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In Whose Interest?

INTRODUCTION

The promise of parent involvement is important for all families and critical to the aims of school improvement. As teachers and school administrators are squeezed by the dictates of bottom-up and top-down school reform plans, shifting expectations and reconstituted roles carve out new spaces for parents in their children's schooling (Murphy 1991). Changes in instruction, assessment, and governance highlighted in the decade-long march toward fundamental change in our nation's schools imply the need to consider parent involvement in the most expansive terms and broadest context.

The widespread appeal and perceived value of parent involvement is reflected in its prominent place across nearly every state and local policy proposal designed to improve the performance of schools. Repeated calls for "parent empowerment" identify home- and community-based involvement as a key weapon in the struggle to slow the downward slide in academic indicators. Goals 2000, the recently enacted legislative mandate for new and expanded federal action in public education, locates objectives for increased parent involvement side by side with strategies focused on curriculum content and student performance. Headlining the agendas of the nation's school systems and statehouses, the promise of parent involvement continues to capture the interest and attention of reform-minded school administrators, teachers, business leaders, and policy makers.

The problem with these policy endorsements and their unwavering faith in the power of parent involvement to improve schools is not that the strategy does not work. To be sure, there is accumulating evidence regarding the positive effects of both home- and school-based parent involvement programs for all parents, teachers, and students. Findings indicate that parent involvement enhances parents' attitudes about themselves, school, school personnel, and the role each plays in the development of the child (Becher 1986; Gordon 1979; Henderson 1981; Keesling & Melaragno 1983; Rich & Jones 1977). Teachers also benefit from parental involvement by gaining insights about their students and their home environment (Epstein 1983). This increased understanding pro-

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motes greater cooperation, commitment, and trust between the parents and teacher. Finally, substantial evidence suggests that students' achievement and cognitive development increases when effective parent involvement practices are in place (Stearns & Peterson 1973; Goodson & Hess 1975; Henderson 1987; Rich 1987; Comer 1980).

While these celebrated outcomes of parent involvement in schools explain the value attached to home-school partnership efforts, they ignore the failed promises of parent involvement. The rush to embrace parent involvement whole cloth without giving central consideration to the social context of family life has rapidly unraveled the authentic promise of parent involvement amidst persistent indications of negative and infrequent interactions between families and schools. Most disturbing may be the evidence which suggests that patterns of parent participation are related to differences in socioeconomic status: higher-income and more educated parents participate at higher rates than lower-class parents, both in terms of school-based activities and home-learning exercises (Baker & Stevenson 1986; Lareau 1989). These observations are routinely provided as evidence that low-income parents "just don't care about their kids" or "don't think education is important." Moreover, researchers (Baker & Stevenson 1986; Medrich et al. 1982; Stevenson & Baker 1987; Wilcox 1978) have identified educative enrichment activities (reading to children, taking children to the library, attending school events) which middle-class parents apparently engage in more frequently than lower-class parents. Despite these observations, the critical question of how and why social class affects patterns of parent action in schools is often overlooked—muted by more vocal voices promoting the value of parent involvement and strategies for increasing it.

REALIZING THE PROMISE

This study and other research indicate that access to information concerning teacher reputations and specialized academic programs can pay profitable dividends to families by enhancing the educational opportunities of their children. Beyond the benefit of home-based activities (e.g., reading, math games) on children's learning, academic program, and promotion, there are strong indications of the connection between teachers' expectations for student performance and the actions and attitudes of parents. Decisions regarding retention/promotion and ability grouping may well hinge on teachers' perceptions of parental interest and commitment. Negotiating successfully the expectations and demands of teachers and administrators undergird the rhetoric and reward of parent involvement.

The promise of parent involvement may be fully realized if efforts are undertaken to examine the elements of family life which influence the ways in which parents interact with schools. This book offers a response to the policy

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failures associated with parent involvement in schools by amplifying the importance of parents' social networks in the discussion of family-school partnerships. The interaction between social structure and school organization provides compelling indications of the need to recast the problem of parent involvement as one of community building. We begin this effort by examining the influence of cultural capital on patterns of parent involvement.

CULTURAL CAPITAL AND FAMILY-SCHOOL INTERACTIONS

This study applies Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to understand varying levels of parent participation in schooling. Bourdieu argues that schools draw unevenly on the social and cultural resources of members of the society by invoking particular linguistic styles, authority patterns, and types of curricula (Bourdieu 1977a, 1977b; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) describe a system of dispositions (habitus) which link class structure to a set of practices associated with different class cultures. Habitus includes the elements of perceptions, understanding, and style which bond and mark members of particular cultural groups and separate them from members of other cultural groups (Feinberg & Soltis 1992). According to Bourdieu, schools function as the primary institution for affirming and reproducing the social legitimacy of the habits, objects, and symbols of the dominant class culture. Children from higher social classes enter school familiar with these sociocultural arrangements. The cultural properties acquired from home differentially facilitate students' adjustment to school, thereby transforming cultural resources into what Bourdieu calls cultural capital (Lareau 1989).

