The Center for
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BOSTON COLLEGE

A CATALYST FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:

Promoting the Involvement of Working Parents in their Children's Education

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WORK-FAMILY POLICY PAPER SERIES

BOSTON COLLEGE
WALLACE E. CARROLL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

A Catalyst for Educational Change:

Promoting the Involvement of Working Parents in their Children's Education

Judi C. Casey and Patricia Ellen Burch

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WHO SHOULD READ THIS PAPER:

- Work-family managers interested in responding to the priorities of employees with school age children.
- Community relations practitioners responsible for the development and implementation of school-business partnerships.
- Human resource executives committed to ensuring the competencies of tomorrow's workforce.
- Educators interested in working with employers to assist working parents to become more involved in their children's education.
- Families and parents who want to involve schools and businesses in parent involvement efforts.

WHAT THE PAPER PROVIDES:

- In-depth examination of the benefits of parent involvement for businesses, schools and families.
- Analysis of the perspectives of the stakeholder groups (business, schools and families) interested in parent involvement.
- Examples of innovative programs and strategies for collaborative approaches to parent involvement.

HOW YOU CAN USE THIS PAPER:

- Assess your company's contribution to the educational reform arena.
- Develop your company's approach for increasing the involvement of parent employees in their children's education.

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INTRODUCTION

The Challenge

In August 1981, the National Commission on Excellence in Education was appointed with the task of preparing a report on the quality of education in America. The Commission was created by Secretary of Education T. H. Bell due to his concern that there were serious problems with the current educational system. The findings of the Commission were reflected in the publication, A Nation at Risk (US National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) which stated:

The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.

This opinion was supported by numerous statistical indicators. For example:

- About 13% of the country's 17 year olds were considered functionally illiterate. Illiteracy had reached an astonishing level of nearly 40% among minority youth.
- There had been a dramatic decline in the number and proportion of students who had demonstrated superior achievement on the SATs (those with scores of 650 or higher).
- Many 17 year olds did not possess the "higher order" intellectual skills that were expected of them. Nearly 40% could not draw inferences from written material; only one-fifth could write a persuasive essay; and only one-third could solve a math problem requiring several steps.

Close to fifteen years later, there is agreement that although some progress has been made, there is much more that needs to be done. For instance:

- Today, 40% of fourth graders fail the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, which is a grade-level assessment, given by the Department of Education (Kronholz, 1997).

However, on a positive note;

- High school students are taking more courses, particularly in academic areas.
- Students are taking more difficult courses as well as a greater number of courses.
- Students appear to be learning more in math and science (Smith, 1995).

There is general agreement that considerable effort will be needed to maintain and sustain the accomplishments that have been achieved (dePaolo, 1993).

Corporations have long expressed concern about the inadequate skills possessed by workforce entrants. This skills gap makes it difficult to compete in the global economy which demands the use of increasingly sophisticated technology. Three major trends – increasing competition, globalization and rapid technological change – have altered the way that work is done. Today's

In a 1995 speech by Louis Gerstner, the former CEO of IBM reminded the country's governors of a quote in A Nation at Risk:

"If an unfriendly foreign power had imposed our schools upon us, we would have regarded it as an act of war."

(US National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983)

businesses need employees who exhibit high performance, adaptability, and the ability to work in teams (Judy & D'Amico, 1997). If the job of education is not done when students are at school, the problems resulting from inferior education appear at the doorstep of companies which hire these workforce entrants.

Business leaders have warned the country that we may be raising a generation of Americans who are scientifically and technologically illiterate, which bodes poorly for the future of US companies (Caudron, 1996). Corporate America has spent billions of dollars to teach basic skills to workers. Corporate resources – money which could be invested in a number of different workplace initiatives – has been diverted to classes in reading, writing, spelling and math (US National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). It has been estimated that $52.2 billion was spent by employers in 1995 to educate and train 49.6 million employees (National Alliance of Business, 1996:1).

Compared to 158 other countries in the United Nations, US students rank only 49th in literacy.

(Crisis in American Education, 1991)

Given the current status of this country's educational system, there is widespread recognition that we need to maintain our focus on meaningful educational reform. A range of strategies designed to promote educational reform such as site-based management and academic standards have been implemented. We especially need to build on strategies which have been shown to produce results. Among the strategies which have been tried and tested, **parent involvement** has met with unparalleled success.

The Promise of Parent Involvement

Communities across the country have discovered that parent involvement is a key ingredient both for the academic achievement of individual children as well as the overall quality of educational systems. In one study which investigated reading comprehension levels in 4th grade classrooms, "Students with highly involved parents scored 44 points ahead of their peers whose parental involvement was low-even after adjustments were made for outside attributes, such as communities, classes and principals." (Binkley, 1996)

Three decades of research have demonstrated that academic achievement is greatly affected by parent involvement. This impact is sustained regardless of what grade the child is in, the socioeconomic status of the family or the highest educational level attained by the parents (Keith & Keith, 1993; Epstein, 1991a; Coleman, 1987; de Kanter, Ginsburg & Milne, 1987; Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Coleman et al., 1966).

As Henderson and Berla indicated in their review of 66 parent involvement articles, "The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to:

- Create a home environment that encourages learning.
- Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers.
- *Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.* (1995:1)

The authors concluded that when the above conditions are created, all children succeed in school. "When parents are involved in their children's education at home, their children do better in school. When parents are involved in school, their children go farther in school and the schools they go to become better." (1995:1) Henderson and Berla highlighted benefits for students, parents and families, schools and communities.

Benefits to Students

Some of the benefits of parent involvement for students include:

- Higher grades and test scores.
- Better attendance and more homework completed.
- Fewer placements in special education.
- More positive attitudes and behavior.
- Higher graduation rates.
- Greater enrollment in postsecondary education.

Benefits to Parents and Families

Families also reap the benefits, with parents who are involved in their children's education having more confidence in their children's schools. Other benefits include:

- Teachers have higher opinions of these parents.
- Teachers have higher expectations of their students.
- Parents have more confidence helping their children to learn.
- Parents have improved perceptions of their parenting skills.
- Parents who become involved in their children's education are more likely to commit to their own educational pursuits.

Benefits to Schools and Communities

Schools and communities benefit when they work with families. Outcomes such as the following can be attained:

- Improved teacher morale.
- Higher ratings of teachers by parents.
- More support from families.
- Higher student achievement.
- Better reputations in the community.

(Henderson & Berla, 1995).

Benefits to Businesses and Employers

Businesses view education as a bottom line concern, particularly as they find it increasingly difficult to hire competent employees. One way for businesses to support educational improvements is to encourage their employees to contribute their time to local schools. Since parent involvement is associated with improved student achievement, employers' support of school involvement will augment the skills of their future workforce. Furthermore, a recent survey found that 91% of parents reported that their effectiveness on the job improved when they were informed about their children's education (Educational Publishing Group, 1997).

"Given the importance of education to the caliber and competency of our future workforce, many employers have found ways to encourage involvement by their own employees in helping students learn."

(US Department of Education, 1995)

Over the past two decades, corporations have made significant contributions to educational reform with 140,000 thousand businesses and companies across the country forming partnerships with public schools. These partnerships are quite varied and include, to name a few, business-school partnerships, school-to-work programs and on-site schools. Programs that promote community volunteerism in the educational arena such as mentoring and literacy supports have been implemented. Through these initiatives, companies have offered considerable assistance to the community, but less emphasis has been placed on fully involving employees – particularly working parents – in educational reform activities.

Focusing on Working Parents

Unfortunately, it appears that many working parents have not benefited from efforts to increase parent involvement. Given the sheer size of the population of working parents who are potential resources for schools, this oversight is remarkable. Recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that over 34 million parents with children under the age of 18 years are in the labor force (US Bureau of the Census, March 1996).

In a recent study, the Families and Work Institute (1993) found:

- Only 53% of employed parents of children ages 5 to 18 regularly attend school activities and events.
- Only 36% of employed parents assist their children with their homework. Fifty percent of all parents of school-age children read their children's homework daily.
- Only 31% of employed parents meet with their child's teacher on a regular basis to discuss their child's school progress.

These research findings suggest that mobilizing the involvement of working parents could significantly enhance educational reform efforts by strengthening academic achievement.

The Need for a Collaborative Approach

Increasing the involvement of parents in their children's education – with particular attention to working parents – has the potential to make a huge impact on schools, businesses and families. However, the success of this strategy will depend largely on the ability of the three key stakeholder groups, who have the greatest investment in educational reform, to work together in a collaborative fashion.

To date, there have been limited efforts that encourage all three of these stakeholder groups to work together. In truth, collaboratives are never easy and require constant attention to building relationships that can be sustained over time.

The Center for Work and Family at Boston College identified three major barriers to parent involvement that arise due to a lack of coordination between the institutional policies of schools and employers:

1. Schedule incompatibilities between schools and workplaces.
2. Limited information about parent involvement and minimal support for working parents around school involvement from either workplaces or schools.
3. Conflicts (e.g., restricted time, etc.) experienced by parents trying to balance family and workplace responsibilities (Casey, 1994).

One of the challenges confronted by working parents is that the worlds of work, family and school tend to function as separate life spheres, with each engaged in distinct types of activities designed to achieve different goals. As a consequence, it is sometimes difficult to identify the "common ground" among corporate decision makers, educators, and parents although they are all interested in educational improvements. However, the development and implementation of policies and programs designed to promote the involvement of all parents – including working parents – will require that the groups interested in this important issue begin to dialogue and work together.

Increasing the involvement of working parents in their children's education can produce positive educational outcomes as well as provide the focus for collaborative approaches to educational change. **It is the contention of this paper that parent involvement may be the catalyst for getting representatives of these three stakeholder groups to work together to create educational improvements that can be sustained over time.**

Businesses are uniquely positioned to offer leadership for a collaborative approach to promoting parent involvement. Not only are companies highly motivated to drive this change, corporate decision makers have demonstrated that they have the needed leadership skills and the power to deliver. Bert Roberts has observed, "The business community has an unprecedented opportunity to shape the workforce that will lead us into the 21st century." (National Alliance of Business, December 1995-January 1996:2)

Paper Overview

This policy paper, which details the promise of parent involvement, is organized into five major sections. In addition, the **Employer Inventory for Action** and **Collaborative Strategies for Parent Involvement** are included in the pocket attached to the inside back cover.

