SOME REASONS WHY SOME PARENTS DO NOT PARTICIPATE
OR BECOME INVOLVED IN
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

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A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
California State College, Hayward

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

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By
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May, 1972
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the support and assistance given me by my wife and the understanding of my two sons. I also wish to express thanks to Dr. George Bliss and Dr. Jon Peters for their counseling throughout the course of this study.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years parent involvement and participation in the schools have been given priorities by educators which are quite unlike the past. A multiplicity of problems within the schools and general changes within the society demands input from many instead of a select few.

Educators have come to the realization that they can no longer work and solve problems affecting large numbers of people in isolation. Therefore, extensive parent participation and involvement play an important part in arriving at solutions.

The recognition of this need has been given increasing attention and support at the local, state, and national levels of education, as demonstrated through such projects as the E. S. E. A. Title I program where guidelines outlining specific steps are to be taken in involving parents. These guidelines are implemented and augmented by funds allocated specifically for this purpose.

In light of the recognitions, concerns, efforts, and allocations of funds there still seems to be a low level of parent participation and involvement. Therefore, this study will address itself to some of the reasons for lack of participation and involvement by parents.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study was to determine some of the reasons why some parents do not participate in school activities.

It is hypothesized that:
1. Reasons for non-participation can be identified.
2. Specific reasons include:
   a. Transportation
   b. Illness
   c. Work
   d. Alienation by school
   e. Lack of interest
   f. Lack of baby sitters or inability to pay a baby sitter.
3. Causes for non-participation can also be identified.

DELIMITATION

Three schools were used in this study which are essentially in the same geographical location in Oakland, California. This study addresses itself only to parents who were identified by teachers in grades four, five, and six, principals, and by community teachers as non-participants during the school year 1971-1972.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Parent involvement: Parental participation in the classroom, attendance at school related meetings, chaperoning school activities, and services rendered for the school away from the school site.

Non-involvement: A total lack of participation on the part of a parent.

School activities: All activities which are related to the school in the interest of better educating children.

Community teacher: A certificated person who coordinates and implements programs within the school.

Parent advisory group: A group of parents whose function is to attempt to involve more parents in the school and its activities. It also acts as a liaison between the school and the community by exploring the school's program to the community and reporting the community's concerns to the school.

JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

Often statements regarding non-participating parents have been generalized with very little direct information upon which to substantiate its claims. This study was designed to make available some first hand information on reasons for non-involvement of parents.
Therefore, the findings should be of value to administrators, teachers, parent advisory groups, and community teachers who are involved or contemplating becoming involved in programs of positive involvement.

**SOURCES OF DATA**

A review of the educational literature was made to provide background and further clarify the problems presented.

Interviews with teachers, parents, and administrators were conducted to ascertain information relevant to non-involved parents. A structured interview was designed and field tested by three parents from each school's parent advisory group.

**METHODOLOGY**

A structured interview was developed and used to survey parents who were members of the parent advisory group. The structured interview was field tested with three parents from each school's parent advisory group. This activity permitted the writer to develop a usable instrument with which to interview parents.

Teachers from grades four through six were selected randomly in three schools to identify non-involved parents. The list of non-involved parents acquired from teachers was
examined by the community teachers and the principal to positively identify non-involved parents. Fifty parents were identified from each school. Out of the fifty identified, twenty-five from each school were randomly selected to be interviewed. All interviews were administered by the writer.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Parent involvement prior to the 1950's consisted primarily of organizations similar to the P. T. A. Most recent history has shown a considerable interest in developing more cogent ties between the parents and the school. To quote one professor, "No other issue on the urban scene is as strategic as that of citizen participation or community control."¹

Since so much of the literature concerning real parent involvement takes place after 1950, the following historical resume' of parent involvement will be focused on those years. However, it is well to note that as far back as 1537 the validity of parent involvement was noted. The following quotation is evidence of that fact.

