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

Melissa J. Marschall[1] and Paru R. Shah[2]

Abstract

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

Keywords

parent involvement, segregation, school policy, inequality, racial/ethnic context of schooling

[1]Rice University, Houston, TX, USA
[2]University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, USA

Corresponding Author:
Melissa J. Marschall, Rice University, 6100 Main Street, Houston, TX 77005, USA.
Email: marschal@rice.edu

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Inequality in educational outcomes for Black and Latino students remain substantial despite increasing gains in civil and political rights over the past 50 years and concerted efforts among school officials, policy makers, and the federal government to rectify this state of affairs. For example, the average Black–White achievement gap in reading and math has shrunk by only four and roughly nine percentage points, respectively, since 1992, whereas the Latino–White achievement gap has remained virtually unchanged for the past 15 years. Despite narrowing the gap, however, African American students continue to score lower than Latino students on standardized tests in both reading and math. At the same time, Latino students have the highest status dropout rate, with 18% of those aged 16 to 24 years not enrolled in school or without a high school credential, versus 11% for African Americans and 6% for non-Hispanic Whites (Aud et al., 2011).

Within education circles, this achievement gap is increasingly referred to as the biggest civil rights issue of this generation (Dillon, 2009; Fishman-Lipsey, 2012; Paige & Witty, 2010).[1] Although the link between parents' racial and socioeconomic backgrounds and the schooling outcomes of their children is one of the strongest and most enduring findings in the sociology of education literature (Fan & Chen, 2001; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996), the belief that minority students are lagging behind at least in part because their parents are not (or cannot be) there for them in the same ways as parents of students who are achieving at higher levels is also having a resurgence, particularly in the Black community.[2]

From blogs and articles arguing that the achievement gap is symptomatic of a larger social gap that is defined not simply by race, ethnicity, and class, but by familial support and involvement (Welch, 2009), to speeches by President Obama asserting that the "responsibility for our children's education must begin at home" (The White House, 2009), parent involvement and the need to increase and improve it among low-income or minority parents has gained prominence as a critical component of addressing the achievement gap. More recently, scholarship has called into question the "one-size fits all" model of parent involvement policies, which may marginalize working class, urban, and minority parents (Boutte & Johnson, 2014; Robinson & Harris, 2014).

All of this attention to parent involvement comes as no surprise to education scholars, who have built a large body of evidence documenting the link between parent involvement, effective schools, and student achievement (Jeynes, 2003, 2014). For example, Lee and Bowen (2006) argue that addressing the achievement gap must involve recognizing common values among parents and schools and changes in the ways in which opportunities and resources for parent involvement at school and at home are made available to all parents. Despite agreement among policy makers, practitioners, and researchers about the value

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of family involvement, increasing and improving this involvement remains illusive.[3] Schools continue to struggle with designing and implementing strong family involvement programs that link to student success (Sheldon, 2005), and research identifying what does and does not work remains insufficient.

The present study addresses these gaps by looking explicitly at what schools are doing to foster parent engagement in their children's schooling and education and what if any difference these programs make in parents' behaviors. In particular, we investigate two questions: First, to what extent do parental attributes, expectations, and perceptions account for the variability in the participation gap? And second, what, if any, role do schools play in either widening or narrowing this participation gap? Building on work by Sheldon (2005) and Marschall, Shah, and Donato (2012), we develop and test a model that simultaneously considers the determinants and outcomes of school-based parent involvement policies. However, we test this model in racially segregated schools (White, African American, or Latino) to investigate both the extent and determinants of the purported parent involvement gap. This focus allows us to examine whether and how predominantly White versus predominately Black or Latino schools vary in terms of the opportunities, incentives, and expectations they provide to parents and the level and form of parental participation in their children's schooling and education.

Our empirical analysis relies on two waves (1999-2000 and 2003-2004) of the National Center for Education Statistics's (NCES) Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), which are administered every 4 years or so to a nationally representative sample of U.S. schools. Our findings reveal that predominantly Black and Latino schools offer more programs to foster parent involvement than do predominantly White schools, yet predominantly Black and Latino schools still have lower levels of parental participation. However, predominantly Black and Latino schools achieve significant gains in parent involvement, in some cases nearly matching levels in predominantly White schools, as the number of policies in place to support and encourage participation increases. This finding provides encouraging evidence that what schools do makes a difference. Our results also indicate that the specific policies most strongly associated with parent involvement differ across predominantly White, predominantly Black, or predominantly Latino schools, suggesting the efficacy of some policies depends on school context and that a one-size-fits-all approach may be misguided.

Explaining Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is multidimensional and refers to a wide range of activities that tap nearly every facet of schooling. For example, parent involvement

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includes attending school events like parent–teacher conferences, supervising children with homework, or making sure children are well fed, well rested, and ready to learn when they arrive at school. It could also entail involving children in enrichment activities like chess clubs or piano lessons, serving on a local school board, choosing a magnet or charter school, or intervening on behalf of one's child for placement in a particular classroom or program. In this study, we focus primarily on school-based activities, in part because schools tend to define parent involvement as participation in formal activities, such as volunteering in school events and attending meetings (Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999). Consequently, these forms are most commonly examined in existing research. Beyond this, however, we focus on these activities because they are linked to both school effectiveness and student outcomes, and because they require action on the part of both schools and parents. This means there is an explicit role for school policy and practices, because these forms of parent involvement are not strictly parent-initiated, but that parent and family characteristics are still critical in determining whether parents ultimately get involved.

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

One of the most essential factors to parent involvement in schooling includes the extent to which parents are able to participate. For parents who possess essential resources like time, money, and skills, the relative costs of participation are typically quite low, thereby explaining why research consistently finds parents of higher socioeconomic status (SES) more involved in practically every activity related to children's schooling and education than lower SES parents (Birch & Ferrin, 2002; Feuerstein, 2000; Griffith, 1998). Families where both parents are working or that include only one parent at home also face more challenges to participating in school-based activities and events (Williams & Sánchez, 2012). Indeed, these families are more prevalent within African American and Latino communities and also in urban areas and help explain the lower levels of involvement among African American and Latino parents (Jeynes, 2014). Similarly,

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studies have consistently found that parents with higher levels of internal or self-efficacy—the beliefs and confidence one has in one's ability to understand and influence desired outcomes—have a relatively easier time participating in their children's education compared with those who lack these psychological orientations (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). That minority and immigrant parents tend to have fewer resources and lower levels of self-efficacy and trust partly explains the parent involvement gap. Indeed, studies have found that status barriers, such as limited-English proficiency, childcare responsibilities, or inadequate transportation, disproportionately discourage and reduce minority parent involvement, especially in formal activities (Zhou & Logan, 2003).

