes, have parents switch roles, so that both get a turn speaking and listening.

Following the activity, discuss how parents felt. Did they feel “more listened to” with active listening? How do they think their child will react?
**Success Factors: Communication & Discipline**

**Activity 3: Try specific questions**

Procedure:

1. **Display slide #6:** "Show Your Interest." Talk about how one of the best ways to effectively communicate with children is to ask specific questions. However, at the end of a long, busy day, it can be difficult to come up with them on the spot. This activity is designed to help parents have a "stockpile" of specific questions they can fall back on when necessary.

2. **Divide parents into three groups.** Give the groups five minutes to come up with a list of specific questions parents could ask their child after school. Direct parents to the bottom of Lesson Book page 7 for a few examples.

3. **After the groups have created their lists,** have each group present their list of questions to the class.

   **Optional:** Ask for two volunteers to show how active listening could work in conjunction with one of these questions. Have one parent act as the parent asking the question and doing the active listening, while the other parent acts as the child.

**Activity 4: Discuss your life**

Display slide #7: "Speak Up!"

When it comes to school, children often ask one question over and over again: "Why do I need to learn this?" A connection to the "real world" can make it easier for children to grasp concepts—and as someone who spends every day in the "real world," you can provide information on how you use your education daily.

Procedure:

1. **Assign each of the three groups** one general education topic—Math, Reading and Writing, or Science.
2. Have each group discuss the many ways they use that subject each day. If parents need a little help getting started, remind them that Math is used when counting your change at the grocery store, Reading is used when you determine whether or not you’re at the correct bus stop, and Science is used when you boil water for dinner.

3. After the groups have created their lists, have each group give an “expert presentation” on how their subject is used in everyday life. Optional: Ask if parents have any specific concerns about how a subject their child is learning is used in the “real world.” Work together as a class to brainstorm how that subject is used.

Remind parents that effective communication is one of the building blocks of a strong, healthy relationship with their child. Opening the lines of communication now will pave the way to effective communication in the future.

It’s also important for parents to realize that effective communication does not mean being your child’s friend instead of your child’s parent. So let’s talk about how you can provide a framework that ensures your child grows into a successful, responsible adult—by providing firm, fair and consistent discipline.

Talk about how discipline is not all about punishing children for making bad decisions, but also about teaching children to make good decisions.

3. Use Firm, Fair and Consistent Discipline

Display slide #8: “Effective Discipline Is ...”

Ask parents to turn to Lesson Book page 9. Call on parents to read each of the bullets in the introduction aloud. Do parents think keeping discipline firm, fair and consistent makes a difference? Why or why not?

Next, call on parents to read aloud about natural and logical consequences, also on Lesson Book page 9.
Success Factors: Communication & Discipline

Activity 5: Natural and logical consequences

Procedure:

1. **Again in their groups**, have parents think of consequences their child has faced recently.

2. **Have groups determine** whether each consequence is a “natural” or a “logical” consequence.

3. **Discuss the consequences as a class.** Were there any consequences that didn’t fit neatly into the natural or logical category? Do parents think there should be another category of consequences? What would they call it? Did parents get any ideas from other parents? Why do parents often just send a child to his room for misbehavior? Do any parents want to share a situation in which they didn’t know what to do?

Talk to parents about how having children face consequences is only part of discipline. Mention that Lesson Book page 10 details the other ways parents can provide discipline: by setting strong house rules, acting as good role models and providing praise to children when they act appropriately.

Class Review and Action Plan for the Coming Week

**Display slide #9: “In Today’s Class, We Learned…”**

and review each item very briefly.

Tell the class that now it’s time to put what they’ve learned to work:

Ask parents to turn to Lesson Book page 11.

Review with them the Action Plan for the coming week:

1. **Review the list** of middle school and high school requirements my child must meet in the years ahead.

2. **Practice “active listening”** with my child at home.

3. **Make a list of our family rules** and decide if we make any changes.
There's More in Your Lesson Book

Tell parents to take a few minutes to review the Lesson Book at home. It contains information about everything that was discussed in class today, plus additional information that couldn’t be covered due to time constraints.
APPENDIX C

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY
Please tell us what you think!

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement. There are no right and wrong answers. The right answer is the one that is most true for you.