Parents and teachers should not only be acquainted with each other....Parents and teachers should be familiarly linked together in amity and continual conference for their common charge, and each should trust in the judgment and personal good will of the other.²

Three hundred years later the first National Congress


of Mothers held its convention. This body is important for it was the forerunner of what is known today as the P. T. A., the single largest parent involvement group in America. While the P. T. A., for example, has an extremely large membership (twelve million) the overall political influence of the P. T. A. is considered minimal. Since P. T. A.'s have only a minor influence on citywide policies due to their parochial orientation to the local school, the P. T. A. has tended to become more social than political.

Koerner implies that the P. T. A. is not effective.

...that the American P. T. A. is rarely anything more than a coffee-and-cookies organization based on vague goodwill and gullibility. It is chiefly useful to the administration for raising money for special projects and persuading parents who are interested enough to attend meetings that the local schools are in the front ranks of American education.

Koerner also states that ninety-five per cent of parents do not get directly involved in public education anymore than they get involved in local government. He states two reasons as to why parents do not get involved.

1. They do not relish the possibility of quarrel or other unpleasantness.
2. They are intimidated by the mystique of the administrator's expert knowledge.

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4Ibid.
Koerner maintains that some parents may appear apathetic because they believe that they can have such little effect on school policy no matter how much they might complain.

Other authors seem to feel lack of parent involvement stems from a parent's own school experiences. Kearney illustrates this point by three examples.

1. A brilliant man who was also brilliant as a child remembers many of the things he knew when he was in the sixth grade. He does not remember, however, that his knowledge was exceptional, that few of his classmates or children of his time had an equal degree of academic competence.

2. A man with an unfortunate socioeconomic background and with certain personality handicaps had an unhappy school experience in a rigid, highly competitive school. He retains an emotional hostility toward schools and, particularly, toward female teachers.

3. A self-made woman who is very proud of her success attributes much of it to a rigidly prescribed and highly competitive school where she survived and became an "honor" graduate.5

Still others have another opinion as to why parents do not become involved. Lane goes so far as to say the "average parent dislikes going to school." He postulates that the reason for this reluctance to go to school is due to the fact that the parents feel unwelcome or are made to feel unwelcome.6


Richard F. Carter at Stanford University did a study of parent attitudes based on interviews with parents. Even with as little involvement as parents seem to have in local government and local schools, parents interviewed felt that the only voice they have in schools is at the polling place. In addition, parents felt that they had a lack of knowledge of basic educational problems.\(^7\)

In another study done by Cloward and others, middle-class parents tended to believe that schooling and hard work resulted in success, lower-income parents felt that success was largely related to "whom you know" or "luck." They went on to note that these same parents felt education could affect the lives of their children and participation gave control to some and none to non-participants.\(^8\)

So the question is what changes have taken place which have made parent involvement more meaningful? One of the ways attempts have been made to keep parents closer to the decision-making center has been the evolution of community-based programs. Many different community-based programs and groups have been instituted—some parent oriented and some not. Nonetheless, the community has come

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\(^7\)Kroener, op. cit., p. 147.

to regard the schools not as that untouchable ivory tower but rather as an instrument belonging to them which when used wisely can be a powerful asset to the goals they have for their children.

Parent involvement is necessary for Jamison notes that the attitudes which parents hold will influence the attitudes of their children. "However parents view education and the regard they have for it may well determine the place the child will hold and the success he will enjoy in his educational endeavors."  

In compensatory education programs, for example, improving school-community relations in a poverty area is a necessity. According to Dr. Wilson Riles, the schools have gained a better understanding of the educational needs of the children and the aspirations of their parents through the parent involvement programs of the compensatory education programs.  

Since the 1950's there have been many ways parents can become involved in schools. There are many reasons why this has evolved. One of the reasons was segregation or the attempt to integrate the schools. The parents of the

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segregated children were powerless, and they found that they were treated with the same contempt as their children with no way to change the school from within. After a ten year struggle in September, 1966, Black and Puerto Rican parents at P. S. 201 in Harlem raised a new demand: community control of schools. The powerless demanded power.¹¹

One of the aftermaths of the Watts riots in 1965 was a demand by the residents for greater community participation and influence in the educational process. Christopher Jencks made an observation in this regard:

So long as militant blacks believe they are the victims of a conspiracy to keep their children stupid—and therefore subservient—the political problem will remain insoluble. But if we encourage and assist black parents with such suspicions to set up their own schools, we may be able to avert disaster.¹²

Some of the residents of Watts offer a pre-riot description of educational problems,

1. Too often parents find themselves so busy and so involved in everything else that they give only little, if any, time and attention to their children. The child usually finds himself in a lonely world of his own, searching and reaching out for something, anything, to compensate for it. School and his studies usually are not his compensation.