Even if parents have the ability to participate, they may not do so because they lack the information or understanding of what is expected of them. Studies have found that differences in role expectations and culturally specific values and experiences of immigrant and minority populations also account for lower levels of involvement among these parents (Lawson, 2003). For example, Latino parents tend to conceptualize their role as one of teaching values and instilling good behavior (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Studies find that this makes them less likely to initiate communication with the school or volunteer in the classroom (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995).

In addition to parents' incentives, expectations, and abilities, research has examined how school and parent interactions shape parent attitudes toward their child's school (De Gaetano, 2007; Williams & Sánchez, 2012). Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural capital, which emphasizes social class differences between school personnel and parents and the way such differences may hinder effective communication and mutual understanding, is the foundation for much of this work. According to Bourdieu, children of the "dominant class" are advantaged in their understanding of the educational environment; in their case, "a clear continuity exists between the culture of home and that of the school" (Goldthorpe, 2007). In contrast, the nondominant classes will find the school environment alien and perhaps hostile. As Lareau (1987) puts it, because schools represent and reproduce middle-/upper-class values and forms of communication, lower income and minority parents are disadvantaged. Lower levels of involvement among poor, working class, or minority parents, particularly in school-based activities, are therefore a function not simply of parents' own disadvantages and lack of resources, but also of sociocultural norms and practices that value middle class and White "culture" that typify schools (Griffith, 1998; Robinson & Harris, 2014).

In the context of Latinos, studies cite examples of how parents' feelings of inadequacy or incompetence prevent them from responding to school requests

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and invitations (Hyslop, 2000; Scribner et al., 1999). Indeed, most of the research on parent involvement focuses on individual-level attributes of parents, paying only cursory attention to how specific school-level programs, policies, or organizational characteristics might shape the behavior of parents or other school-level actors (but see De Gaetano, 2007). If schools are an important piece of the puzzle for parent involvement, we must examine in more detail not only how schools formulate and implement parent involvement policy and practices but also why some schools devote more time, money, and energy to these activities than others.

School-Level Practices to Promote Parent Involvement: Causes and Consequences

While research investigating the causes and consequences of school-level policies and practices to promote parent involvement is relatively rare, the effective schools literature, as well as broader theoretical work on the organization of schools and schooling, provides some guidance. In the fields of public administration and urban politics, scholars have conceptualized schooling as a public good that is "coproduced" by school personnel and parents. This body of work underscores the critical role of schools in fostering parent involvement and explicitly argues that how schools structure opportunities for parent participation and develop and implement procedures that facilitate the flow of information between parents and schools is critical for establishing and sustaining productive relationships between schools and parents (Ostrom, 1996; Sharp, 1980). A corollary body of literature from the sociology of education focuses on how school organization contributes to a school's capacity to create a successful learning environment (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Parent involvement is a core characteristic of the "effective schools" identified by this body of work.

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

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School leadership plays an especially crucial role in whether and how schools engage parents. In particular, principals have the capacity to design and implement school policies and shape the norms, expectations, personnel, and culture of the school. For example, principals can shape the "invitation–involvement" connection by communicating a clear and consistent message to school personnel regarding the importance of parent involvement. They can also sponsor professional development programs and workshops to help teachers and staff understand and overcome cultural differences and other barriers to parent involvement or implement policies to foster and encourage strong parent–school partnerships (Griffith, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Marschall et al., 2012). In the context of schools serving minority populations, minority principals are often more aware of the cultural norms that facilitate trust with co-ethnic parents and understand the social hierarchies and avenues for gaining access to racial and ethnic communities (Goodwin, 2002). In these schools, co-ethnic principals may be better able to develop effective parent involvement policies and practices than principals who do not share racial/ethnic characteristics with students and families, and this in turn may lead these policies to be more consistently implemented by other school personnel (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Marschall et al., 2012).

Teacher invitations, other forms of parent outreach, as well as teacher attitudes regarding parent participation can also make a difference. For example, some research finds that when teachers make parent involvement part of regular teaching practices, parents are more involved and feel more positive about their abilities to help (Ames, 1993). Minority teachers have been cited as instrumental in recognizing and addressing cultural differences that manifest in parental attitudes and behaviors that might be misinterpreted as disengagement or indifference (Gordon, 2000). Marschall et al. (2012), for example, found that the percentage of Black, Latino, and Asian teachers in established immigrant gateway schools was strongly associated with school activities to engage parents at home and in school. Thus, similar to minority principals, minority teachers may foster greater communication, trust, and cultural understanding, which may lead to programs better tailored to address the specific issues and problems that impede parent participation.

Overall, this disparate body of work has a number of important implications regarding the role of schools in minority parent involvement. First, it suggests that whereas schools may be engaging in outreach with parents, these efforts may not be effective for all types of parents. Limited access to material resources, coupled with role orientations that do not conform to those of Whites or Anglos, often places racial and ethnic minority parents at a disadvantage. Second, school-level factors may be particularly important in shaping parent attitudes and behaviors toward schools and schooling. The

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"invitation–involvement" connection literature suggests that who does the asking may be as important as what is asked, and evidence supports the idea that teacher training regarding how to foster parent involvement may be a central indicator of how school culture shapes parent involvement. From the cultural capital perspective, lower levels of involvement among minority or low-SES parents are at least partly a function of the inability of schools to create organizational forms and modes of communication that adapt to the sociocultural values of these parents and the classism/racism they face (Robinson & Harris, 2014). Furthermore, racial/ethnic congruence between school staff/administrators and parents may be an important link between the offer and acceptance to participate and the development of positive school–parent relationships.