Please fill in the circles completely to show whether you disagree very strongly, disagree, agree or agree very strongly. Correct: ☑ Incorrect: ☒

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<th>This is what I believe:</th>
<th>Disagree very strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree very strongly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am my child’s most important teacher.</td>
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<td>2. My child spends more of his or her learning time at home than at school.</td>
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<td>3. My child’s principal, teacher(s) and other school staff cannot make sure my child will succeed academically without working with me as a partner.</td>
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<td>4. It’s my responsibility to make sure my child finishes high school.</td>
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<td>5. It’s my responsibility to talk with my child about the importance of continuing his or her education beyond high school.</td>
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<td>6. It’s my responsibility to communicate with my child’s teacher(s) regularly.</td>
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<td>7. It’s my responsibility to supervise my child’s homework.</td>
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<td>8. It’s important to talk with other parents from my child’s school.</td>
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<td>9. It’s my responsibility to talk with my child about the school day.</td>
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<td>10. I can help my child learn.</td>
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<td>11. A student’s motivation to do well in school depends on his or her parents.</td>
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<td>12. Other people have more influence on my child’s grades than I do.</td>
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<td>13. I can make a significant difference in my child’s school performance.</td>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree very strongly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. I understand the important terms and concepts necessary to help my child graduate from high school prepared to get a university education.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I understand the important academic standards and requirements my child must meet to succeed academically.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I know some good ways to maintain two-way communication with my child.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I know some good ways to maintain firm, fair and consistent discipline for my child at home.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I know some good ways to build my child’s self-esteem at home.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is what I believe:
1. I am my child’s most important teacher.
2. My child spends more of his or her learning time at home than at school.
3. My child’s principal, teacher(s) and other school staff cannot make sure my child will succeed academically without working with me as a partner.
4. It’s my responsibility to make sure my child finishes high school.
5. It’s my responsibility to talk with my child about the importance of continuing his or her education beyond high school.
6. It’s my responsibility to communicate with my child’s teacher(s) regularly.
7. It’s my responsibility to supervise my child’s homework.
8. It’s important to talk with other parents from my child’s school.
9. It’s my responsibility to talk with my child about the school day.
10. I can help my child learn.
11. A student’s motivation to do well in school depends on his or her parents.
12. Other people have more influence on my child’s grades than I do.
13. I can make a significant difference in my child’s school performance.

This is what I know:
14. I understand the important terms and concepts necessary to help my child graduate from high school prepared to get a university education.
15. I understand the important academic standards and requirements my child must meet to succeed academically.
16. I know some good ways to maintain two-way communication with my child.
17. I know some good ways to maintain firm, fair and consistent discipline for my child at home.
18. I know some good ways to build my child’s self-esteem at home.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This is what I know:</th>
<th>Disagree very strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree very strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. I know some good ways to motivate my child to succeed at school academically.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I know some good ways to build my child’s reading skills at home.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I know some good ways to spend time with my child.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I know the steps required to help my child succeed academically and go to a university.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I know how to work with my child’s teacher(s), principal, counselor and parent liaison.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree very strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. I keep in touch with the teacher(s) about my child’s academic performance.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I keep in touch with the teacher(s) about my child’s classroom behavior.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I talk with my child about the importance of continuing his or her education beyond high school.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I have made a plan to make sure my child succeeds academically and graduates from high school prepared to get a university education.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
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<td>28. I make sure my child attends school every day.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
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<td>29. I talk with my child about my expectations for his or her success.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
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<td>30. I monitor my child’s homework regularly.</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX D

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Please think about the current school year as you consider each statement. There are no right and wrong answers. The right answer is the one that is most true for you.

Please fill in the circles completely to show whether you disagree very strongly, disagree, agree or agree very strongly. Correct: O Incorrect: O O O

### This is what I believe:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree very strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. I am my child’s most important teacher.</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. It’s my responsibility to make sure my child finishes high school.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It’s my responsibility to talk with my child about the importance of continuing his or her education beyond high school.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It’s my responsibility to communicate with my child’s teacher(s) regularly.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It’s my responsibility to supervise my child’s homework.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>8. It’s important to talk with other parents from my child’s school.</td>
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<tr>
<th>This is what I think about the program:</th>
<th>Disagree very strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree very strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. The facilitator was very knowledgeable about the material.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I would recommend this class to a friend.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I would recommend this facilitator to a friend.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. The facilitator connected with parents in the class.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. The facilitator stayed in touch with me by phone during the course.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To: Luis Perilla  
MERCADO  

From: Mark Roosa, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB  

Date: 08/18/2011  

Committee Action: Exemption Granted  

IRB Action Date: 08/18/2011  

IRB Protocol #: 1108006737  

Study Title: Realizing the American Dream: An Evaluation of Parents' Knowledge, Beliefs and Behaviors Before and After a Parent Education Program  

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).  