Chapter I provides background information about the importance of parent involvement for students, parents and school systems.

Chapter II focuses on the significance of involving the three primary stakeholder groups in collaborative efforts to promote the involvement of working parents in their children's education: businesses, schools and families. A stakeholder analysis framework is used to identify some of the perspectives of these three groups.

Chapter III describes some of the innovative and successful steps that businesses, schools and parents have taken to promote parent involvement.

In Chapter IV, background information about the web of public education policies established at the federal, state, and community levels is presented. An overview of the impact which these policies have on the involvement of working parents in their children's education is offered.

The conclusions are included in Chapter V.

I. THE POWER OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Overview

There can be no doubt that the quality of schools – the commitment and skills of teachers, the robustness of curriculum, and the visions of educational leaders – has a significant impact on students' achievements and successes. But it is also clear that there are other factors that affect student achievement. Consider that in America, when children reach 18 years of age, they have spent just 9% of their lives in school (Motorola Corporation pamphlet). It is compelling to examine how the remaining 91% of their time contributes (directly and indirectly; positively and negatively) to their educational experiences.

Terry Ehrich, Hemmings Motor News in Bennington, VT reports, "Employees have been able to solve some of the problems about their children's schooling - as a result they have been better able to focus and perform their jobs when at work."

(National Report on Work and Family, 12/21/95: 190)

The supports which parents provide to their children's education have long been recognized as critical to academic achievement. Numerous studies have documented that families can make positive contributions to student success, regardless of their income status, educational level, or cultural background (Epstein, 1995). When care is taken to develop comprehensive, well-planned and long-lasting parent involvement efforts:

- Students stay in school longer and attain high scholastic success.
- Parents' sense of self-efficacy increases.
- The quality of schools improves.

Drawing on recent syntheses by Henderson and Berla (1995) and Epstein (1995), the following section provides a summary of the effects of parent involvement on students, parents and schools.

Effects on Students

Students' success at school is of utmost importance to most parents, educators and business leaders. Academic achievement can be measured by indicators such as:

- test scores,
- report card grades,
- quality of school work,
- attitudes about education,
- behaviors such as completion of homework assignments, and
- accomplishments such as promotion rates (Epstein, 1988).

Student Achievement

- High achievement among immigrant Asian children is strongly related to a home environment that supports learning (Caplan et al., 1992).
- Elementary school students in grades one to six, with parents and teachers who participated in a parent involvement program, gained .5 to .6 grade equivalents in reading comprehension compared to less involved students (Walberg, Bole & Waxman, 1980).

Reviews of empirical research provide documentation about the positive benefits which parent involvement has on children's learning (Swap, 1993; Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1990; Ziegler, 1987). These benefits were evident across grade levels and socio-economic backgrounds.

Almost 4,000 young people drop out of high school each day.

(Crisis in American Education, 1991)

Longitudinal studies have confirmed that there are positive outcomes for those children who attend pre-school programs that conduct home visits and/or involve parents in school activities. In comparison to other children, the former students of these pre-schools sustain higher achievement across age-levels including better attendance, lower drop-out rates, improved high school completion rates, and higher college and university admissions (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1992; Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Nationwide, the average drop-out rate is approximately 25% and close to 60% in some urban areas.

(Waddock, 1993)

Pre-school Programs

- Pre-school education programs increased children's scores on fourth-grade math and readiness tests as well as resulted in higher IQ scores 10-15 years later (Lazar & Darlington, 1978).
- Pre-school students ages 2-4, whose parents participated in family education activities, were found to have higher high school graduation rates at age 19 than a matched control group (Schweinhart & Weickart, 1992).

The investment in parent involvement during a child's early years reaps important benefits throughout a child's educational career.

Similar gains accrue when parents are involved at the elementary level. In three separate studies, students attending elementary schools with high levels of parent involvement had greater gains on reading and math tests than students at schools without parent involvement efforts (Comer & Haynes, 1992).

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

- Efforts to more actively involve parents of low-income students in elementary schools resulted in students achieving better reading scores (Armor, 1976).
- Elementary school students who participated with their parents in family math and science programs showed significant gains in math, reading and science compared to non-participating students (Beane, 1990).

Joyce Epstein (1982) surveyed fifth grade students and gathered information about their reactions to teacher practices which promoted parent involvement in the schools and parental help at home. She found that the implementation of parent involvement practices by teachers was related to levels of student motivation and positive school-related behaviors. In classrooms where teachers and parents demonstrated high levels of parent involvement, students reported:

1. They felt better about school.
2. They did their homework more regularly.
3. Their parents and teachers were more familiar with each other.

When combined with an enriched academic curriculum, parent involvement has been shown to have positive effects not only on students' achievement, but also on students' behavior and adjustment to school, their self-concept, and positive ratings of classroom climate. In one five-year study, students across four districts "...experienced significantly greater positive changes in attendance, classroom behavior and attitudes towards authority..." in comparison to students without high levels of parent involvement (Comer & Haynes, 1992: 4).

It would be well worth the effort of supporting parent involvement even if the beneficial outcomes were restricted to children's educational outcomes. However, part of the good news about parent involvement is that the circle of benefits expands to the students' parents and their schools.

"Students whose parents are aware of what their children are studying at school, who are in regular communication with their teachers, and who help to reinforce school work show higher achievement all the way through secondary school."

(Henderson & Berla, 1995: 151)

EFFECTS ON SCHOOLS

Parent involvement efforts can have an impact on the success of educational systems. Recent research provides welcome evidence that, "The presence of parents in the school not only brings new resources to the school, but can also transform the culture of the school." (Ziegler, 1987: 34) Several studies point to the benefits that parent involvement has on teaching practice. At schools where parents are more involved, teachers report feeling more positive about the schools and their teaching (Epstein & Dauber, 1988; Letich & Tangri, 1988).

There is some evidence that when parents become more involved in schools, parent-teacher interaction and trust can also improve. This is significant given students' reports that poor relationships between home and school act as a powerful disincentive to learning (Institute for

Educational Transformation, 1992). Evidence from school-based projects such as the *Schools Reaching Out Project and School and Family Connections Project* suggests that when engaged in substantive, on-going collaboration, parents and teachers can develop mutual understanding and appreciation for the skills and strengths which each brings to helping children (Burch & Palanki, 1994; Epstein & Tadros-Connors, 1994).

Effects on Parents

An emerging line of research has examined one of the unanticipated consequences of parent involvement efforts: schools' efforts to promote parent involvement have had positive impacts on parents' knowledge about school activities and teaching methodologies, their parenting skills, and parent-teacher interactions.

When parents are treated with respect and are provided with relevant information, parents' sense of empowerment and sense of competence about parenting increases (Burch, Palanki & Davies, 1995; Cochran & Henderson, 1986; Gordon, 1979). Parents report greater understanding of curricular objectives and increased knowledge of how to support their children's learning when teachers provide timely information that is relevant to the parents (Epstein, 1986, 1985). Parents who receive this type of information tend to rate the ability and quality of their children's teachers higher than those who do not (Epstein, 1986, 1985). One recent study found that parents in eight communities assumed new leadership for instructional and curricular improvements when they were given opportunities to meaningfully participate in school decision-making (Burch, Palanki & Davies, 1995).

According to the Department of Education, only half of parents who have children under the age of nine years read to them on a daily basis.

Recent surveys have found that as many as two-thirds of today's working parents report that they do not have the time to support their children's education by becoming involved in educational activities such as reading to children or assisting with homework.

(Kronholz, 1997)

So Why the Inertia?

Despite the overwhelming evidence that parent involvement can provide important benefits to students, schools, and parents themselves, the level of parent involvement is not overwhelmingly impressive (Swap, 1993, Davies et al., 1992).

- According to the Department of Education, only half of parents who have children under the age of nine years read to them on a daily basis (Kronholz, 1997).
- Recent surveys have found that as many as two-thirds of today's working parents report that they do not have the time to support their children's education by becoming involved in educational activities such as reading to children or assisting with homework (Kronholz, 1997).

Steinberg (1996) recently completed an eight year study of 20,000 teenagers and their families in nine varied American communities. He concluded that declines in students' academic success reflects uninvolved parents rather than poor curriculum or lack of discipline at schools. His data indicated that close to 30% of American parents are seriously disengaged from their adolescent's life, particularly from their educational experiences. Only one-fifth of parents consistently at-

tended school programs, while nearly one-third of students indicated that their parents had no idea how they were doing in school. Lastly, about one-sixth of all students stated that their parents did not care whether they earned good grades in school.

It is easy to blame parents for this state of affairs. Numerous assumptions are made about the causes of parents' behavior such as apathy and poor judgment, mistaken priorities, lack of education, or discomfort with teachers.

And yet, parents often encounter policies, practices, and attitudes at workplaces and at schools which discourage their participation. Anecdotal accounts suggest that working parents, in particular, often feel unwelcome at schools. The efforts of school districts to promote increased involvement of parents has often been lackluster and sporadic. Furthermore, there are indications that many parent involvement programs have not devoted sufficient attention to the needs of working parents. As a consequence, many programs designed to promote the increased involvement of parents have met with only modest success.

The key stakeholders interested in parent involvement as a strategy for improving education – families (including employed parents), educators, and business leaders – have not had many successful experiences working collaboratively to address these issues. The next section will provide a stakeholder analysis to better understand the factors which either facilitate or constrain efforts to promote the involvement of working parents in their children's education.

II. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

Overview

Given the potential benefits of promoting parent involvement, it is particularly disheartening that parent involvement has not yet become a major strategy for improving the educational experiences of our children. Despite the fact that practically everyone agrees about the promise of parent involvement, progress has been slow. Some of the "fits and starts" seem to have resulted from the fact that the words "parent involvement" have different meanings for different stakeholder groups.

Wagner (1994), at the Institute for Responsive Education, has observed that although members of the various stakeholder groups demonstrate significant commitment to improving education, they often have divergent views about what changes are needed and which strategies should be used to bring about improvements in our educational system. Furthermore, these different perceptions affect the roles and responsibilities assumed by the stakeholders and what they each see as the primary objectives of school reform efforts.

In order to fully realize the promise of parent involvement, a better understanding of stakeholders' perspectives about parent involvement is needed. Such an understanding will facilitate collaborative relationships between businesses, schools and families. Collaborations have the potential to address complex issues; however, without considerable dialogue and mutual goal setting with key stakeholders, they are difficult to establish and maintain.

Framework for a Stakeholder Analysis

A four-step analytic process will be used to examine the perspectives of the stakeholder groups interested in parent involvement.

Step 1: Identifying Motivators that Encourage the Interest of Stakeholders in Parent Involvement

Step 2: Identifying Barriers that Inhibit the Interest of Stakeholders in Parent Involvement

Step 3: Clarifying Goals and Objectives for Increased Parent Involvement

Step 4: Specifying Roles and Responsibilities for Creating Change

Businesses as Stakeholders

Corporations across the country have long-standing commitments to improve the quality of the American educational system. Since the early 80's, there has been a resurgence of interest in educational reform, with business leaders viewing themselves as major contributors in solving the educational crisis in America (US National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Business interest in educational improvements are propelled by their need for a skilled workforce – employees who can compete in today's economy and the future. Businesses are concerned that, in many instances, students who stay in school continue to perform far below grade level. These same students, in the near future, will comprise the next generation of workforce entrants. The National Alliance of Business framed the scope and scale of the educational crisis in our country:

> Large numbers of today's young people are unable to do well on tasks of even moderate complexity. Yet, these youth are the potential workers from whom the business community will choose its future workforce. As business needs rapidly increase for employees who can communicate their ideas, make on-the-spot decisions and respond intelligently to changing situations, the need for educational reform becomes obvious (National Alliance of Business, 1989: 1).

Nearly one-third (29%) of those students who do graduate from high school do not possess the skills required to function in today's workplace at basic entry level positions.

(Crisis in American Education, 1991)

To date, business support for school change has taken four primary forms:

- **Helping-Hand Relationships:** Businesses provide resources that schools could not provide on their own such as guest speakers for seminars and meetings; equipment, materials, and computers; employee volunteers; and grants to teachers for specific educational activities.
- **Programmatic Initiatives:** Businesses funnel resources to initiate changes in curricula and instructional practices and to enhance learning opportunities for students by establishing academies, mentoring programs, and career preparation programs.
- **Compacts and Collaborative Efforts:** This form of support encompasses a wide range of school-business and school-community activities which, in one way or another, are aimed at influencing district-wide school reforms.
- **Policy Changes:** Business leaders and organizations participate in the on-going debates and activities focused on the development of educational policy (e.g., higher educational standards) (Timpane & McNeil, 1991).

The ability of working parents and schools to join together can be strongly influenced by the decisions of business leaders. As Mickelson states, "Parents' and communities' capacities to positively influence their children's schooling are directly influenced by business practices and policies affecting familial and community income and quality of life." (Mickelson, 1996: 2)

"Myths" which exist at the workplace can result in some workplaces overlooking the importance of creating policies and supporting practices that increase the involvement of their parent employees in their children's education.

Myth at the Workplace: "Committed parents are less productive employees."

Contrary to popular stereotypes, research suggests that parents who balance issues of work and family are as productive as their non-parent colleagues. The findings of a recent study by the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School suggests that people who give their families top priority are as successful at work as those who do not. Based on a survey of over 5,000 men and women, the study reports that, "A stable, mature and happy family life may allow one more time and energy to devote to the workplace than does a family life fraught with problems." (National Report on Work and Family, 1995)

However, as Rhona Mahoney (1995) argues in Kidding Ourselves: Breadwinning, Babies and Bargaining, balancing issues can be particularly complicated for women, whose bargaining power for higher salaries may be handicapped by perceptions that their income is easier to forego than their mates. Mahoney's observations highlight the importance of examining the connections between workplace culture and policies, programs, and practices. Parents, whose family responsibilities prevent them from working long hours at the office or taking overtime, can easily be perceived as less-committed employees. For many, using flextime for family commitments is considered to be professionally risky. These challenges are compounded for single parents who report that their supervisors assume that complicated family circumstances mean that they are more distracted or less willing to get the job done in a quality fashion (Mulroy & Pitt-Catsouphes, 1994).

Myth at the Workplace: "Parenting and work should be kept separate."

Historically, employers have established clear boundaries between business concerns and the personal/family concerns of employees. In the past, the separation between the worlds of work and family had been seen as serving both workplace priorities and family privacy (Googins et al., 1995). In many workplaces, parenting is seen as something that employees do "after-hours." According to a Wall Street Journal report, top managers at one manufacturing company were dumbfounded when they discovered that concern for family happiness has led growing numbers of employees to turn down transfers that could groom them for advancement (Schellenbarger, July 12, 1995).

In fact, the boundaries between parenting and employment responsibilities are not so easily drawn. Each day, thousands of children call their parents at the workplace. In one survey, 61% of employees reported that child-related issues interfered with them working effectively (Mulroy & Pitt-Castouphes, 1994). Although employers may see family demands in the course of the work day as "exceptional circumstances," parents experience situations – such as arranging back-up child care or bringing a sick child to a medical appointment – as chronic challenges (Schellenbarger, June 28, 1995).

It has become increasingly clear that business and family concerns overlap. Parents who are worried about a sick child are not going to perform as well at work. Waiting for an 8 year old child to call to inform his working dad that he is home safely from school can be distracting from the work at hand. Studies indicate that when companies offer programs and services that make it easier for working parents to balance their family and work lives, employees may be more loyal and willing to go out of their way for the company (Lambert et al., 1993). Turnover and hiring costs can be reduced and productivity increases.

Businesses are clear stakeholders in educational reform efforts (Waddock, 1992). As such, many are attracted to strategies, such as promoting parent involvement, that can improve the capabilities of workforce entrants.

The following table highlights some of the key perspectives held by members of the business community.

TABLE 2:
PERSPECTIVES OF BUSINESS LEADERS

What might motivate businesses to promote the increased involvement of working parents in their children's education?	The importance of supporting educational reform is acknowledged by a wide range of firms across industries, and is not restricted to corporate America. **Businesses of all sizes are beginning to understand how an educated workforce contributes to their bottom line.** For example, • There is an inadequate supply of skilled workers, making global competition more difficult. • Employees do not possess the desired levels of competence needed for increasingly sophisticated work processes and technology. **Employees not only spend fewer years with a single employer than their counterparts a generation ago, but also often have more than one career.** It is estimated that temporary workers comprise 25% of today's workforce. In order for employees to be successful with these transitions, they need to be well-prepared and ready to learn the skills associated with emergent technologies and work processes. Companies want employees at all levels who: 1. can "hit the road running" when they begin new projects, 2. are highly trained, 3. have the skills to work in project teams, and 4. are prepared to anticipate and respond to rapid changes. **Parent involvement, which can result in higher student achievement, is a business strategy benefiting businesses, schools and families.**
What might inhibit businesses' interest in promoting increased involvement of working parents in their children's education?	Despite their commitment to quality education, business leaders are also concerned with day-to-day productivity. Time away from work, which would allow working parents to get more involved in their children's education, can be perceived as decreasing productivity. As a consequence, managers and supervisors may not support employees taking time-off for school involvement activities. **Managers need to understand the connection between an educated workforce and their businesses bottom line.** For instance, parents who are informed about their children's education, report that they perform better at work. Some companies have instituted company-wide training programs to facilitate supervisor understanding and support of various work-life issues, including parent involvement in schools. A few companies have begun to include "support of work-life issues" on performance reviews of managers. These initiatives could send a strong message that parent involvement is valued by the company.
What would businesses view as appropriate goals and objectives for the increased involvement of working parents?	**Businesses could facilitate the involvement of working parents in their children's education by instituting company-wide programs and policies to support these efforts.** Businesses could also coordinate their efforts with schools and encourage schools to offer opportunities for at least some of the participation of working parents to occur during non-work hours, such as evening meetings or early morning parent-teacher conferences.
What role might businesses want to play in promoting the involvement of working parents?	Businesses could contribute to new initiatives designed to increase the involvement of working parents by: 1. Taking a **leadership role** as a key stakeholder by coordinating collaborative efforts with schools and families. 2. Developing company sanctioned **policies and programs** which promote involvement of working parents. 3. Contributing **resources** – time, skills, materials and funding – necessary to initiate change processes.

School Specialty of Appleton, WI provides 24 hours of paid time-off for any employee to participate in a child's education and it matches gifts employees make to the public or private K-12 school of their choice.

Schools as Stakeholders

In order to understand the school perspective about the involvement of working parents in their children's education, it is important to gain a historical perspective on parent involvement. In the past, there was an implicit contract detailing the interface between parents and school systems. The contract expected the active participation of stay-at-home moms in school activities and events. In this arrangement, schools counted on parents to support teachers in classroom activities and to manage school functions and fundraising programs.

There are several fundamental problems with this contract.