Data and Methods

Our analysis of parent involvement considers factors that shape parents' decisions to participate in their children's schools and how leadership, teacher attributes, and other characteristics of schools influence what schools are doing to foster parent involvement. While we are interested in the parent involvement gap across racial/ethnic groups, our focus on schools with predominantly (at least two-thirds) Latino, African American, or Anglo students is also justified by the fact that Black and Latino students now attend more racially and socioeconomically segregated schools than they did in previous decades (Orfield, 2009). We use NCES's SASS, administered every 4 years to a nationally representative sample of U.S. schools and districts.[4] We combined NCES questionnaires for both school and principal components of the 1999-2000 and 2003-2004 NCES surveys.[5] Our sample includes 1,039 predominantly Black schools, 551 predominantly Latino schools,[6] and 9,828 predominantly White schools.

Parent Involvement and Opportunities to Participate: What Schools Report

Figure 1 displays principals' estimates of the proportion of parents participating in three parent involvement activities: (a) open houses, (b) parent–teacher conferences, and (c) special events such as science fairs or concerts.[7] Though we recognize that these bivariate relationships do not control for the SES of the school or other covariates of participation (thus we cannot make inferences about the relationship between participation and the racial composition of schools), we report them to illustrate the gap in involvement

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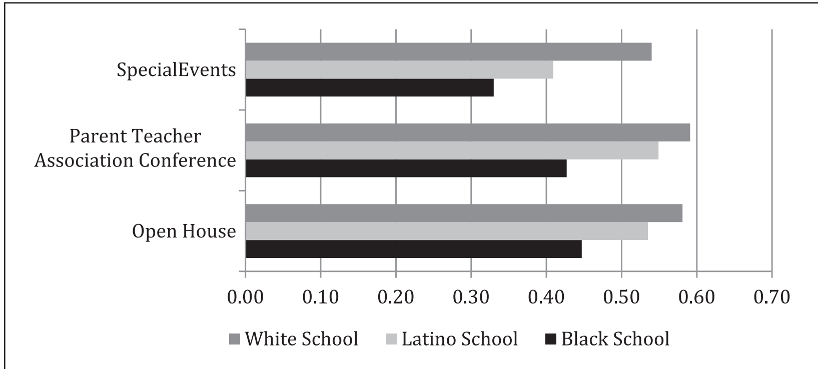

Figure 1. Parent involvement by school racial/ethnic composition.
Source. National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Surveys (1999-2000, 2003-2004).
Note. All *t* tests significant at $p \leq .01$, two-tailed test.

levels across schools with different racial/ethnic compositions. Predominantly White schools have the highest levels of parent involvement in each of these activities. Roughly 60% of these parents reported attending parent–teacher conferences and open houses and nearly 55% participate in special events.[8] Given the additional barriers (language, citizenship) faced by some Latino parents, we might have expected Latinos to exhibit the lowest levels of involvement, but Figure 1 shows a higher rate of participation in predominantly Latino schools as compared with predominantly African American schools. In fact, participation rates in predominantly Latino schools are closer to those of predominantly White than Black schools on two of the three measures. On the other hand, fewer than half of parents in predominantly Black schools participate in each of the three activities, with only a third attending special events.[9]

To what extent do schools with different racial/ethnic compositions vary with regard to the programs and practices they pursue to foster parent involvement? Figure 2 provides a preliminary (descriptive) look at this question for principal reports of whether their school had each of the following: (a) parent education workshops or classes, (c) a written contract between the school and parents, (c) opportunities for parents to serve as volunteers in the schools on a regular basis, (d) a reliable system of communication with parents, such as newsletters or phone trees, (e) services to support parent participation, such as providing childcare or transportation; a requirement that teachers (f) send information home to parents explaining school lessons, (g) provide

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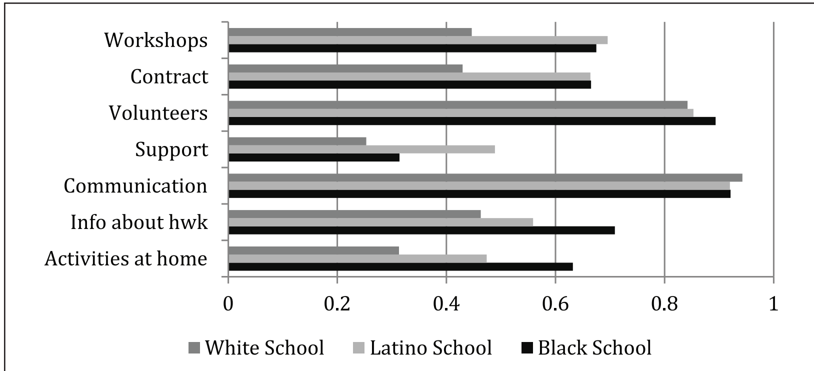

Figure 2. Programs and practices by school racial/ethnic composition.
Source. National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Surveys (1999-2000, 2003-2004).
Note. All t tests between Black–White and Latino–White significant at $p \leq .01$, two-tailed test (except Latino–White volunteers).

suggestions for activities that parents can do at home with their child, (h) create homework assignments that involve parents.

Figure 2 shows a strikingly different pattern than the one reported in Figure 1. Whereas parents in predominantly White schools reported the highest rates of participation, Figure 2 shows these same schools are least likely to offer all but one (reliable system of communication) of the programs designed to foster parent involvement. Indeed, we see the largest gaps in school-based initiatives that require teachers to involve parents in student learning at home, where predominately Black schools are almost three times more likely to require homework that involves parents and twice as likely to require suggestions to parents about activities they can do at home with their child than are predominately White schools. Similarly, whereas more than two thirds of predominantly Black and Latino schools report providing parent workshops or written contracts, less than half of predominately White schools do. Finally, predominantly Latino schools are significantly more likely to report offering support services like childcare or transportation (48%) than are either predominately Black (31%) or White (25%) schools.

These patterns are consistent with resource and class-based explanations of parent involvement (Lareau, 1987), which argue that involvement among White parents stems more from voluntary actions and thus does not require as much programming or infrastructure on the part of schools as might be the case for Latino or African American parents. On the other hand, in

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predominantly minority schools, the lack of resources and lower levels of White, middle-class cultural capital suggest that schools must take a more active and aggressive role in stimulating and directing parent engagement. Yet as we suggested previously, resource and class-based explanations cannot account for differences *among* minority parents, and in this case *across* parents situated in hyper-segregated schools. Furthermore, these explanations would not predict the pattern depicted in Figure 1 and do not provide any leverage in understanding whether and how school policies in the area of parent involved are related to these patterns.