2. Many parents pretend to be interested. These are the ones who take a passive part in their child's education. They tend to give encouragement by mild


¹²Ibid., p. 168.
conversation and are reluctant to do anything more, but some students need more than this. These parents take education too lightly.

3. Going from one extreme (statement #1) to another, there are those parents who are too harsh. By harsh we don't mean that too much emphasis is placed on education, but instead that the emphasis is in the wrong manner. If students, or anyone as far as this is concerned, are given the strong feeling that they are being forced to do something, some kind of a revolt is bound to take place. Family problems will probably result and it is likely that pretty soon the student will become discouraged and drop out of school.

4. In many cases broken homes or large families are factors that lead up to disinterest. There are many times when parents have so many children that they can't give the proper time to each. This is often the case when one will use the financial excuse in order to drop out of school.

5. The female populace of the high school dropouts usually drops out because of pregnancy. This also usually stems from uninterested parents who are too harsh. Uninterested parents usually have this attitude either because of their lack of educational attainment or because they just don't care. Others don't really realize the importance of receiving an education....

Parent advisory groups are still and yet another adjunct to parent involvement. These groups began with a movement with Conant in the 1940's. Even more recently guidelines established for parent advisory groups under the E. S. E. A. Title I projects delineates the methods by which parents may become involved, for example,

1. Request parents to assist in classroom one day a week.
2. Provide baby sitting and other services to allow parents to visit class and share their child's learning experiences.

13Ibid.
3. Meet with groups of parents in their homes.
4. Assign a teacher, community coordinator, or social worker to service and follow up needs of pupils and their parents.
5. Schedule pupil-parent activities to increase their mutual experiential backgrounds.
6. Utilize parents as resource persons for specific projects.
7. Encourage father-son and/or mother-daughter activities.
8. Provide special instructional classes for parents.¹⁴

Not only may parents become involved in the Title I projects, but they must. State guidelines require that at least half of the members of the local advisory committee be residents of the target area, with preference going to the parents of the children participating in the project.

The Master Plan Citizens Committee, a newly organized advisory group consists of a large number of people, some of whom are parents. This committee is comprised of interested individuals, parents, students, teachers, representatives of organizations, service, civic, and religious groups. The purpose of the groups is to examine the critical issues facing the school district reflecting the broad spectrum of views and interests of the community. There are six task force teams and parents may involved themselves in any one of these areas. At this date

(committee was established in 1971) it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the committee or the degree of parent involvement because it is still going through organizational growing pains, but it is one definite way parents in Oakland can become involved.

Teacher aides are another way parents have become involved. These positions can be paid or volunteer and their titles change commensurate with their remuneration. These people do not have to be parents of the children in the school, but many times they are. Their duties are non-instructional and are varied with everything from collecting milk money to telephoning parents about routine matters. Many times the untapped resources and talents of parents are utilized through their positions as teacher aides. Without a doubt this kind of a position brings parents to the school for total involvement in the education of their children, for they are actually immersed in the day-to-day programmatic experiences of their children. One author goes so far as to comment,

They are employing parents as aides, they are welcoming them as volunteers. Often these people have had little education themselves; all too often they are hostile to the school. Bringing them into the classroom has served to tighten school-community ties.15

In conclusion it seems that many parents do not become involved in schools because they want to avoid unpleasant quarrels or they are intimidated by the "expertise" of administrators. Others are not made to feel welcome when they do visit the schools; and some have retained vivid memories of their own unpleasant childhood experiences in school. Still others feel that they have no power perhaps because they feel so far removed from the decision-making process that they have little influence.
CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The instrument designed by the writer was administered individually in the form of a structured interview by checking the appropriate responses. This made the results more complete in addition to simplifying the tabulation. This was possible because the writer was able to get first hand information from individual parents.