- Changing family structures and employment patterns make old models of parent involvement obsolete. The image of the traditional family with the father as the sole income earner and mother as full-time homemaker no longer describes the typical American household (Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1990). In 1990, only one in every four children lived with both parents in a household where one parent was employed. Today, only 7.3% of all families with children under the age of 18 years have one "breadwinner" parent and one "home manager" parent (US Bureau of the Census, 1996). Approximately 46% of all families with children under the age of 18 are dual earner households (US Bureau of the Census, 1997). During 1993, more than 27% of children under 18 lived with one parent, compared to 12% in 1970. Among single parent families, who constitute 23% of all families with children under the age of 18, 72% are working parents (US Bureau of the Census, 1996). Burdened with the high costs of raising a family, 79% of single mothers with children between the ages of six and seventeen and 59% of those with children under the age of six are currently employed (US Department of Labor, 1991). As increasing numbers of mothers are in the workplace and less available to support teachers and schools, it is imperative that a new contract be constructed to engage working parents – mothers and fathers – more fully in their children's education.
- In the old contract, limited efforts were made to involve children's fathers in school-related activities. Fathers have long been an underutilized resource for parent involvement and have often felt somewhat disconnected from their children's educational experiences.
- The old model, which focused primarily on classroom volunteering and low scale fundraising, may have underutilized the contributions that parents can make to a wider range of school activities. As a group, today's parents have interests in activities such as governance, curriculum development, safety, and enrichment programs.

Adherence to the outdated contract between home and school has contributed to myths which have inhibited the participation of working parents in their children's education.

Myth at the Schools:
"Working parents are 'hard to reach' parents."

Traditionally, schools have interpreted parents' limited participation in school activities as evidence of their disinterest and lack of commitment to their children and to education. The parents who rarely attend an open-house, fail to respond to school correspondence or cancel parent-teacher conferences are labeled "hard to reach" (Heleen, 1990). The assumption is that they are less caring and committed to their children's education than parents who are active with minimal encouragement from schools. Identifying the problem as one of parental motivation, schools have focused their energies on educating parents about the importance of supporting their children's education. More often than not, strategies have been targeted towards parents of lower-income and educational levels (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Baker & Stevenson, 1986).

Recent research suggests that contrary to popular stereotypes, parents across educational levels and social classes want to become more involved in their children's education (Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1990). Rather than being uncaring, the so-called "hard to reach" parents are unable to take advantage of the opportunities that the school offers. The multiple demands of work and family coupled with limited resources prevent them from participating in their children's education (Davies et al., 1992). For example, mothers' employment outside of the home has been shown to have little effect on their level of interaction and attention to their children (Milne, 1988; Heyns, 1986). However, their professional responsibilities outside of the home may prevent them from attending parent-teacher conferences and other school events. In order to effectively reach working parents, schools and workplaces will need to work together to change their policies and practices so it will be easier for working parents to participate in a meaningful fashion.

Dakota State University employees can take up to 5 hours every 2 weeks to volunteer in public schools. Employees can adjust their schedules to incorporate volunteer time in school activities.

Myth at the Schools:
"Moms matter most."

Schools traditionally have operated on the assumption that mothers are (by nature and/or circumstance) children's primary caregivers. Traditional kinds of parent involvement strategies have been designed accordingly. Volunteer opportunities have been domestically oriented (e.g., bake sales, chaperoning, creating costumes for the school play). An individual who assists the teacher in the classroom is referred to as a "room mother." In these and other ways, schools have sent the signal that when it comes to parent involvement, moms matter most.

While women have been some of the most visible supporters of schools, as noted above, that pattern is likely to change. Families are increasingly diverse. Most American children spend a portion of their childhood growing up in families where the mother may not be the most available or significant adult in a child's life (Scott-Jones, 1986). The increasing prevalence of one-parent homes, reconstituted or joint-custody families as well as blended families is drawing attention to the important role that extended relatives, siblings and step-families play in children's development. Research suggests that when deliberate efforts are taken to engage the expertise and involvement of members of these non-nuclear families, children gain academically (Burch & Palanki, 1995; Nettles, 1993).

It is clear that policies, practices and attitudes at schools have a tremendous impact on the extent to which parents are involved in their children's education. The school stakeholder group includes educators such as superintendents and principals, teachers and administrators. Although they may have different priority areas under the umbrella of parent involvement, they are all focused on strategies to improve student achievement levels.

The following table highlights some of the key perspectives held by members of the school community.

TABLE 3:
PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOLS

What might motivate schools to promote the increased involvement of working parents in their children's education?	Educators are well aware that a range of indicators suggest that existing educational processes and experiences are not producing the desired academic outcomes. Furthermore, in many communities, public support for education is waning. **Educators understand that successful educational outcomes cannot be maximized unless students' families are allies in the educational process. Effective parent involvement strategies result in higher academic gains.**
What might inhibit the interest of schools in promoting the increased involvement of working parents in their children's education?	Although some educators realize that many benefits can be associated with increased parent participation, they rightfully recognize that it will take some work to involve parents (at least in the short run). And educators already feel beleaguered. The changing needs of students and their families have introduced difficult challenges to the educational process, ranging from the complex special needs of increasing proportions of children to families experiencing significant life transitions such as homelessness. In recent years, an increasing number of students enrolled in public schools have fled with their families from war and oppression present in their homelands. Most educators report that they are not prepared to handle many of these emergent needs.
	In some school systems, teachers have exhibited resistance to parent involvement. Most teachers have not been trained to work with families and consider their area of expertise to be their work with students. Additionally, developing creative ways to incorporate parents into the educational process requires considerable planning time. It is understandable that teachers are not anxious to add another layer of responsibility to their already considerable work load. However, superintendents and principals must commit to parent involvement and establish systems which make it easier for teachers to incorporate parents into their teaching strategies. Schools, as a whole, must demonstrate support for parent involvement and pay attention to the multiple ways that parents can contribute. In order for schools to become seriously engaged in promoting the involvement of parents, particularly working parents, **it will be necessary for educators to view parent involvement as a priority which is deserving of their time and attention. Training for parents and teachers may be needed to successfully create new relationships between schools and working parents.**
What would schools view as appropriate goals and objectives for the increased involvement of working parents?	Educators realize that they cannot accomplish educational reform by themselves. Although they want to be recognized for their expertise and leadership, most educators are aware that successful improvements in the educational system will require **the development of new types of relationships with parents as well as members of stakeholder groups committed to educational change**. Coordination between these various groups is needed to ensure that collaboration will be successful. Educators can assess staff responsibilities and systems to enhance the supports for effective parent involvement programs. Resources may need to be re-allocated to promote parent involvement efforts.
What role might schools want to play in promoting the involvement of working parents?	Most school personnel and teachers feel that **the enhancement of communication between school and home can help support parent involvement**. Innovations such as homework assignments on voice mail or access to a school web page have been tried by some school districts. School personnel want to be able to provide an environment which allows children to achieve a higher standard of learning. Many educational leaders have realized that **the school environment also needs to be "inviting" to parents** if schools want parents to participate and contribute to their children's educational experiences.

It is clear that new parent involvement models need to be developed which reflect the demographics of today's families. Attention must be paid to the significant number of women in the workforce who are no longer available to assist schools during the school day. Creative strategies for including working mothers and fathers in their children's education need to be conceived with the support of employers. Effort should also be directed at the various ways that parents can be involved with schools - as trainers, mentors, policy analysts - which go beyond the typical types of parent involvement.

Families as Stakeholders

Despite the structural changes which have transformed many families, there are strong indications that the majority of parents value education and are willing to help their children achieve their potential at school. The following box summarizes the issues discussed during focus group sessions with working parents which explored their perspectives on parent involvement issues.

Patagonia in Ventura, California allows five days off with pay for parents to attend their child's school.

The Voices of Working Parents

During the fall of 1995, the Boston College Center for Work & Family conducted focus groups with 22 parent employees (14 women and 8 men) at three work sites. They also completed a short survey. The workplaces included an insurance company, a publishing company and a manufacturing firm, all located in Massachusetts. Eighty-three percent of the participants worked full-time and 70% had a working spouse. The majority had children in elementary school.

Participants in the focus groups were asked the following questions.

- **How responsive are schools to the needs of working parents?**
- **How satisfied are you with your level of involvement at your child's school?**
- **What are schools doing (or what additional policies and programs could they implement) to encourage parent involvement?**
- **How does your workplace accommodate your ability to be involved in schools?**
- **What could your employer do to make it easier for you to be more involved?**

Generally, employees felt that schools could be more responsive to the needs of working parents. They noted, in particular, how difficult it is to make arrangements for their children on teacher in-service days and half-days when they were expected to be at work.

Although some parents observed that their schools made accommodations which allowed working parents to participate in school activities (e.g., evening parent-teacher conferences, early morning or evening assemblies, access by phone in the evenings), overall their impression was that schools were not aware of changing family demographics and the demands on today's families. Several parents also indicated that any accommodations made for working parents were usually initiated by individual teachers, rather than a school policy. This was problematic in that opportunities for involvement sometimes changed from year to year.

continued on next page

continuation of "The Voices of Working Parents"

The participants reported the following levels of overall satisfaction with their involvement in their children's school:

- slightly satisfied 27%
- moderately satisfied 55%
- greatly satisfied 18%

Despite the fact that three-quarters of the parents were either "moderately" or "greatly satisfied" with their level of involvement, these working parents wanted to participate more in their children's education and reported feeling "guilty" when they were unable to be available for school activities and functions. They described the difficult dilemma of having to choose between their work demands and the needs of their children.

Hemmings Motor News sponsors Education Participation Days where all employees - not just parents - are given two days off with pay to attend classes with children in local schools.

This is noteworthy since the three companies where the focus groups were conducted have flextime policies and are viewed as "family-friendly." Even with these policies, focus group participants reported that the work culture expects everyone to be at work between 9 AM and 5 PM. Participants noted that they might come in early, leave late, or make up the work at home; but they found it necessary to explain to their co-workers where they were, what they were doing, and how they were going to compensate for their time-off. Participants talked about the value of "face time" and how presence at work is more highly valued than performance.

The working parents who participated in the focus groups recommended that workplaces and schools more actively support parental involvement by adopting strategies such as:

1) **Conducting seminars designed to strengthen parents' involvement in their children's education.** These seminars, which could be held either at the workplace or at schools, could address a range of topics including:
   - how to help children with homework;
   - how to interact more effectively with teachers and school administrators;
   - how working parents can be more connected to children's school experiences, given the constraints of participation during school hours.