Modeling Parent Involvement

When it comes to explaining levels of parent involvement in predominantly Black, Latino, and White schools, our goal is to not only assess the impact and significance of different school-initiated efforts to recruit, inform, and support parent involvement but to also explicitly account for school-level factors that shape whether and how schools target their efforts. We use seemingly unrelated regression (SUR), which estimates two or more equations that have contemporaneous cross-equation error correlation (i.e., the error terms in the regression equations are correlated; Zellner, 1962). Because the outcomes for both of our equations are likely influenced by the same set of exogenous factors, a SUR model is more advantageous than Ordinary Least Squares (OLS).[10]

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

$$\begin{aligned} &\textit{School Policies / Practices} = \\ &\qquad f\left(\text{Leadership} + \text{School- Level Factors} + \text{Controls} + \varepsilon\right) \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

$$\textit{Parent Involvement} = f\begin{pmatrix} \text{School Policies/Practices} \\ + \text{Leadership} + \text{School-Level Factors} \\ + \text{Controls} + \varepsilon \end{pmatrix} \tag{2}$$

The dependent variables in equation (2) (*Parent Involvement*) are identical to those included in Figure 1, discussed previously (see Note 5). *School Policies/Practices* is a vector that includes two indices that measure school efforts to foster school- and home-based involvement, respectively. The school-based policy index (*School-Based*) taps both the extent of

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opportunities for parent involvement and school programs and resources that attempt to help parents overcome barriers to participation and includes the first five indicators from Figure 2 (parent workshops, written contracts, opportunities for parent volunteers, communication systems, and support services).[11] We constructed a summated rating scale with these five indictors to represent the dependent variable in the first set of equations, but estimated separate SUR models with both the index and the individual items as independent variables in the second set of equations. This approach allows us to discern the independent effects of each policy or program on levels of parent involvement.

The second index includes three indicators regarding teachers requirements vis-à-vis parent involvement at home (*Home-Required*): (a) explaining school lessons, (b) suggestions for activities parents do at home, and (c) homework assignments that involve parents (see Figure 2). Because school programs regarding home-based learning presumably operate more indirectly on parent involvement in school-based activities, we use only the index (and not the individual items) in the second set of equations.

Explanatory Variables

Our explanatory variables capture the factors noted in the effective schools and coproduction literature and are expected to influence both the participatory behavior of parents and the programs schools offer to foster these behaviors. The first of these is *Leadership*. Given our interest in comparing the effects of leadership across different racial/ethnic contexts, we measure the racial/ethnic identity of the principal (*Black Principal, Latino Principal*) and expect that presence of a co-ethnic principal will be associated with more school programs and policies promoting parent involvement and higher levels of parent involvement.

The second vector, *School-Level Factors*, includes a set of variables that measure specific dimensions of effective schools as well as the resources of families whose children attend these schools. In terms of effective schools measures, we focus on teacher autonomy, high expectations for teacher performance, minority representation within the teaching force, and school culture and climate. *Teacher Professional Development* is an index constructed from three survey questions that asked principals (a) whether schools provide teachers with time for professional development during regular contract hours (1 = yes; 0 = no), (b) how often professional development for teachers in the school is planned by teachers in the school or district, and (c) how often professional development for teachers in the schools is accompanied by the resources that teachers need to make changes in the classroom.[12] The index

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ranges from 0 to 3, with higher values associated with a stronger commitment to teachers' professional development. In addition to tapping principal leadership, schools that devote time and support to professional development may focus more attention on parent involvement and enhance teachers' abilities to connect with parents, fostering higher levels of parent involvement.

High-Performing Teachers is based on a survey question that asked principals what percentage of teachers in their school were teaching to high academic standards,[13] and *Teacher Influence* is an index constructed from a set of questions asking principals how much influence teachers had on school policy and decision making in six different areas: (a) curriculum, (b) performance standards, (c) evaluating teachers, (d) setting discipline policy, (e) deciding how the school budget will be spent, and (f) determining the content of in-service professional development programs for teachers at this school.[14] The index ranges from 0 to 5, with larger values associated with more teacher influence. We expect schools where teachers have a greater voice in decision making or those with more high-performing teachers to have a stronger role in designing and implementing policies regarding parent involvement. We also expect such teachers to be more effective at engaging parents, thus leading to higher levels of parent involvement in the three activities we examine here.

Given the body of literature that links co-ethnic teachers to effective schools and outcomes, we expect minority representation in the teaching force to be associated with greater levels of parent involvement. Thus, we include the percentage of Black, Latino, and White teachers (*Percent Black, White, and Latino Teachers*), as well as the representation of bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) teachers on staff (*Percent Bilingual/ESL Teachers*). Finally, another characteristic of effective schools is the presence of order and discipline. We operationalize this with two variables constructed from survey questions that asked principals how much they perceived *Teacher Absenteeism* and *Discipline* to be problems in their schools.[15] We expect these to be associated with lower levels of parent involvement and negatively correlated to school policies regarding parent involvement.

In addition to effective schools measures, we also include an indicator of parent resources and the class composition of schools. We operationalize this by the proportion of Title 1 (*Proportion Title 1*) students in the school or in other words, the proportion of students eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program.[16] We expect schools where more parents lack financial resources to have lower levels of parent involvement and a wider gap between school and parent norms and expectations about institutional procedures. However, these schools should also offer more policies and provide more support to parents in order to overcome these disadvantages.[17]

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Table 1. Summary Statistics.