The instrument was field tested by three parents from each school's parent advisory group. This permitted the writer to develop a usable instrument. Seventy-five parents were interviewed in their homes. Comments and statements were made by parents which were not included as part of the instrument which made it easier to clarify some of the responses that were recorded.

Item 1

Item 1 asked parents to indicate whether or not they visited the school this year. The data collected and shown in Table I indicates forty per cent of the parents visited the schools while sixty per cent did not.
TABLE I

NUMBER OF PARENTS INTERVIEWED INDICATING SCHOOL VISITATION AND NON-VISITATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Parents Interviewed</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>30 (40%)</td>
<td>45 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 1 a

Item 1 a asked parents to indicate reason(s) for not visiting the school. Table II will illustrate the number of parents indicating the various reasons for not visiting the schools.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF PARENTS INDICATING REASONS FOR NON-PARTICIPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Number*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Interest</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Baby Sitter or Ability To Pay Sitter</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages were not stated in Table II because some parents indicated more than one reason for not visiting the schools.
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In this section each reason for non-participation is summarized and the parents' responses to each item under the reason are tabulated. The items under each reason were not summarized individually but summarized as a group under each reason.

Item 1 a--Transportation

The data gathered in response to this statement were tabulated in Table III. Transportation affected only two persons interviewed. Even though they did not have cars or did not have a neighbor or a friend with a car in the immediate neighborhood, they were willing and could afford public transportation. However, the inconvenience of handling younger children on a public mode of transportation plus the restrictions after arrival at the school site seems to have made visiting the schools unfavorable.
TABLE III
TRANSPORTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a car?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you drive?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you afford public transportation?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you lived within walking distance to the school, would you become more involved in school activities?*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you unable to get a ride with your neighbor or friend to school activities?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If transportation were provided, would you attend school activities?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Answered only if applicable.
Item 1 a--Illness

Parents who were unable to participate in school activities because of illness seem to have been well informed about the various school activities and programs. However, the nature and the length of their illnesses have deprived them of actual participation in spite of their desire. Some parents indicated they would participate after regaining their health and some felt they would not participate even if restoration of their health was a certainty.
### TABLE IV

#### ILLNESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximately how long have you been ill?</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 year or longer</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your illness kept you from leaving the house?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since you have been incapacitated how were you informed about your children and the various activities at the school?</td>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher visit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you regain your health, do you feel you will participate in the activities of the school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 1a--Work

Work seems to be a major factor for a lack of parent participation in school activities. They feel that most school activities are held during hours when they are at work. Most parents within this group feel that they are not able to take time off work due to financial reasons. Furthermore, they feel that most school and school related activities are held during hours which are inconvenient for them.

**TABLE V**

**WORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you find that most school programs are held during your busiest hours of the day?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you can afford to take time off from work to visit the school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which time of day is most convenient for you to visit the school?</td>
<td>A. M.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. M.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding your children, which of the following take the most of your time?</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 1 a—Alienation

Parents responding to this reason seem to have had unfavorable experiences with schools in the past. Even though most indicated having had a pleasant elementary school experience, the consensus seems to be that teachers do not treat their children fairly in addition to the feeling that teachers and administrators were not friendly toward them.

TABLE VI
ALIENATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When you visited the school in the past, what kind of reception did you receive?</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following best describes your own school experience at the elementary level?</td>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pleasant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel the teachers and/or administrators are friendly toward you?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you had a serious misunderstanding with the principal or a teacher this year?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that the teachers treat your children fairly?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 1 a—Lack of Interest

The data indicate that these parents feel that the schools are doing a good job of educating their children. The feeling seems to be the schools can do the job without parents' participation. In the words of one parent, "Parents can do no good at school; they should let those who are paid do the job."

The feeling seems to also be slanted toward school being for children and teachers—not parents.

TABLE VII
LACK OF INTEREST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the school is doing a good job of educating your child?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see the school as an interesting place to visit?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that club and church organizations, not related to the school, take up more of your time?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel your children are generally interested in school?</td>
<td>Generally</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that the various activities of the school are valuable to parents and to children?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 1 a--Babysitting

The data shows that parents under this item would not necessarily participate in school activities even if babysitters were provided. Apart from a seeming reluctance of having persons unknown to them to care for their children, there seems to have been a lack of interest in school participation or a desire to do other things during the prime hours of school which would minimize participation.