It is important to note that while Bourdieu's concept of capital parallels the notion of a resource profitable for both individual and collective purposes located in the concept of human capital (Schultz 1963) and social capital (Coleman 1988), the principles of conflict theory and cultural reproduction distance cultural capital from the functionalist imperatives and implications of human and social capital. The concept of cultural capital underscores *differences in class cultures* and the role of social institutions (schools) in differentially rewarding class cultures. In sharp contrast, the concept of social capital emphasizes the role of organizational (school) relationships in establishing *social ties between members* who share similar attitudes, norms, and values instrumental in promoting a strong sense of obligation, shared expectations, and trust. Conceived as a bridge between rational (economic) theory and social organization theory, the principle of social capital exists, according to Coleman (1988) in relations among people (social structure) in ways that facilitate collective, purposeful action (e.g., Catholic school communities).

Cultural capital provides the necessary theoretical framework to examine cultural patterns associated with social class and to analyze how these patterns provide advantages in social institutions. By exploring the interinstitutional

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linkages among schooling, family life, and individuals, cultural capital furnishes the theoretical lenses necessary to understand why social class influences family-school relations (Lareau 1989).

Although Bourdieu does not examine the question of parent involvement in schooling, his analyses contribute to the research on the importance of class and culture in parents' interactions with schools (see Baker & Stevenson 1986; Connell et al. 1982; Ogbu 1974; McPherson 1972; Wilcox 1978). More recent research, however, applies the concept of cultural capital to studies of parent involvement to understand how social class provides parents with unequal resources and dispositions in the educational experiences of their children. Annette Lareau (1989) asserts that higher social class provides parents with more resources to intervene in schooling and to bind families into tighter connections with social institutions than are available to working-class families. These resources are derived from their education, income and material resources, occupational status, style of work, and social networks. Consequently, even if all parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education, all do not have an equal chance to participate in the ways teachers want. Specifically, the Lareau study suggests that: (1) more years of schooling provide parents with a greater capacity to understand the instructional language used by teachers and, more generally, the competence to help their children with schoolwork; (2) higher social status allows parents to approach teachers as social equals or superiors and provides a sense of confidence in the educational setting; (3) higher incomes make it easier for parents to purchase more educational resources and to obtain child care services and transportation to attend school events; (4) upper-middle-class jobs more closely resemble the interconnection between work and home that teachers envision for students and their schoolwork; and (5) upper-middle-class parents are more likely to be members of social networks which provide information on school processes and practices.

Although the Lareau study provides powerful evidence for the importance of considering the influence of social class and culture on family-school interactions, it deliberately excludes the effects of institutional characteristics of schools on these relations. Consequently, little is known about how the effects of school organization may alter or mediate the influence of social class or cultural capital on family-school interactions. At the same time, researchers have examined the effect of certain organizational factors on family-school relations, e.g., the effect of functional community (Coleman & Hoffer 1987); the effect of affirmative choice (Erickson 1982; Metz 1986); the effect of teacher practices and attitudes (Becker & Epstein 1982; Epstein & Becker 1982; Epstein 1983); the effect of school charter (Baker, Oswald, & Stevenson 1988; Stevenson & Baker 1988); however, they have excluded the concept of cultural capital from their analyses.

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MEDIATING CONDITIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

This study extends the organizational focus of community, choice, and teachers' practices/attitudes by refracting these images through the lenses of family background (cultural capital). The intent here rests with providing a model for family-school interactions which emphasizes the active and dynamic relationship between family characteristics and school organization.[1] This perspective allows us to examine the characteristics of schooling that may influence the experiences and expectations of families, thereby mediating the influence of social class on the nature and quality of family-school relationships.

This book argues that there are three key institutional characteristics of schools which may influence the ways in which families from different social classes interact with schools: *community, choice,* and *commitment* (defined as teacher/school-initiated programs which reflect a significant organizational commitment to family-school partnership). In the literature on effective schools and schools of choice, the social relations derived from a sense of community is repeatedly referenced as an organizational dimension of schooling which establishes a particular cultural ethos and renders deep and sustaining effects on the character and content of family-school interactions (e.g., see Grant 1985; Hallinger & Murphy 1986; Rutter et al. 1979). The promotional influence of school sector on the interlocking core components of school community (shared values, sense of membership and like-mindedness, and regular occasions of face-to-face interaction) is underscored in the research on the degree of communal association in magnet and Catholic schools (see Bryk, Lee & Holland 1993; Coleman & Hoffer 1987; Metz 1986). The voluminous effective schools research and the additional work which examines the effect of school programs designed to promote a family-school partnership (see Comer 1980; Davies, Burch & Johnson 1992; Epstein 1992) further testify to the critical and potential mediating role rendered by this organizational characteristic.