	Predominantly Black schools (*n* = 1,039)		Predominantly Latino schools (*n* = 551)		Predominantly White schools (*n* = 9,828)		
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	Range
School-based	0.693	0.239	0.725	0.242	0.582	0.231	(0-1)
Home-required	0.591	0.385	0.450	0.392	0.309	0.348	(0-1)
Parent involvement in open house	0.447	0.262	0.535	0.275	0.581	0.288	(0-0.9)
Parent involvement in parent–teacher conference	0.428	0.272	0.550	0.314	0.591	0.311	(0-0.9)
Parent involvement in special events	0.331	0.263	0.409	0.284	0.540	0.295	(0-0.9)
Black principal	0.677	0.468	0.082	0.275	0.019	0.135	(0-1)
Latino principal	0.014	0.116	0.427	0.495	0.010	0.102	(0-1)
White principal	0.318	0.466	0.514	0.500	0.971	0.167	(0-1)
% high-performing teachers	73.24	22.20	75.86	19.73	81.70	16.99	(0-100)
Teacher influence	3.270	0.686	3.511	0.661	3.498	0.634	(1-5)
Professional development	3.776	0.690	3.816	0.705	3.621	0.652	(1-5)
Teacher absenteeism	1.357	0.870	1.390	0.926	1.409	1.090	(0-3)
Discipline	2.471	0.636	2.511	0.651	2.488	0.707	(1-4)
% Black teachers	0.543	0.276	0.061	0.132	0.015	0.053	(0-1)
% Latino teachers	0.020	0.067	0.358	0.272	0.015	0.077	(0-1)
% White teachers	0.427	0.272	0.557	0.276	0.961	0.103	(0-1)
Number of bilingual staff			1.951	3.446			(0-36)
Charter school	0.036	0.186	0.033	0.179	0.008	0.090	(0-1)
Magnet school	0.116	0.321	0.098	0.297	0.024	0.152	(0-1)
Number of students (log)	6.121	0.800	6.301	1.066	6.055	0.935	(0.7-8.6)
Elementary school	0.664	0.473	0.692	0.462	0.602	0.490	(0-1)
Proportion Title I	0.266	0.415	0.332	0.437	0.078	0.209	(0-1)
Urban	0.572	0.495	0.521	0.500	0.121	0.327	(0-1)

Finally, *Controls* includes a set of covariates that likely affect both levels of parent involvement and the extent to which schools provide programs to foster this involvement. First, since schools of choice are believed to be more likely to embody the characteristics of effective schools (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Purkey & Smith, 1983), including higher levels of parent involvement,

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we include measures for whether the school is a *Charter* or *Magnet* (1 = yes, 0 otherwise), as well as a measure of *School Size* (total students logged). Because parent involvement is most prevalent in *Elementary Schools*, we also include a variable that controls for this (1 = yes, 0 otherwise). Last, we include a dummy variable for *Urban* (1 = yes, 0 otherwise). Table 1 includes summary statistics for all variables in our models by the racial context of schools.

Analysis and Findings

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

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

Figure 3 illustrates that irrespective of what schools do, parents in predominantly Black and Latino schools participate at lower rates than parents in predominantly White schools. The gap between predominantly White and predominantly minority schools is greatest when there are no efforts by the school (school policy index = 0). However, as the number of school policies to encourage and support parent involvement increases, the gap between predominantly White and minority schools decreases (*Special Events* is the exception). For example, the gap in parent–teacher conference attendance narrows from 0.14 to 0.05. Interestingly, the gap between predominately Black and Latino schools gets larger for the open house measure, with parents in predominately Latino schools almost matching the participation rate of parents in predominately White schools, but parents in predominately Black schools participating at a lower rate. In addition, while school-based policies have large and significant effects for parent involvement in all three racial contexts, the greatest effects are found in predominantly Latino schools. For example, participation in parent–teacher conferences increases by over 30 percentage points in predominantly Latino schools going from 0 to 1 on

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Table 2. SUR Estimates for Predominantly Black Schools.

	Determinants of parent involvement policy		Determinants of parent involvement		
	School-based	Home-required	Open house	Parent–teacher conference	Special events
School-based policy index			0.164***	0.204***	0.184***
			(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.037)
Home-required policy index			0.039†	0.057*	0.055*
			(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Black principal	0.035*	0.120***	0.040*	0.017	0.034†
	(0.017)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Latino principal	0.100†	0.173*	0.057	−0.018	0.069
	(0.057)	(0.094)	(0.064)	(0.068)	(0.065)
% high-performing teachers	0.000	0.0009†	0.001***	0.001**	0.0006†
	(0.000)	(0.0005)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.0003)
Teacher influence	0.031**	0.031	0.007	0.012	−0.005
	(0.011)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Professional development	0.032**	0.068***	0.012	0.016	0.012
	(0.010)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Teacher absenteeism	0.006	−0.007	−0.002	−0.005	−0.007
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Discipline	0.012	−0.003	−0.026*	0.004	−0.014
	(0.012)	(0.019)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.013)
% Black teachers	0.004	0.046	−0.084**	−0.106**	−0.103**
	(0.028)	(0.047)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.032)
% Latino teachers	0.016	0.106	−0.082	−0.149	−0.053
	(0.108)	(0.178)	(0.120)	(0.127)	(0.122)
Charter	0.014	0.003	0.079*	0.061	0.217***
	(0.036)	(0.059)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.041)
Magnet	0.033	−0.010	0.116***	0.040	0.068**
	(0.022)	(0.036)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.025)
Student enrollment (log)	0.044***	0.024†	0.044***	0.014	0.046***
	(0.009)	(0.015)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Elementary school	0.124***	0.206***	0.089***	0.075***	0.042*
	(0.015)	(0.025)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Proportion Title I	0.101***	0.067*	0.021	0.010	0.021
	(0.017)	(0.028)	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.020)
Urban	0.061***	0.050*	−0.004	0.022	−0.016
	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Constant	−0.039	−0.239	−0.106	−0.028	−0.150
	(0.078)	(0.128)	(0.087)	(0.092)	(0.088)
n	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039
R^2	.164	.140	.151	.125	.135

Note. SUR = seemingly unrelated regression.
†$p \leq .10$. *$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p \leq .001$, two-tailed test.

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Table 3. SUR Estimates for Predominantly Latino Schools.