TABLE VIII
BABYSITTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you know that baby sitting services were provided in the parent room?*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a baby sitter were provided, would you attend the school's activities?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you will become involved in the school after the children become more independent?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a responsible individual outside or within your home who might baby sit for you while attending school activities?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Answered only if applicable.
Item 1 a--Others

The data were collected as "others" because it was designed to cover information not included in the structured interview.

TABLE IX

OTHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 1 b--Part II

The data collected under part II is in response to parents who indicated that they attended school activities. Question one will be discussed separately while the remainder of the questions under part II will be tallied and summarized as a group.

Most parents who indicated attendance at the various school activities did not appear to be highly involved with any program or activities. Their participation consisted mainly of observations, coming in to solve disciplinary problems, requested teacher conferences, voluntary attendance at special meetings, and unannounced classroom visits. The
number of parents who visited the schools for various activities are listed in table X.

**TABLE X**

NUMBER OF PARENTS IN ATTENDANCE AT VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Program</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Visit</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. T. A.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Conference</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to Parent Room</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Meeting for Parents and Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there appeared to be a low level of participation, most parents expressed a positive attitude toward the schools in addition to the quality of education their children were receiving.

Table XI gives a summary of responses to interview items two through ten.
### TABLE XI

**PARENTAL RESPONSE TO SCHOOL VISITATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who invited you to school?</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Just visited</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About how many times have you visited the school this year?</td>
<td>1-3 times</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-6 times</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 or more</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While visiting the school, what kind of reception did you receive?</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel the school is doing a good job educating your children?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you enjoy visiting the school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel parents are also responsible for educating their children or is it the total responsibility of the school?</td>
<td>School only</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you can afford to take time off work at least three times a year to visit the school or to participate in its activities?</td>
<td>Can</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cannot</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not work</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding your children, which of the following take up the most of your time?</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have younger children kept you from participating and/or visiting the school this year?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE XI (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you find that the majority of the teachers and the principal are friendly at _____ name school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data collected in part III was intended to elicit general information. The results seem to indicate that overall most parents interviewed do not seem to be aware of what is going on in the schools. The desire and interest in becoming members of parent groups appear to be lacking. Even though parents seem not to be interested in membership in parent groups, the majority feeling of parents is one that the schools are doing a good job of educating their children.
### TABLE XII

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you often help your children with their school work?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel that your children's academic progress would improve if you participated in the school's activities?*</td>
<td>Would improve</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not improve</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little improvement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No difference</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following organizations have you paid membership dues this year?</td>
<td>P. T. A.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dad's Club</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you heard of the parent involvement program at name school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a community teacher or teacher assistant employed at school. Have you ever talked to the community teacher or teacher assistant?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you know that there is a parent advisory group at name school?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of the Master Plan Citizens Committee for Oakland Public Schools?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE XII (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel the school is doing a good job of educating your children?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything you would like to say about the schools?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Answered only if applicable.*
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine some of the reasons why some parents do not participate in school activities. It was hypothesized that:

1. Reasons for non-participation can be identified.
2. Specific reasons include:
   a. transportation
   b. illness
   c. work
   d. alienation
   e. lack of interest
   f. lack of baby-sitters or inability to pay a sitter.
3. Causes for non-participation can also be identified.

Review of the Study

To test the hypothesis a review of the literature was made to provide a background and further clarify the problems presented. Interviews were conducted with teachers, administrators, and parents to gain information which was pertinent to non-involved parents. Next, a structured interview was developed and field tested by three parents from each school’s parent advisory group. Subsequently, a usable structured interview was developed to be used in interviewing the seventy-five parents in the study.

Three teachers, one each from grades four through six, were selected randomly in three schools to help
identify non-involved parents of students they taught. The list of non-involved parents acquired from the teachers was then examined by the community teachers and the principals for positive identification of non-involved parents. Fifty parents were identified from each school. Twenty-five of the fifty parents from each school were randomly selected to be interviewed by the writer. The hypotheses of the study were supported by the results of the interview. The facts which are presented below are offered to justify and clarify the responses to the interview and the general comments made.