The multiple case-study design of this book reflects and displays my interest in examining the influence of each of these organizational aspects of schooling on the ways in which families with different amounts of cultural capital interact with schools. The case studies of a Catholic elementary school, a magnet elementary school, and a public neighborhood elementary school reflect the conceptual argument related to the intersection of school organization and cultural capital on the character and content of family-school interactions. The next section explores each of these organizational characteristics more deeply and relates the selection of the cases to the central argument of the book.

To understand patterns of family-school interactions and how they differ across social class,[2] this study focuses primarily on: (a) elements of cultural capital activated in family-school relations; (b) the effects of these elements on

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the nature and quality of interactions between families and schools;[3] and (c) mediating conditions (school organization) that affect family-school relations.

COMMUNITY

The concept of community has a rich and extensive research literature which is centuries old. Sociologists in the nineteenth century (and earlier philosophers as well) distinguished *community* from *society* by noting differences in the level of social cohesion, familiarity, and generational changes. In stark contrast to mass society, communities were identified by their self-sufficiency and structural (economic, educational, religious, and recreational) consistency and interdependence.

In a seminal work on education and community, Newmann and Oliver (1968) trace the historical conceptions of community from Tonnies' distinctions between Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society) to more contemporary sociological definitions. The differences that Tonnies (1963) underscores relate to the nature of relationships within communities and societies, which range from more natural and organic to more mechanical or rational (Newmann & Oliver 1968). Thus, relationships within a community are rooted in familiarity and interdependence whereas societal relationships reflect formal, contractual relations found in legal and commercial institutions and bureaucratic organizations and are characterized by independence and logic.

Contemporary notions of community (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, Moen, & Garbarino 1984; Coleman & Hoffer 1987; Newmann & Oliver 1968; Scherer 1972) argue that the community of residence in society today does not reflect the community of psychological meaning for most families (Steinberg 1989). These observers distinguish between a concept associated with physical or geographical boundaries and a concept of community grounded in social structures and social relations. For example, Newmann and Oliver (1968) include the following criteria in their definition, each of which is viewed as a continuum and indicative of greater or lesser degrees of community: (1) membership is valued as an end in itself, not merely as a means to other ends; (2) members share commitment to a common purpose; and (3) members have enduring and extensive personal contact with each other. The sense of solidarity, membership, and mutual support that results from community is thought to impact both the individual in terms of personal development and integration and the larger society in terms of social cohesion and stability (Raywid 1988b).

A distinct component of the notion of community is a social network or a social system of formal and informal organizations and opportunities for information exchange and face-to-face interactions among individuals (Cochran & Brassard 1979; Steinberg 1989). Members who are considered a part of a functional social network are characterized by well-known roles and contexts (neighborhood, relatives, work- or school-mates, people in agencies or organi-

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zations, etc.) and are distinguished from a more peripheral social circle (Cochran & Henderson 1986).

The notion of a school as a community embraces both the communal associations and personal relationships, which are sustained by a school's symbolic and personal dimensions and the more associative relationships, which are driven by the need to accomplish structured activities and maintain particular work relations (Bryk & Driscoll 1988). The vision of the school as a community portrays adults and students linked to one another by a common mission and by a network of supportive personal relations that strengthen their commitment to the organization (Bryk & Driscoll 1988). Three core components comprise this communal school organization (Bryk & Driscoll 1988): (1) a system of shared values among members of the organization which include the "norms of schooling" (Bird & Little 1986); (2) a common agenda of activities which include those formal and informal events which enable school participants to engage in face-to-face interactions, promote social ties, and encourage communal association; and (3) a pattern of social relations which embodies collaboration and extensive involvement and is highlighted by the collegiality shared among the adults in the school and the expanded role of the teacher.

The impact of community on the degree of social integration between families and schools is examined by Coleman and Hoffer (1987) in their study of private and public schools. The researchers argue that the type and strength of community in schools differentially affect the critical social connections which bond families and schools in the joint enterprise of education.

This concept of community refers to two types: functional and value. *Functional communities* are characterized by structural consistency between generations in which social norms and sanctions arise out of the social structure itself, and both reinforce and perpetuate that structure (Coleman & Hoffer 1987). Functional communities exhibit a high degree of uniformity and cohesion within geographical, social, economic, and ideological boundaries. *Value communities* describe a collection of people who share similar values about education and childrearing but who are not a functional community; they are strangers from various neighborhoods, backgrounds, and occupations united around an educational organization—their children's school.