	Determinants of parent involvement policy		Determinants of parent involvement		
	School-based	Home-required	Open house	Parent–teacher conference	Special events
School-based policy index			0.283***	0.303***	0.188***
			(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.053)
Home-required policy index			0.034	0.093**	0.088**
			(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.030)
Black principal	0.025	0.100†	−0.018	0.016	−0.057
	(0.034)	(0.061)	(0.039)	(0.043)	(0.042)
Latino principal	−0.032	0.059†	0.008	−0.007	0.038
	(0.020)	(0.037)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.025)
% high-performing teachers	−0.000	0.002*	0.002***	0.001*	0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Teacher influence	−0.002	−0.007	−0.001	−0.021	0.023
	(0.016)	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.019)
Professional development	0.032*	0.082***	0.003	0.024	0.014
	(0.014)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Teacher absenteeism	−0.007	0.037	0.008	−0.005	−0.034*
	(0.012)	(0.021)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.014)
Discipline	0.000	−0.031	−0.013	−0.010	−0.035†
	(0.015)	(0.027)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.018)
% Black teachers	−0.051	0.279*	−0.020	−0.145	−0.199*
	(0.074)	(0.132)	(0.085)	(0.094)	(0.090)
% Latino teachers	0.111**	0.017	−0.021	−0.089†	−0.042
	(0.038)	(0.068)	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.047)
% bilingual staff	0.009***	0.006	0.002	0.005	0.001
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Charter	−0.007	0.098	0.074	0.075	0.023
	(0.051)	(0.091)	(0.058)	(0.064)	(0.062)
Magnet	0.022	0.055	0.007	0.014	0.013
	(0.031)	(0.056)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.038)
Student enrollment (log)	0.069***	0.031†	0.044***	−0.002	0.049***
	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Elementary school	0.138***	0.157***	0.157***	0.225***	0.095***
	(0.021)	(0.037)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.027)
Proportion Title I	0.051*	−0.023	0.027	0.011	0.047
	(0.023)	(0.040)	(0.026)	(0.029)	(0.028)
Urban	0.013	−0.037	−0.042*	−0.033	−0.052*
	(0.019)	(0.034)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Constant	0.033	−0.302	−0.223*	0.083	−0.229*
	(0.095)	(0.169)	(0.109)	(0.121)	(0.116)
n	551	551	551	551	551
R^2	.248	.118	.263	.304	.221

Note. SUR = seemingly unrelated regression.
†$p \leq .10$. *$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p \leq .001$, two-tailed test.

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Table 4. SUR Estimates for Predominantly White Schools.

	Determinants of parent involvement policy		Determinants of parent involvement		
	School-based	Home-required	Open house	Parent–teacher conference	Special events
School-based policy index			0.198***	0.192***	0.162***
			(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Home-required policy index			0.030***	0.026**	0.016*
			(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
White principal	−0.021	−0.102***	−0.002	0.032*	0.036*
	(0.013)	(0.020)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.016)
% high-performing teachers	0.001***	0.001***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Teacher influence	0.019***	−0.005	0.022***	0.037***	0.019***
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Professional development	0.036***	0.052***	0.012**	−0.005	0.008
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Teacher absenteeism	−0.002	0.006	−0.024***	−0.028***	−0.037***
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Discipline	−0.001	0.012	−0.009†	0.000	−0.021***
	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
% White teachers	−0.059**	−0.146***	0.021	0.125***	0.134***
	(0.021)	(0.034)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Charter	0.135***	0.154***	0.072*	0.053†	0.049†
	(0.024)	(0.038)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.030)
Magnet	0.057***	0.035	0.005	0.001	0.034†
	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Student enrollment (logged)	0.039***	0.015***	0.042***	−0.055***	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Elementary school	0.126***	0.127***	0.219***	0.210***	0.146***
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Proportion Title I	0.110***	0.065***	−0.013	−0.039**	−0.039**
	(0.011)	(0.017)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Urban	0.045***	−0.002	0.021**	0.018*	−0.028***
	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Constant	0.076*	0.092	−0.158***	0.321***	0.058
	(0.034)	(0.054)	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.043)
n	9,828	9,828	9,828	9,828	9,828
R^2	.135	.060	.241	.236	.137

Note. SUR = seemingly unrelated regression.
†$p \leq .10$. *$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$. ***$p \leq .001$, two-tailed test.

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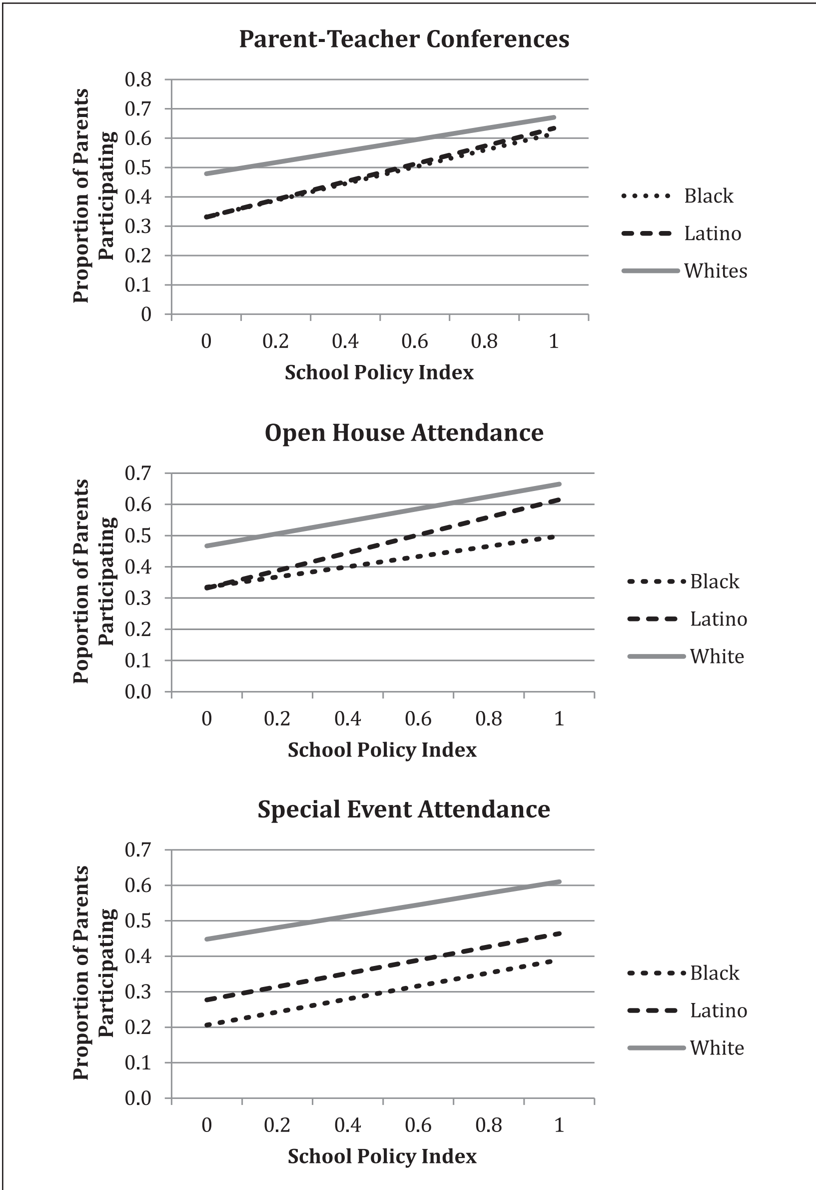

Figure 3. Effects of school-based policies on parent involvement.