2) **Establishing workplace policies, which are endorsed by the CEO, that explicitly state that flextime and/or leaves for educational involvement are sanctioned and encouraged.**

3) **Establishing school policies which specify how schools will accommodate parents who are not available during the school day.**

4) **Encouraging schools and workplaces to work together to promote the involvement of working parents.** Policies, programs and practices which meet both needs of the schools and companies can be developed if businesses and educational leaders work in tandem.

Families have traditionally been viewed as principal stakeholders in quality education. Most parents want their children to receive a challenging educational experience that prepares them to successfully participate in the work world. Working parents are invested in creating new partnership models with schools which reflect the changing nature of today's families.

The following table highlights some of the key perspectives held by working families.

TABLE 4:
PERSPECTIVES OF WORKING FAMILIES

What might motivate working parents to increase their involvement in their children's schools?	Despite the fact that there is no consensus among parents about the key characteristics of a quality education, it is clear that **most parents want their children to receive the best education possible**. Furthermore, most parents would like to contribute in some way, not only to the education of their own child, but also to the improvement of their children's schools.
What might inhibit parents from becoming increasingly involved in their children's education?	The barriers to increased parent involvement reported most frequently by parents are: insufficient time, inadequate knowledge about what opportunities exist for involvement or how to best get involved; and/or a perceived lack of skills that might be of help to schools. One of the harsh realities faced by most working families is that there simply is not enough family time. According to a recent Gallop poll, parents spend an average of only twenty waking hours per week – less than three hours per day including weekends – in quality time with their families (*National Report on Work and Family*, June 23, 1995: 95). Many parents report that they want to become more involved in their children's education, but constraints associated with **limited time and schedule incompatibilities make it difficult for them to participate directly in many school activities**. Additionally, some parents report that they do not feel welcome by school personnel.
What would working parents view as appropriate goals and objectives for the increased involvement of working parents?	Parents would like some fundamental changes in how we think about parent involvement. 1. There are many ways that parents can support their children's education and the school. **Parents would like to feel that their different types of contributions – ranging from support for homework assignments to coordinating a survey – are valued.** Additionally, working parents want to be recognized for involvement activities that occur outside of the school day, such as reading at home or going to museums. 2. Access to teachers and to the school can be difficult for working parents. Despite the fact that increasing numbers of parents are at the workplace during the school day, schools continue to schedule meetings, conferences, and special events during school hours. Working parents would like schools to explore options that make it **easier for them to stay in touch with their children's teachers and make a contribution to their children's school**.
What role might working parents want to play in an effort designed to promote the involvement of working parents?	If new parent involvement strategies are going to engage working parents, it will be necessary for some working parents to participate in the planning and development of these innovative programs and practices. Parents will need to assume roles such as: • networking with other parents; • establishing relationships with school administrators and teachers; • creating effective communication strategies; • pilot testing and evaluating the effectiveness of new parent involvement strategies.

CAN THE STAKEHOLDERS COLLABORATE?

Schools, families, and businesses all can make important contributions to promote the involvement of working parents. In fact, some members of these stakeholder groups have indicated a

commitment to increasing parent involvement. However, a number of challenges remain that could interfere with the creation of working collaboratives that have the potential to change how working parents participate in their children's schools.

It would be easy for each stakeholder group to "blame" the lack of parent involvement on problems associated with the actions and decisions of another group. Businesses could blame schools for yet another failure (see Mickelson, 1996). Schools may blame parents for their lack of commitment. Parents may blame the workplace and the schools for making it virtually impossible for them to stay engaged in school activities and experiences.

The U S Army and the Killeen (Texas) School District incorporates parent/teacher conferences as part of military duty for all soldiers with children.

The first step toward collaborative action is to increase the dialogue among the stakeholder groups. Wagner (1994) observes that differences in the agendas of stakeholder groups are the greatest barrier to educational reform. He advocates that representatives of different stakeholder groups in each local community work together to determine what educational reform means to them (Wagner, 1995b; Wagner, 1995; Wagner, 1994). Wagner suggests that members of different stakeholder groups will be better able to identify common concerns and issues if they take the time to examine each other's perspectives. This process could also be used to find the "common ground" around the issue of parent involvement.

Finding Common Ground: Stakeholder Discussions

Using interviews and/or focus groups, persons committed to parent involvement initiatives can pose the following questions to the stakeholder groups.

1. What are some of the most important changes that have taken place in our society, and how do they affect our children?
2. What do our graduates now need to know and be able to do to be prepared for work, citizenship, life-long learning, and personal growth and health?
3. What do we see as our schools' strengths, needs and priorities for increased parent involvement?
4. What do we see as our families' strengths, needs and priorities for increased parent involvement?
5. What do we see as businesses' strengths, needs and priorities for increased parent involvement?
6. What might schools do to promote increased parent involvement? How might they reach out to specific groups of parents such as working parents?
7. What might businesses do to promote increased parent involvement, particularly of their own parent employees?

Adapted from: "Questions To Ask To Dialogue And Create A Shared Vision" in Wagner, H.A. (December, 1995).

SUMMARY

There is growing consensus that effective parent involvement efforts share three common characteristics; they must be well-planned, comprehensive and long-lasting (Henderson & Berla, 1995; Davies et al., 1992; Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1990).

- Well-planned parent involvement strategies coordinate the efforts of the different stakeholder groups. For example, school-based programs could be designed to compliment (not duplicate) existing activities and build on the resources of other stakeholder groups.
- A comprehensive approach implies that diverse strategies are developed which reach out and respond to the needs of different types of families, particularly working parents.
- Changes in policies and programs take time to develop and implement. Furthermore, the benefits of increased parent involvement may take years to become visible. Parent involvement programs that make a difference in children's lives need to be sustained over time. Consequently, representatives of the primary stakeholder groups need to make long-term, multi-year commitments to pursuing their objectives and evaluating progress.

Columbia Gas, Wilmington, NC allows its employee parents two hours of paid "release time" per semester for school conferences or classroom visits.

Parent involvement programs which embody these criteria have the greatest chance of achieving their most important goal – helping more students succeed. There is abundant evidence that leaders from the three primary stakeholder groups realize the importance of increased parent involvement. However, the challenges associated with increasing the involvement of working parents are also apparent.

As mentioned in the report of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education,

> Over 30 years of research findings show that greater family and adult involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high quality education. Small investments that enable employee participation in students' academic success, and in our education system, lead to a win/win for everyone (US Department of Education, 1994).

Individuals, groups and organizations interested in developing successful parent involvement programs can benefit from the experiences of others who have pioneered some innovative projects. The next chapter focuses on a few selected parent involvement projects which have adopted collaborative approaches to promoting parent involvement.

III. COLLABORATIVE PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Overview

In the past few years, there have been numerous initiatives designed to promote parent involvement in education. Schools, businesses, and families have started to work collaboratively to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education. These programs vary in their purposes as well as the strategies utilized to achieve their goals. Also, they reflect the unique priorities of communities across the country.

Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, Texas has a program designed to encourage businesses to support their own employees to get more involved in their own children's education.

Four programs have been selected to illustrate some of the progress which can be made when members of the stakeholder groups work to achieve a common goal: Learning Leadership Team Initiatives; Hand in Hand: Parents- Schools-Communities United for Kids; The Leadership Summit; and Investing in People.

Learning Leadership Team Initiatives – Motorola, Inc.

The Motorola Learning Leadership Team (LLT) Initiatives are, "...partnerships in which business, education and community leaders identify the need for change in the educational system and then work over the long term to make those major changes happen in the system." These initiatives create, "...a process that focuses on shared decision-making for continuous improvement and changes in curriculum, instruction and assessment."[1] LLTs provide tools that can be utilized to facilitate school improvement and develop on-going mechanisms to monitor continued progress and success in student performance. A strategic plan is developed with learning objectives that are measured to track outcomes over time. LLTs also share their learning with other school districts in a LLT network which enables LLTs to benefit from the success and problems of other LLTs.

LLT participants include: a member of the school board, the superintendent, principals and other administrators, teachers, support staff, university representatives, parents, business/ community leaders and constituent groups such as elders. Currently, there are over 50 LLTs across the country, with approximately 40 in Illinois, 8 in Massachusetts, 4 in Arizona and 1 in Rhode Island. Motorola anticipates that additional LLTs will develop.

The process of developing a LLT begins with an outreach effort to interested partners who are personally approached. Once committed participants are identified, customer focus groups are

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[1] From the Learning Leadership Team Process slides

conducted with all key stakeholders in the community. The teams are supported by a Motorola facilitator. A strategic plan is developed with learning objectives that are measured to track outcomes over time.

All LLTs work only at the district level, rather than with individual schools. It has been Motorola's experience that systemic change can only occur at the district level where the superintendent provides hands-on visionary leadership in conjunction with a supportive school committee.

Kenneth F. Edwards, Motorola's Manager, Client Learning Solutions has observed that some communities are motivated to change only if they perceive that there will, otherwise, be negative consequences. He has stated, "Districts only seem to be willing to change when there is the threat of disastrous consequences." For example, Mr. Edwards was familiar with one district where there was a "burning need for major change". The superintendent and the school board perceived that they might "go out of business" unless there were significant changes made.

Mr. Edwards reports that LLTs have experienced varied rates of success. One critical success factor appears to be the involvement of a visionary leader who is committed to making certain that the team continues to work toward its objectives. Additionally, this leader must be willing to hurdle the barriers that can exist at all levels of the school structure which might be exhibited by principals, teachers, parents and students.