The responses to the interview revealed that all of the parents interviewed were affected by one or more reasons listed. However, work and illness dominated the reasons for non-participation. Other reasons in order of their decreasing importance are: Baby sitting, alienation, lack of interest, others, and transportation.

Work accounted for the largest number of parents not attending a school activity. Many parents work during the hours of the day that most school activities are held and cannot afford to take time away from work. Some of these same parents have more than one job which makes it practically impossible for participation in school activities. In some situations mothers were the only providers, and consequently did not have time or flexibility
for participation as those homes where both parents were present.

Even though illness played a definite role as to why some parents said they did not participate, some of them seem to feel that if their health is restored, they would probably still not participate.

Baby sitting may not be as acute a problem as presented if parents were to exhaust all means at their disposal. There seems to be a reluctance to have persons unknown to them care for their children.

Alienation, as an indicated cause, may in some cases be because some parents in the past have had unpleasant experiences with school personnel in addition to the feeling that their children are not always treated fairly. In spite of past experiences most feel that the current administrations and faculties are friendly toward them.

Most parents indicating a lack of interest seem to agree that the schools are doing a good job of educating their children, but the expressed feeling seems to be that the schools are not the most interesting place or exciting place to visit. Some of these same parents feel that there are enough people in the schools already, therefore, there is no need for them to get involved. Incidentally, some parents who live near the school have not been to any
activities of the school this year. It was expressed that in the past and in some instances the present, the schools did not and are not providing vehicles by which parents who were turned off became interested in the affairs of educating their children.

The section of the instrument which dealt with "others" revealed that persons who were listed as parents were not the parents but grandparents who were of the age that did not permit participation. It was also revealed that parents who did not establish residency for any length of time were not inclined to participate in the activities of the school.

Some parents did not participate in certain school activities for the following stated reasons:

1. Children did not deliver memos.
2. Memos were sent out too late not allowing parents time to make necessary preparation to attend.
3. Parents did not read the memos thereby informing themselves.
4. Some parents could not read the information.
5. Children were not informed as to what the memo contained, which meant if the memos were lost, the children could not inform their parents of its content.

Some parents who were initially identified as non-participants had become participants during the interval of identification and the time of the interview. However, the frequency of their attendance at the various activities indicated were minimal. Their participation seemed to be of a low level.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the writer offers the following recommendations as a means of getting more parent participation.

1. Parents who are incapacitated or ill should be provided with other means of information regarding school activities.

2. More activities or programs which necessitate parent participation with children should be considered during hours convenient to working parents.

3. Broader radio and television coverage should be utilized in an effort to regain the interest of parents in addition to dissemination of information.

4. Definite activities should be planned by the schools for parents in an effort to more effectively involve them.

5. Broader emphasis should be placed on teachers and administrators going into parent's homes instead of always trying to get parents into the school.

6. Alienated parents should be encouraged and given the opportunity to work in some of the school's salaried positions for parents.
I. Introduction

1. Have you visited the school this year?
   Yes____   No____

1.a. If no: Could you tell me why you have not visited?

   Transportation ___
   Illness ___
   Work ___
   Alienation ___
   Lack of interest ___
   Baby sitter ___

1.b. If yes: See page 3, part II

Answer section/sections which pertains to answer given for question 1.a.

Transportation

1. Do you have a car?
   Yes____   No____

2. Do you drive?
   Yes____   No____

3. Can you afford public transportation?
   Yes____   No____

4. If you lived within walking distance to the school, would you become more involved in school activities? (ANSWER ONLY IF APPLICABLE)
   Yes____   No____

5. Are you unable to get a ride with your neighbor or friend to school activities?
   Yes____   No____
6. If transportation were provided, would you attend school activities?

   Yes___     No___

Illness

1. Approximately how long have you been ill?

   3 months _____  6 months _____  9 months _____  1 year or longer_____

2. Has your illness kept you from leaving the house?

   Yes___     No___

3. Since you have been incapacitated, how were you informed about your children and the various activities at the school?