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Table 5. Policy Effects—Individual Parent Policies.

	Black schools			Latino schools			White schools		
	OH	PTC	SE	OH	PTC	SE	OH	PTC	SE
Workshops	0.03	0.01	0.04*	0.01	0.06*	0.00	0.041**	0.03**	0.03**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.005)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Contract	0.01	0.04*	−0.00	0.04*	0.03	0.01	−0.011*	−0.02**	−0.03**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.005)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Volunteer opportunity	0.09**	0.08**	0.10**	0.17**	0.12**	0.11**	0.093**	0.08**	0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.008)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Support	0.02	0.06**	0.04*	0.07**	0.06*	0.05	0.041**	0.06**	0.05**
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.006)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Communication system	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.101**	0.13**	0.11**
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.011)	(0.01)	(0.01)

Note. OH = open house; PTC = parent–teacher conferences; SE = special events.
†$p \leq .10$. *$p \leq .05$. **$p \leq .01$, two-tailed test.

the policy index; in predominantly Black and White schools, the increase is around 20 percentage points.

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

These results make a strong case for the efficacy of school policies and practices, especially in Latino schools. The persistent achievement gap for African American families, however, is perhaps additional evidence that the problems of a one-size-fits-all framework of policy efforts (Boutte & Johnson, 2014). Though we cannot fully address this in the present study, we can examine which of the school-based policies included in our analysis matter most for parents situated in the three different racial/ethnic school contexts. To do this, we reran the models substituting the individual items comprising the *school-based policy index*. Table 5 reports the SUR estimates for this set of covariates by racial context, for each of the three dependent variables.

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

Support programs are also strongly and consistently associated with levels of parent involvement. In all three racial contexts, schools that provide assistance to parents in the form of childcare and transportation have higher levels of parent involvement (from 4% to 7%) than schools that do not. Though workshops are less consistently significant and also have less substantive effects, they nevertheless provide a boost in levels of parent involvement, particularly in predominantly White schools.

Apart from these similarities in the effects of the school policy variables, there are some important differences across the racial composition of schools. For example, written contracts between schools and parents are negatively associated with levels of involvement in predominantly White schools, yet positively associated with parent–teacher conferences and open houses in Black and Latino schools, respectively. And, in predominantly White schools, the presence a reliable communication system yields between 10% and 13% more parents participating. These findings indicate that there is no "one-size fits all" to school-based initiatives to engage parents, that some policies work better in particular school contexts, and that other factors may also play an important role in whether and how parents get involved in school-based activities.

Returning to the full table of results (Tables 2-4), we find other school-level covariates also matter. In particular, schools with larger percentages of teachers teaching to high standards are associated with higher levels of parent involvement across racial contexts. The biggest effects are in predominantly Latino schools, where an increase from 50% to 100% of teachers teaching to high standards (the average range one standard deviation above and below the mean across racial contexts) is associated with a 12% increase in open house attendance (compared with 6% and 8% in predominantly Black and White schools). Moreover, schools with discipline and teacher absenteeism problems report less parent involvement, further substantiating the role of leadership, effective teachers, and school culture in shaping the extent of

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parent engagement in schools. For example, predominantly Black (Latino) schools with "serious" discipline problems have 8.6% (10.5%) fewer parents participating in open houses compared with schools where principals report "no" discipline problems. Problems posed by teacher absenteeism are greatest in predominantly White schools, where we consistently find negative and significant results.

Though the negative effects of co-ethnic teachers in predominantly Black and Latino schools were unexpected, substantively these effects are quite small. We also find positive effects in predominately White schools. The effects of the proportion of Title 1 students also vary according to the racial context of schools. In predominantly Black and Latino schools, coefficients indicate no association between greater shares of economically disadvantaged students and levels of parent involvement, whereas in predominantly White schools two of the three models reveal a positive relationship. These findings support our expectation that schools where parents lack financial resources have lower levels of parent involvement, and these effects appear to be larger in those contexts where we might find a wider gap between school and parent cultural norms.

Finally, past research finds that charter and magnet schools have greater levels of parent involvement, as they demonstrate many of the characteristics of "effective schools." This finding is confirmed for predominantly Black and White schools, but not for predominantly Latino schools. All else equal, predominantly Black charter schools have 52.4% of parents attending open houses, compared with 44% in "traditional" public schools. Similarly, a predominantly White charter school has 7.2% more parent participation than its traditional school counterpart.

Explaining Parent Involvement Policies

We hypothesized that school policies make a difference in parent involvement outcomes and thus may reduce the parent involvement gap. We now turn to the model that examines what schools are doing to promote parent involvement and how school-level factors shape what types of policies and practices schools implement.

Turning again to Tables 2 to 4, this time we focus on the first panel (columns 1-2), which displays the results for the models predicting schools' scores on the school-based and home-required policy indices. Looking first at the effects of co-ethnic leadership, we find strong, positive effects for Black principals, somewhat weaker effects for Latino principals, and negative effects for White principals. Specifically, the presence of a Black principal in a predominantly Black school increases the home-required policy

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index from 0.53 to 0.61, and a predominantly Latino school with a Latino principal has 0.05 more home-required policies. However, we also find effects of Black and Latino principals across racial contexts: Latino principals are positively associated with school- and home-based initiatives in predominantly Black schools, and Black principals have similar effects in predominantly Latino schools. This pattern of findings suggests the effects of racial/ethnic minority principals extend beyond shared racial/ethnic identity and support recent reviews of research on the positive influence of co-ethnic leadership on family and community involvement (Lomotey & Lowery, 2014).

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

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

Last, we find consistent and positive effects of the proportion of Title 1 students on school efforts to engage parents. Predominantly Black schools with 70% of students receiving Title 1 funds (one standard deviation above the mean) score 0.73 on the school-based policy index and 0.63 on the home-required policy, as opposed to 0.69 (0.6) in schools with 25% Title 1 students (the mean). Similarly, predominantly Latino schools see a 0.05 increase in

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school-based practices with a 10% increase in Title 1 recipients. These findings suggest schools recognize the disadvantages of their parents and respond by offering additional resources and programming.