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the info obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.  

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.
Dear Alex Perilla,

Your study "Realizing the American Dream: An Evaluation of Parents' Knowledge..." has been determined to be exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2). Please find a copy of your approval letter attached to this email. Research may begin.

Thank you,
Tiffany

Tiffany Dunning
IRB Coordinator
Office of Research Integrity and Assurance
Center Point, 660 S. Mill Avenue Suite 315
Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ 85287-6111 (Mail Code 6111)
Telephone: 480 965-6788
Fax: 480 965-7772
http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans
Dear Alex Perilla and Danelia Portillo,

Danelia Portillo has been added to your exempt study #1108006737” Realizing the American Dream: An Evaluation of Parents’ Knowledge, Beliefs and Behaviors Before and After a Parent Education Program.”

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tiffany

Tiffany Dunning | IRB Coordinator, Office of Research Integrity & Assurance
Arizona State University | Office of Knowledge Enterprise Development | Operations
t 480-639-7396 | f 480-965-7772
tiffany.dunning@asu.edu | http://researchintegrity.asu.edu
How am I doing? Email my supervisor

---

From: Alex Perilla
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2013 10:30 AM
To: Tiffany Dunning
Cc: daniportillo1@gmail.com
Subject: FW: IRB Approvals.pdf

[Quoted text hidden]
1. What is your gender?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

2. Which category best describes your job? Which category best describes your spouse or partner’s job? *(Please choose only one for each of you.)*
   - [ ] Unemployed, retired, student, disabled
   - [ ] Labor, custodial, maintenance
   - [ ] Warehouse, factory worker, construction
   - [ ] Driver (taxi, truck, bus, delivery)
   - [ ] Food services, restaurant
   - [ ] Skilled craftsman (plumber, electrician, etc.)
   - [ ] Retail sales, clerical, customer service
   - [ ] Service technician (appliances, computers, cars)
   - [ ] Bookkeeping, accounting, related administrative
   - [ ] Singer, musician, writer, artist
   - [ ] Real estate, insurance sales
   - [ ] Social services, public service, related government
   - [ ] Teacher, nurse
   - [ ] Professional, executive
   - [ ] No spouse or partner

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? What is the highest level your spouse or partner has completed?
   - [ ] Less than high school
   - [ ] High school or equivalent
   - [ ] Some college, 2-year college or vocational
   - [ ] Bachelor’s degree
   - [ ] Some graduate work
   - [ ] Master’s degree
   - [ ] Doctoral degree
   - [ ] No spouse or partner

4. On average, how many hours per week do you work? How about your spouse or partner?
   - [ ] 0 - 5
   - [ ] 6 - 20
   - [ ] 21 - 40
   - [ ] 41 or more
   - [ ] No spouse or partner

5. What is your average yearly family income? *(Please choose one.)*
   - [ ] Less than $10,000
   - [ ] $10,001 - $20,000
   - [ ] $20,001 - $30,000
   - [ ] $30,001 - $40,000
   - [ ] $40,001 - $50,000
   - [ ] Over $50,000

6. What is your race/ethnicity? *(Please choose one.)*
   - [ ] Asian/Asian-American
   - [ ] Black/African-American
   - [ ] Hispanic/Hispanic-American
   - [ ] White/Caucasian
   - [ ] Other/Prefer not to say

7. What is your age? *(Please choose one.)*
   - [ ] 20 or younger
   - [ ] 21-25
   - [ ] 26-30
   - [ ] 31-35
   - [ ] 36-40
   - [ ] 41-45
   - [ ] 46-50
   - [ ] Over 50
8. How many children under the age of 19 live in your home? (Please choose one.)

   O 1  O 4  
   O 2  O 5  
   O 3  O 6 or more

9. How many children under the age of 5 live in your home? (Please choose one.)

   O 1  O 4  
   O 2  O 5  
   O 3  O 6 or more

10. Have any of your children attended school outside the United States?

    O Yes  O No

11. What is your country of origin?

12. How long have you lived in the Phoenix area?

    O Less than 1 year  
    O 1 - 2 years  
    O 3 - 4 years  
    O 5 - 6 years  
    O 7 - 8 years  
    O 9 - 10 years  
    O Over 10 years