   Memo _____  Phone _____  Teacher visit _____  Neighbor _____  Others _____

4. When you regain your health, do you feel you will participate in the activities of the school?

   Yes___     No___

Work

1. Do you find that most school programs are held during your busiest hours of the day?

   Yes___     No___

2. Do you feel you can afford to take time off from work to visit the school?

   Yes___     No___
3. Which time of the day is most convenient for you to visit the school?

A. M. _____   P. M. _____

4. Excluding your children, which of the following take the most of your time?

Work _____
Social _____
Housekeeping _____

Alienation

1. When you visited the school in the past, what kind of reception did you receive?

Warm _____
Cold _____
Mixed _____
Indifferent _____

2. Which of the following best describes your own school experience at the elementary level?

Frustrating _____
Pleasant _____
Failure _____
Other _____

3. Do you feel the teachers and/or administrators are friendly toward you?

Yes _____   No _____

4. Have you had a serious misunderstanding with the principal or a teacher this year?

Yes _____   No _____

5. Do you feel that the teachers treat your children fairly?

Yes _____   No _____
Lack of Interest

1. Do you think the school is doing a good job of educating your child?
   Yes____ No____

2. Do you see the school as an interesting place to visit?
   Yes____ No____

3. Do you feel that club and church organizations, not related to the school, take up more of your time?
   Yes____ No____

4. Do you feel your children are generally interested in school?
   Generally____ Not interested____ Don't know____

5. Do you feel that the various activities of the school are valuable to parents and to children?
   Yes____ No____

6. Others

Baby Sitter

1. Did you know that baby sitting services were provided in the parent room? (ANSWER ONLY IF APPLICABLE)
   Yes____ No____

2. If a baby sitter were provided, would you attend the school's activities?
   Yes____ No____

3. Do you feel you will become involved in school after the children become more independent?
   Yes____ No____
4. Is there a responsible individual outside or within your home who might baby sit for you while attending school activities?
   Yes ____  No ____

II. Yes to 1.b.

1. What activities or program did you attend?

2. Who invited you to school?
   Child ____
   Teacher ____
   Principal ____
   Just visited ____

3. About how many times have you visited the school this year?
   1-3 times ____
   4-6 times ____
   7 or more ____

4. While visiting the school, what kind of reception did you receive?
   Warm ____
   Cold ____
   Mixed ____
   Indifferent ____

5. Do you feel the school is doing a good job educating your children?
   Yes ____  No ____

6. Do you enjoy visiting the school?
   Yes ____  No ____
7. Do you feel parents are also responsible for educating their children or is it the total responsibility of the school? 

School only___  Both___

8. Do you feel you can afford to take time off work at least three times a year to visit the school or participate in its activities? 

Can ___  Cannot ___  Does not work___

9. Excluding your children, which of the following take up the most of your time? 

Work ___  Social ___  Housekeeping___

10. Have younger children kept you from participating and/or visiting the school this year? 

Yes____  No___

11. Do you find that the majority of the teachers and the principal are friendly at __________________ name school? 

Yes____  No___

III. General Information

1. Do you often help your children with their school work? 

Yes____  No___

2. (Answer only if question 1.a. is No): Do you feel that your children's academic progress would improve if you participated in the school's activities? 

Would improve ___  Not improve ___  Little improvement ___  No difference ___
3. Which of the following organizations have you paid membership dues this year?

   P. T. A. ____
   Dad's Club ____
   None ____

4. Have you heard of the parent involvement program at ____________school?

   name

   Yes ____       No ____

5. There is a community teacher or teacher assistant employed at ____________school. Have you ever talked to the community teacher or teacher assistant?

   name

   Yes ____       No ____

6. Did you know that there is a parent advisory group at ____________school?

   name

   Yes ____       No ____

7. Are you aware of the Master Plan Citizens Committee for the Oakland Public Schools?

   Yes ____       No ____

8. Do you feel the school is doing a good job of educating your children?

   Yes ____       No ____

9. Is there anything you would like to say about the schools?

   Yes ____       No ____

   (If yes, utilize the following lines)__________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________
BIBLIOGRAPHY