Conclusion and Implications

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

Our findings confirm that predominantly White schools have higher levels of parent involvement, fewer programs and policies in place explicitly designed to foster this involvement, and a greater return on these policies. Moreover, findings from our study clearly demonstrate that school efforts to engage parents by providing opportunities for involvement as well as resources and incentives to support and encourage participation make a significant difference in the extent of parent involvement in predominantly Black and Latino schools. Given that socioeconomic resources and cultural capital that reward White, middle-class social assets are in relatively shorter supply in predominantly minority schools, it should come as no surprise that these schools must do more to initiate and sustain parent involvement. Yet the additional effort (and associated costs) put forth by predominantly minority schools is by no means wasted. Indeed, as the number of policies in place to support and encourage participation increases, predominantly minority schools achieve significant gains in parent involvement, in some cases nearly matching levels in predominantly White schools.

When it comes to how school-level factors shape the nature and extent of parent involvement programming, this study underscores the importance of effective teachers, leadership, and schooling arrangements. In particular, we find similarities in the effects of teacher attributes, responsibilities, and training on parent involvement policies across all three racial contexts. Schools devoting more time and support to teacher professional development implement significantly more policies promoting parent involvement in both

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school- and home-based activities. In these schools, having more teachers who teach to high standards is also linked to more school initiatives to engage parents in assisting their children with schoolwork and learning at home. Thus, effective teachers can and do make a difference in the extent to which schools serving both minority and White students prioritize and invest in parent involvement.

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

While the present study makes an important contribution to understanding the process and outcomes of school-based parent involvement initiatives across different contexts, considerably more work needs to be done. In particular, multilevel data sets that include information on both schools and parents would allow for both direct measures of parent involvement by parents' racial and ethnic backgrounds and additional controls for family SES, nativity, gender, age, and family structure. In addition, multilevel data would permit stronger and more nuanced analyses of the myriad ways in which the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic contexts of schools affect the attitudes and behaviors of parents, teachers, and principals of different sociodemographic backgrounds.

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

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Notes

1. Though it is important to note that this view is not shared by all, and that for some, this discourse is viewed as less constructive and more complicit with a neoliberal or modernist agenda that seeks to homogenize difference rather than affirm heterogeneity (Gutiérrez & Dixon-Román, 2011). We thank our anonymous reviewer for emphasizing this point.
2. School-level factors also play a key role in the Black–White achievement gap (Condron, 2009).
3. Scholars have emphasized different aspects of this relationship and not all agree on how or why parent involvement is important. For example, Robinson and Harris (2014) focus exclusively on the independent effect of specific parent involvement activities on student achievement and argue that their findings suggest much more nuanced and in some cases counterproductive effects of parent involvement.
4. The purpose of the principal questionnaire is to obtain information about the principals' demographic characteristics, training, experience, and salary, as well as judgments about parent involvement the seriousness of school problems. The school questionnaire obtains information such as grades offered, number of students enrolled, staffing patterns, teaching vacancies, high school graduation rates, programs and services offered, and college application rates. Both questionnaires are sent to principals, though other administrators typically complete the school questionnaire. More details at: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/methods.asp.
5. Identical questions were asked on both sets of surveys, but response categories for the parent involvement questions (reported by principals) differed. Because the distribution of responses across the two sets of categories was similar, we merged the variables recoding response categories as follows: few = .10, less than half = .30, about half = .50, more than half = .70, and most = .9; 0%-25% = .125, 26%-50% = .375, 51%-75% = .625, and 76%-100% = .875.
6. The Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) does not ask questions specifically regarding immigrant parents, and thus for this analysis we do not disaggregate native versus immigrant status.

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7. No surveys match school and parent responses, limiting us to principal reports of parent involvement. However, on the indicators examined here, parent and school reports are comparable, particularly across parent race/ethnicity and activity (Aud et al., 2011).
8. The *t* tests for White–Latino, White–Black, Latino–Black schools were significant at $p < .01$.
9. One reason for the lack of involvement stems from the lack of opportunities to participate. More Black schools reported not offering special events than did Latino or White schools. However, they were also most likely to offer open houses or parent–teacher conferences, so this explanation does not sufficiently account for their lower levels of participation.
10. In fact, seemingly unrelated regression is actually an application of generalized least squares (GLS). Because its residual covariance matrix is unknown and must be estimated from the data, it is sometimes referred to as feasible GLS (see Timm, 2002).
11. SASS questions asked principals if each was offered last school year (1 = yes; 0 otherwise).
12. Responses for frequency questions: never, rarely, sometimes, frequently, always (coded 0-1).
13. Note, while principals are certainly in a position to evaluate their teachers, there is a possibility that they may overstate performance due to social desirability bias. There is, however, no reason to suspect that some principals are more subject to this bias than others. Thus, potential measurement error affects descriptive but not causal inference.
14. Response categories: 0 = no, 0.33 = minor, 0.67 = moderate, and 1 = major influence.
15. Teacher Absenteeism responses: 1 = serious problem in this school; 2 = moderate problem, 3 = minor problem, 4 = not a problem. Discipline is an index of five questions tapping student tardiness, student absenteeism, dropouts, student apathy, and unprepared students (coded as above).
16. The National Center for Education Statistics has recently reviewed the usefulness of Title 1 funding and free- and reduced-price lunch as a proxy for poverty and has concluded that new measures are needed. However, they have also stated that currently, this is the best indicator available.
17. Because No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires schools receiving Title 1 funds to involve low-income parents in school programs, it provides an added incentive for these schools to actively engage parents.

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Author Biographies

Melissa J. Marschall is professor of Political Science at Rice University. Her research focuses on urban politics, educational policy, political behavior, and representation. Her book, *Choosing Schools: Consumer Choice and the Quality of American Schools* (coauthored with Mark Schneider and Paul Teske), was recipient of the Policy Studies Association Aaron Wildavsky Award for the Best Policy Book in 2000-2001. Marschall also created and directs the Urban Lab Program at Rice University and has

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taught courses on urban politics, education policy comparative urban politics & policy, and research methods.

Paru R. Shah is associate professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research centers on American politics, with an emphasis on race, ethnicity, and politics; urban politics; and public policy analysis (focused particularly on education policy and governance).

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