In some districts, the effectiveness of the LLTs has been restricted when team members have tended to wait for Motorola to assume the leadership needed to take the next steps and to keep the momentum going. In the beginning, Motorola had hoped that the LLTs would develop a strong capacity to act as a catalyst for change, which would continue even as Motorola reduced its input. In those situations where Motorola needs to continue to expend resources as the LLT evolves (rather than reducing the intensity of Motorola's involvement), the relationship with the LLT can become burdensome for the company as well as for the Motorola facilitator.

MATTEL FOUNDATION

In 1995, the Mattel Foundation started Hand in Hand: Parents, Schools, and Communities United for Kids, which is a "...national initiative to build and strengthen partnerships to improve education for all children." (Ramirez, 1997) The Foundation has identified four priority areas:

1. Conduct a national survey which explores parent's perspectives on the roles and responsibilities associated with parent involvement programs.
2. Develop a national media campaign to increase awareness of the importance of parent involvement.
3. Encourage companies to offer flex-time or paid leave policies which allow working parents to participate in school activities during the day. **The Mattel Company has instituted a 16 hour per year paid leave program for educational involvement for its own employees.**
4. Participate in the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education.[2]

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[2] Described in Chapter IV

The major effort of Hand in Hand has been the establishment of collaboratives in 8 cities across the country: Birmingham, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland, San Antonio and Tampa. These cities were selected based on their interest in collaborating with parents, students, educators, businesses and community non-profits to implement practical activities and programs which promote parent involvement. Examples of these efforts include;

- New in-school parent Resource Centers,
- Planning workshops designed to help family members to improve parenting skills,
- Mini-grant proposal funding for classroom parent involvement activities,
- Family involvement policies that were submitted to the school board,
- Student participation in a range of activities such as committees and focus groups,
- Business sponsored parent and teacher recognition ceremonies, and
- Encouraging business colleagues to serve on school site advisory councils and planning efforts.

"Providing employees with release time to participate in activities at school is probably the most important contribution that businesses can make to expand the world of children."
(Ramirez, 1997)

To date, Hand in Hand programs have focused on parental/ family involvement, supporting teachers, student involvement and corporate and business involvement.

Each of the eight targeted cities participate in "Take Our Parents to School (TOPS) Week," an annual activity of Hand in Hand. The purpose of TOPS is to showcase the accomplishments of each unique city and detail how parents, children, educators and community members interact in new ways that promote parent involvement. Positive outcomes of the TOPS week include media coverage of positive community efforts in schools as well as the opportunity for groups that usually do not work together to affiliate on behalf of children and schools.

Sample "Take Our Parents to School Week" Activities

CITY	TOPS ACTIVITY
Birmingham	• Photographer and video crew recorded involvement of over 16,000 parents. • "Permission slips" that parents took to their employers to excuse their time-off from work.
Chicago	• Breakfast held to announce mini-grants for schools and non-profits. • Developed a data base of community contacts and system-wide activities that encourage parent and community involvement.
Los Angeles	• Sponsored the Parent Institute for Quality Education, an 8 week program that provided classes designed to help parents improve their relationships with educators and promote familiarity with teachers and schools. • Parent Resource Fairs • Career Days • Family-oriented workshops offered in science, math and the arts. • Speech contest held about "how parents help" (with achievement), with winners presenting to the community.
New York	• Parents and children interviewed one another about their school experiences. • Classroom workshops on "Curing the Homework Blues" which allowed parents, children and teachers to discuss respective roles and responsibilities for homework completion.
Philadelphia	• "Walk in your Child's Shoes' which invited parents to participate in their child's morning routine. • "Good Day Philadelphia" broadcasted live from a classroom to offer viewers the opportunity to see a typical school morning.
Portland (Oregon)	• Signing of a model Parent-Student-Teacher Covenant.
San Antonio	• San Antonio Spurs held a half-time program about Hand in Hand. • Newspaper ran a series on parent involvement. • Coffee meetings for dads and granddads. • Parent conferences and meetings with school leadership.
Tampa	• Grand celebration attended by parents, teachers, community and business members. • Recognized 4 businesses that demonstrated leadership in supporting families and schools.

The Leadership Summit – The Boston Compact

The Leadership Summit, sponsored by the Boston Compact in October 1996, was a local partnership of schools, businesses and community organizations that were working together to improve the quality of education and **to reach out to parents** and involve them in that effort.[3] The major purpose of the Summit was for Boston's education and community leaders to share their experiences around school reform and restructuring and to "sharpen a strategic vision for collaboration and achievement". The Summit participants spent a morning visiting with the principals or headmasters of 70 Boston schools. Business and community leaders were paired with a partner in the schools and discussed issues such as:

- How can we work together to ensure that your students are prepared for the future?
- What are your challenges in reaching out to parents? How can we assist you?
- What professional development opportunities do you need to support the learning standards?
- What are the next steps?

Principals and headmasters shared their leadership challenges and successes with business and community leaders and discussed ways to collaborate to promote school reform efforts. The Summit culminated with a panel discussion which was broadcast to every school in the area. Following the Summit, the Boston Public Schools received the announcement of a five-year, 10 million dollar matching grant from the Annenberg Foundation.

In 1990, UNUM implemented an Educational Initiative to demonstrate their commitment to schools in Maine. The initiative has two major components. First, UNUM employees can take up to one day off each year to participate in school-related activities such as parent teacher conferences, field trips or school programs.

"Education: Investing in People" – John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co.

John Hancock established its partnership with English High School in 1974, making it one of the oldest school-business partnerships in the city of Boston. Hancock employees have been involved with students as tutors and mentors as well as teaching conflict resolution skills and business skill development. In 1989, Hancock began offering the HOPE program (Hancock On Premises Education) which is a two year School-to-Work program. Students are screened for the program in their sophomore year of high school. In their junior year, students take business skills classes at Hancock two afternoons each week to learn financial services skills. These may include computer and typing skills, learning about insurance programs and monitoring a stock on the Stock Exchange. The program is designed to expose students to real life work issues and the challenges within the work environment. Students then work at Hancock as paid interns in the summer of their junior year and continue in part-time employment in their senior year. During their senior year, students continue to have access to skill-building workshops and seminars. Depending on their college plans, students can continue to work part-time or full-time at Hancock.

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[3] The Boston Compact, which has been in place since the 70s, is the framework in Boston for business-school partnerships. It is a promise, a collaborative agreement, a set of goals to improve the quality of education. The Compact strives to assure that Boston Public School students graduate from high school and are educationally prepared to meet the demands of higher education and business in a changing global economy.

In 1992, Hancock established partnerships with two elementary schools, the Lucy Stone School in Dorchester and the Samuel Mason School in Roxbury. The major focus of these two partnerships has been the development of quality improvement teams. The teams are led by a Hancock representatives and are composed of business partners, parents, teachers, principals and representative of higher education. The teams have each focused on projects which reflect the collective needs of the key stakeholders. At the Stone School, the major focus has been on technology while at the Mason School, the team has concentrated on how to best market the school to students, given the school choice program in Boston. Also at the Mason School, Hancock and the school collaboratively sought and received grant funding from the Society of Actuaries. The "Financial Wizards Program" teaches children to enjoy math at an early age. Although Hancock has contributed equipment and supplies as well as training for parents and teachers, these two elementary school partnerships emphasize the expertise and "brain power" that Hancock has to offer to the schools.

UNUM also encourages employees to volunteer in their school districts. In order to facilitate this activity, UNUM has developed an electronic bulletin board which details volunteer positions available in each school district and the name of a contact person. Although employees can not take paid leave to volunteer, it is possible to rearrange working hours to accommodate volunteer activities.

SUMMARY

It is evident that there are impressive efforts to promote collaborative parent involvement activities which are supported by the key stakeholders of businesses, schools and families. Different models with varying roles for the key stakeholders have been developed and implemented. Corporations, schools and families must consider their particular needs and priorities in order to determine the strategic approach which best meets the needs of their constituents.

IV. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC POLICY

Overview

Policies established at the federal, state, and community levels have influenced the extent to which the three primary stakeholder groups have begun to work together on parent involvement issues. As discussed by Waddock (1993), public policy decisions made by local, state and national decision makers establish some of the most fundamental opportunities and constraints for educational reform efforts. There is a long standing tradition in this country that education is an important – perhaps the most important – of all public trusts.

The complex structure of public policy decision making in the United States results in a mosaic of educational policies established at the federal, state, and community levels. Getting a clear picture about the current state of affairs is complicated even further, due to the fact that, there is significant variation in the educational policies which exist in different states and communities. Despite the challenges associated with summarizing educational public policy, it is important to consider how public policy issues shape efforts to promote parent involvement.

Waddock states, "Schools can be thought of as existing at the center of a complex spider's web of influence. Reaching outward from the center are the web's strands, which consist of such sectors of influence as educational policy makers, the economic system, teacher organizations, social service organizations, governmental agencies and value shapers. Each of these strands affects school performance from an increasing distance representing a series of nested levels – family, community, state, and national – the center of which is the school." (1993: 39) Efforts to increase the involvement of working parents will be successful only if we gain an understanding about this web of influence.

Federal Policy

On the national level, policies act as, "broad umbrellas of both ideology and action that influence activities at lower levels." (Waddock, 1993: 41) The federal government sets the stage and creates a context for efforts to bring about educational change. Federal policies establish the parameters and create the incentives (or barriers) for collaborative work.

The publication of A Nation at Risk (US National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was a catalyst for putting educational improvement on the national agenda. Many elected officials viewed the findings reported as a call to action. One response was the adoption of "Goals 2000: Educate America Act." Work began in 1989 when President Bush met with the nation's governors to develop goals which responded to critical educational concerns. Initially,

six goals were identified, with two more being added when "Goals 2000" was signed into law on March 31, 1994 by President Clinton. "Goals 2000" supports the development of voluntary state standards for student learning, provides incentives for local changes in curriculum and instruction, and encourages broad-based community involvement in education.

GOALS 2000: HIGHLIGHTS

Goals 2000 contains eight goals which focus on:

1) readiness to learn
2) increasing the high school graduation rate to at least 90%
3) demonstrated competencies over challenging subject matter
4) professional development
5) first in the world in science and math achievement
6) literacy
7) schools free of drugs, violence and guns as well as providing an environment conducive to learning
8) **promoting parental involvement.**

A recent report indicated that, as a whole, the US has made little progress in reaching these eight national education goals, although some states have made significant progress (Reichmann, 1996). The report suggested that considerable work is needed for these goals to be achieved by the year 2000.

It is important to note that representatives of two important stakeholder groups – public decision makers and corporate decision makers – were instrumental in the development and adoption of "Goals 2000." However, the voices of many key stakeholder groups, including educators and parents, were audible only by proxy.

In 1994, a major federal initiative was launched to support family involvement in education – the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education – spearheaded by Secretary Richard Riley at the US Department of Education. The Department of Education worked with civic groups, religious organizations, and business leaders to position family involvement in education high on the American agenda. The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education disseminated information about examples of model initiatives and provided technical assistance to communities and grassroots efforts to increase family involvement in education (US Department of Education, 1994). As of October 1997, approximately 3,800 organizations are part of this partnership.

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education was followed by another initiative, "America Goes Back to School: A Place for Families and the Community." As part of this second initiative, the Secretary encouraged all Americans to make a commitment to support

educational improvement and community involvement throughout the year. Secretary Riley was joined in this effort by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) a group of educational and community organizations that includes parents, principals, teacher and school board associations. NCPIE is dedicated to promoting the involvement of parents in their children's education and fostering relationships between home, school and community to improve education. NCPIE recognizes parents and schools as having important roles in family-school partnerships as communicators, supporters, learners, teachers, and participants in shared governance. Although workplaces were identified as important stakeholders, the emphasis of NCPIE is on family-school collaborations.

"Acknowledging that some headway had been made in education reform, President Clinton and business leaders urged greater progress and increased effort to ensure that America continues to be competitive in an international economy."

(US Department of Education, 1996: 3))

In December 1995, The Employer's Promise for Learning was established by Secretary Riley and national business leaders to encourage corporate involvement in children's learning. The Employer's Promise is a pledge that commits companies to establish family-friendly practices and partnerships that support the family's central role in children's learning. It encourages companies to "sign on" and establish workplace based family-friendly policies and programs that make it easier for employees to support schools. Employers who sign the promise identify a person in their company to drive these initiatives, encourage other firms to sign on and assist in the creation of similar programs. As of October 1997, 807 businesses and employers had signed the promise[4]. This initiative represents the first national effort which links three of the primary stakeholder groups – schools, families, and workplaces – in collaborative relationships designed to stimulate and support improvements in the educational system.

In March 1996, President Clinton, the nation's governors, business leaders and educational experts attended a National Education Summit to develop rigorous standards for the nation's schools. The summit resulted in a renewed commitment to the need for educational standards with new measures to determine student levels of achievement. This second summit was an update to the first summit held in 1989 when "Goals 2000" was developed. As stated in a Department of Education document, the summit was convened in an effort to continue the momentum toward education reform. As a result of the summit, the business sector made a commitment to improve public education, include a review of school transcripts in their hiring practices, and consider school quality and standards when making decisions about locations for new business. While recognizing that the summit helped continue the commitment of leaders to the urgency of educational reform efforts, there was some concern that important constituent groups (e.g., school personnel, parents) were not present and that the summit exclusively focused on academic standards as the priority for school reform.

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[4] 807 businesses includes 580 individual Hardee's Restaurants.

In 1997, educational reform continued to be a visible national policy priority. In fact, in his State of the Union Address, President Clinton emphasized the importance of continuing to raise our expectations for academic achievement and increasing our efforts to pursue educational excellence.

President Clinton has urged Congress to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act (1993) to allow parents to take time-off from work to deal with family obligations. Believing that the involvement of working parents is critical to students' academic success, the President is supporting the passage of legislation that would permit workers to take up to 24 hours of unpaid leave each year to attend parent-teacher conferences or take a child to dental or medical appointments. Although the bill failed in the House, it signals a national interest in supporting parents in their efforts to balance their work and family lives.

Policy makers at the federal level have drawn attention to the importance of creating collaborative initiatives which involve members of the key stakeholders groups – schools, families (including working parents), and workplaces – in educational improvement efforts. During this same time period, a number of interesting policy initiatives have been established at the state level.

"My number one priority for the next four years is to ensure that all Americans have the best education in the world. ...Tonight I issue a challenge to the Nation: Every state should adopt high national standards, and by 1999 every state should test every fourth grader in reading and every eighth grader in math to make sure these standards are met. ...This is my plan: a call to action for American education."

(President Clinton, 1997 State of the Union Address)

STATE POLICY

State policy makers have direct impact on the day-to-day functioning of schools through budget decisions, the adoption of educational standards, and accreditation policies. A number of states have passed laws and instituted innovative programs as way to stimulate improvements in education. Many educational reform policies have included provisions designed to encourage parental involvement in education, with a few recognizing that the workplace can play a critical role by facilitating the involvement of parent employees.

Increasingly, states are enacting legislation designed to increase parental involvement in the education process. State governments have adopted a variety of strategies to accomplish this goal including:

- requiring school districts to develop policies and programs to increase parent involvement,
- encouraging or directing employers to give their employees time-off to participate in school-related activities,
- encouraging parents to take a more active role in their children's education.

Below are some examples of state policies and programs which have the potential to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education.

Parent Involvement: Selected State Policies	
California	The California State Department of Education focused their efforts on state-wide training for school districts and their staffs. Parent involvement activities, programs, outreach strategies and policies were developed. State legislation prohibits employers who have at least 25 employees from firing or discriminating against an employee for taking up to 40 hours leave each school year (limited to 8 hours in any given calendar month) for participation in school-related activities.
Colorado	Businesses with more than 10 employees are encouraged to allow each employee at least 2 hours per school semester to attend parent-teacher conferences and other school-related activities.
Idaho	In 1992, the Governor recognized the importance of supporting family involvement in education. State employees may take 1 hour of paid administrative leave each week or 4 hours per month to volunteer in a school.
Minnesota	The state of Minnesota has passed a law which entitles working parents to 16 hours of unpaid leave.
North Carolina	North Carolina requires employers to grant four hours of unpaid leave per year to parents or guardians for parent involvement activities such as class visits, volunteer participation, and parent-teacher conferences.
Oklahoma	The state Board of Education is developing a program which will encourage private employers to give leave time to their employees so that they might attend one parent-teacher conference per semester.
Oregon	The state recommends that employers recognize the value of parents as well as community members participating in the education process by extending "appropriate" leave.
South Carolina	South Carolina emphasizes connecting schools and parents as soon as a child is born. The state distributes "birth packets" which offer parents information about developmental milestones and supporting their child's learning. South Carolina also conducted an "education day" in each region of the state where local leaders spoke about educational reform efforts. All state residents were invited to offer their perspectives on educational reform initiatives and a toll free hotline was available to make input possible for all residents.
Utah	Support is given to local districts to develop policies and programs that would facilitate greater employee participation in educational activities. The State Office of Education and the PTA offered seminars to parent volunteers who trained families within Utah about the Family Education Plan. This plan assists parents to create home environments that are supportive of education as well as to get involved in their children's education.

Community Policy

The structure of educational policy-making in this country assigns significant responsibilities to community leaders and administrators who determine not only curriculum content and teaching strategies, but also policies related to important issues such as:

- school hours and the school calendar
- governance processes such as site-based management
- educational innovations such as school-to-work-programs
- use of school buildings for community programs such as after-school care
- opportunities for establishing relationships with families, community groups, and businesses.

The capacities of school districts to pursue educational improvements varies dramatically from community to community. Cities and towns with strong tax bases typically devote more resources to their school systems and, consequently, are in better positions to consider innovative collaborative strategies such as site-based management, parent involvement programs, and business-school partnerships. Furthermore, moderate and upper income municipalities may be better able to support community-based programs such as after-school services which help working families to bridge the worlds of school, work and home. These types of supports are critical. One survey found that half (48%) of Americans believe that families need support from their local communities to help raise their children (US Department of Education, 1994: 23). Unfortunately, families residing in lower income communities may have access to more limited forms of support (Googins et al., 1995).

Policy makers in the community confront significant challenges. In order for their policies to be effective, they must stay up-to-date about how changes in family, workplace and community resources could affect strategies for educational reform such as parent involvement. Innovative community policies need to be designed that can facilitate community collaboration with schools.

Summary

Public policies have the potential to stimulate interest in promoting parent involvement. However, they can be successful only if businesses and schools work with parents to create new strategies for engaging working parents as well as parents who are at home during the day. Therefore, creating the conditions which support meaningful parent involvement requires extra effort on the part of schools and businesses and the people who work in them. The success of new strategies, which encourage working parents to become more involved with their children's education, will depend on the ability of schools and businesses to collaborate with working parents to develop new approaches. Although such collaborations are often difficult, the potential benefits of involving working parents make it worth the effort.

V. CONCLUSION

There is widespread awareness among business leaders about the importance of improving the educational system in our country. When they succeed, corporate efforts to promote parent involvement not only benefit students and schools, but organizational support can also position the company as a neighbor of choice and/or an employer of choice.

Growing numbers of businesses are discovering that opportunities exist for different company departments to work together in support of increased parent involvement. Many firms have developed community relations initiatives which support schools located in communities where they have a business presence. Human resources may be involved in employee development or volunteer programs. Work-family managers can create policies which make it easier for employees to balance their work and home lives. For parent employees, these work-family options may assist them to become more involved in their children's education. Training may offer educational experiences such as workshops or seminars that provide information about parent involvement to employees. When the activities of these different departments are coordinated, it becomes more likely that educational reform will be elevated from a programmatic to a strategic level.

The time is right for companies to take the next step and expand their educational reform efforts by increasing parent involvement. The leadership demonstrated by a few visible leaders in the corporate sector has shown that it is possible to increase the involvement of working parents in their children's education if schools, businesses and parent employees work together. If additional workplace supports were more widely available, it is likely that greater numbers of working parents would augment their participation in their children's education.

Employers can encourage employee involvement in educational activities by promoting and establishing programs and policies that facilitate participation in school activities. These may include "lunch-time flex" programs (or other flexible work arrangements) where employees might take time-off during the work day. Some companies have instituted paid leave policies which provide paid time-off for educational involvement. Part-time work and job sharing also may offer options that enable employees to get involved in educational reform efforts. These policies may be important not only for parent employees, but also for other employees (neighbors, grandparents) who are interested in educational reform efforts.

Support and flexibility need to be available to both management and non-management employees. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is often easier for managers to get involved in school-related activities. Non-management employees must be given the same opportunity to participate in their children's education. Increasing collaborative efforts with schools may facilitate the involvement of non-managers. For example in Newton, North Carolina, guidance counselors from the school system come to Ridgeview, Inc., a family owned hosiery company of 325 employees, to meet monthly with parents at the workplace about their children's school progress.

Counselors meet with parents for 15 minutes in company office space and employees are paid for their time.

Another important consideration when implementing employee involvement strategies is the impact of corporate culture on employee behavior. Unless policies and programs receive sanctions from the CEO and down the chain of command, they will be subject to the interpretation of individual supervisors and managers (Hammonds, 1997). A corporate culture must be created where it is acceptable to use these policies and programs or they will not impact employee involvement in education. Formal written policies can help to shape the culture and provide legitimacy for involvement activities. Some companies have begun to train managers on how to respond to employees' work-life needs. Others link manager's performance evaluations with reporting employees usage of company programs and benefits, which could promote use of work-family benefits. These type of incentives would send a strong message that employee involvement in education is valued by the company and considered a workplace priority.

"Family-friendly employers for learning have policies that allow time for employees and parents to get involved with schools; provide resources to employees and parents on how to become more involved in children's education and support programs in the community that promote family involvement in education."

(US Department of Education, 1995)

Many employees have expressed a desire to become involved in local schools or community projects, but find that work schedules and job responsibilities make this difficult or impossible. Corporations could work with schools to make it easier for employees to play a more active role in school reform efforts. Ultimately, corporate support of employee efforts would benefit business. When employees and parents have more time and energy to support children's learning, children will be more successful in school. Children who are more successful in school will provide corporations with a more educated workforce to employ.

Increasing the involvement of parents in their children's education is a critical business strategy which has the potential to enhance: student achievement, the experiences of parents, the functioning of school systems and the skills of the future workforce. Businesses are uniquely positioned to lead collaboratives which increase the involvement of working parents in their children's education. The key stakeholders need to be included and working together in order to ensure that progress is made. The importance of developing trust and mutual respect between partners can not be minimized nor can it be rushed. Equal attention must be paid to the program components as well as the process for achieving their actualization. Implementation and on-going activities will at times be a time intensive process. Difficulties will undoubtedly arise around how to best achieve mutual goals. In order for these programs to have lasting impact, attention must be directed to how they fit into the larger picture of educational reform activities. Businesses must make a long-term commitment to these endeavors. Rather than isolated instances of best practices, change requires systemic thinking and collaboration. Efforts to reduce the barriers between the primary stakeholders and to promote long lasting change are recommended.

If working parents are to participate in their children's educational experiences, it will be necessary for schools and businesses to collaborate with working families to design policies and programs which meet their needs. There are some exciting examples of business–school–family partnerships which have been developed over the past few years. However, much more can be done to increase the involvement of parents, particularly working parents, in their children's education.

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RESOURCES

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The mission of the Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (AllPIE) is to organize parents to make positive contributions to their children's education. AllPIE publishes a national newsletter, Options in Learning, which encourages parents to write in and share their experiences with their children's education.

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Nashville, TN 37203
(615)322-8080

The purpose of the Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education is to expand and improve parent involvement in the schools through teacher in-service and program development. The BPCPE periodically publishes a report entitled The Parent Involvement Report.

The Business Roundtable
1615 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-5610
(202)872-1260

The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers that examines public issues that affect the economy and develops positions that promote sound economic and social principles. The Business Roundtable's Education Initiative is a 10-year effort to improve education performance through comprehensive education reform strategies in all states.

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410)516-8800

The Center's mission is to conduct research, evaluations and policy analyses to produce new and useful knowledge about how families, schools and communities influence student motivation, learning, and development. Over 50 reports, guidebooks, classroom materials, videos, surveys, and other products by Center researchers are available from the Center's Publications Office. In 1995, the Center established the National Network of Partnership-2000 Schools which currently has 550 members. The Network assists schools to design, implement and maintain relationships with families, employers, school administrators, teachers and the community.

Committee for Economic Development
477 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212)688-2063

The Committee for Economic Development is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose trustees are national and business education leaders. The trustees conduct policy research in the areas of education, national and international economics, management of government, and urban development.

Family Education Company
Education Today
20 Park Plaza, Suite 1215
Boston, MA 02116
(617)542-6500, ext. 128
http://www.familyeducation.com

The mission of Education Today is to help parents support the education of their children, encourage parent involvement, and communicate the value of education in society. The Newsletter Education Today, published eight times a year by The Educational Publishing Group, Inc., is distributed by employers to their parent employees.

Hand in Hand
Institute for Educational Leadership
101 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016
(800)953-HAND
http://www.handinhand.org

Hand in Hand is a national campaign funded by the Mattel Foundation, which strengthens community partnerships focused on parental involvement. Hand in Hand is a nationally recognized education initiative and currently works with eight cities (Birmingham, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland, and Tampa).

HIPPY USA
220 E. 23rd St., Suite 300
New York, NY 10010
(212)532-7730
http://www.c3pg.com

HIPPY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters) is an early intervention program designed to support parents as a child's first and most influential teacher.

Home and School Institute
MegaSkills Education Center
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202)466-3633
http://www.megaskills.his.org

MegaSkills is a parent education program that trains individuals to run workshops for families. The workshops teach parents how to foster skills that positively influence school success.

The Institute for Responsive Education
Northeastern University
50 Nightingale Hall
Boston, MA 02115
(617)373-2595

The Institute for Responsive Education helps school districts explore issues and develop skills that enable them to realize their school improvement goals. A nonprofit research and development organization, the IRE promotes educational restructuring through family-school-community partnerships.

National Alliance of Business
Center for Excellence in Education
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202)289-2888
http://www.nab.com

The National Alliance of Business is a business-led, nonprofit organization dedicated to building a competitive American workforce by enhancing skills and knowledge of workers to meet the needs of business.

National Association of Partners in Education
901 N. Pitt Street Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703)836-4880

The National Association of Partners in Education sponsors the Ambassadors for Education program. This program, delivered in the form of a hands-on workshop, is designed to increase adult community members involvement in the schools.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
1201 16th Street, NW, Box 39
Washington, DC 20036
(202)822-8405
http://www.iel.org

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education is dedicated to the development and strengthening of family/school partnerships. By publishing information about existing programs, and by raising issues among professional educators, parents, and administrators, NCPIE encourages local school and community leaders to create strong partnerships for children's learning.

National PTA
330 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611-3690
(312)670-6782
http://www.pta.org

The National PTA is a volunteer association seeking to unite home, school and community in promoting the education, health and safety of children, youth and family.

Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.
10176 Corp. Square Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63132
(314)432-4330
http://www.patnc.org

Parents as Teachers is a home-school-community partnership program designed to support parents of children from birth to age 5 through home visits by parent educators, parent support groups and a referral network.

US Chamber of Commerce
Center for Workforce Preparation
1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062-2000
(202)463-5525
http://www.uschambers.com

The Center for Workforce Preparation was established in April 1990 as the US Chamber's nonprofit education and training affiliate. Its mission is to assist Chambers of Commerce and small businesses with local education and training programs.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Judi C. Casey is a Senior Research Associate at the Center for Work and Family at Boston College where she manages research and demonstration projects that focus on work-family issues. Her current research interests include parent involvement and employer responses to employees with disabilities. Prior to joining the Center, she directed research projects at Boston University that examined substance abuse problems at the workplace. She is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and received her MSW from the Boston University School of Social Work. She is a member of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA). She is the author of "Working Single Parents and the Schools: Project Highlights."

Patricia Ellen Burch is a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Policy at Stanford University. Her current work involves policy analysis of family-school-community partnerships and teacher professional development. Ms. Burch, who drafted the original version of this document, was a consultant to the Center during the summer of 1995.

WORK-FAMILY POLICY PAPERS

Policy papers addressing the following topics are currently available from the Center for Work and Family:

"Single Parents at the Workplace" (1994)
by Elizabeth Mulroy and Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes

"Strategic Responses: Corporate Involvement in Family and Community Issues" (1995)
by Bradley Googins, Robert Hudson, and Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes

"The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993: Analysis and Appraisal" (1995)
by Andrew Scharlach

"Contingent Work Arrangements in Family-Sensitive Corporations" (1995)
by Kathleen Christensen

"Work/Life and Diversity: Perspectives of Workplace Responses" (1996)
by Sharon Lobel

"European Perspectives of Work and Family Issues" (1997)
by Suzan Lewis

Center Brief

The Center for Work and Family at Boston College is a research organization devoted to the study of work and home-life issues. Through research, demonstration projects, corporate partnerships, and policy analysis, the Center works to promote corporate and community responsiveness to families.

WORK-FAMILY POLICY PAPERS

The Work-Family Policy Paper Series was designed to provide corporate decision makers with information about a range of social issues which are pertinent to companies' business concerns.

The goals for the Policy Paper Series are:

- To promote a greater understanding of the societal context of contemporary work-family challenges.
- To increase the dialogue between corporate decision makers, public policy makers and academicians.
- To identify innovative public, private and corporate strategies that have had positive impacts on work-family experiences.
- To articulate alternative response options available to employers.

The Center for Work & Family
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140 Commonwealth Avenue
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