Catholic Schools: Families of Catholic school students may constitute both value and functional communities. Besides value consistency, these families (may) attend the same religious services and know one another. These functional communities, however, are more circumscribed than the ones described earlier; they encompass only a religious institution and ignore other social or economic institutions.

Magnet Schools: Parents of children who attend a magnet school may constitute a value community if they exhibit a high degree of value consistency—e.g., commitment to a particular educational philosophy—but are

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mainly strangers drawn from a wide collection of city neighborhoods; they have little contact with one another outside school corridors.

Neighborhood Schools: Many public, neighborhood elementary schools reflect geographical communities but lack the value consistency or interinstitutional linkages of either the value or functional communities. While neighborhood schools a century ago served residential areas that were functional communities, social and technological changes have transformed many of these communities from enclaves of shared values and daily face-to-face talk to somewhat disparate sets of interests and weak affiliations.[4]

The research on organizational features which promote school community points to an array of structural and compositional features, including school size, sector, diversity of student body, and student selectivity (Bryk & Driscoll 1988). The empirical research in this area has focused primarily on the characteristics of "effective" schools in the Catholic and private school sectors (e.g., Bryk & Holland 1984; Cookson & Persell 1985; Peshkin 1986). The explicit mission or ethos of Catholic and private schools, combined with a comparatively smaller size and more homogeneous student body, have been considered key elements associated with creating the foundational elements of community (e.g., shared goals, personal ties) within schools. Little research has focused on organizational elements in public-sector or public-sector choice schools which may promote or constrain the development of community in these schools.

CHOICE

Choice refers to the affirmative decision parents make when they send their children to a school other than the public elementary school in their neighborhood.[5] It is assumed that enhanced choice (when it is exercised) creates communities of shared values that inspire the loyalty and commitment of parents and teachers (Chubb & Moe 1990; Elmore 1987; Erickson 1982; McNeil 1987; Metz 1986; Raywid 1988a). Research on public schools of choice indicates that parent satisfaction rates tend to be unusually high and often exceed approval ratings in comparable local schools (Raywid 1988b). Erickson (1982) suggests that both students and parents may feel more committed to school life when their enrollment at a particular school is voluntary. The act of choosing may make parents aware of benefits that would otherwise go unnoticed (Erickson 1982). Additionally, the opportunity to choose may generate a sense of power that itself enhances commitment (Erickson 1982). The effects of purchasing educational services through the payment of tuition may engender an even greater sense of commitment and affiliation. Thus, private choice parents and students might approach schooling with greater effort and thought than their nonchoice public school counterparts.

These processes and conditions associated with the concept of choice correspond to two mechanisms which encourage organizations to be responsive to

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their clients: exit and voice (Hirschman 1970). "Exit" refers to the act of shifting from one provider to another or from one school to another school. If a parent dissatisfied with the education her daughter is receiving in a Catholic elementary school transfers her child to a public elementary school, she is exercising the exit option. The option reminds schools that the interests and concerns of parents must be responded to in order to sustain the commitment and loyalty of these "clients."

The concept of "voice" is considered here as a mechanism families may invoke for encouraging schools to be responsive. Voice refers to protest, discussion, negotiation, voting, and other forms of political or "client" participation to obtain one's goals (Hirschman 1970). Voice is most often used by individual parents to obtain services for their children or collectively to alter local school and school district practices (Levin 1989). Voice can be exercised within a formal forum of decision making (e.g., a school board meeting) or in a spontaneous, informal exchange with a school official. The degree to which parents have access to this mechanism and the nature of school response to its employment is an area of focus in this study.

COMMITMENT

Commitment is defined as the array of programs, policies, and procedures schools design to develop and sustain parent participation. These programs may be teacher-initiated, principal-initiated, or schoolwide strategies developed by a group or organization such as the PTA or school-site council. They may range from strategies designed to promote home learning activities for parents, e.g., Family Math, to school-based governance and decision making opportunities. Commitment extends from the most explicit, mandated programs requiring parents' time to the more subtle, implicit support for parent volunteerism and recognition.

The research on the effect of school programs (organizational commitment) designed to involve parents in their children's education is both broad and somewhat incomplete. Most studies point to the promising results of school/teacher-initiated efforts designed to assist parents in engaging in educational activities at home and the positive impact of school-based parent volunteer activities for families and schools alike (see section above). School-based projects such as Family Math, Schools Reaching Out, and the Yale Child Study Center programs have recorded strong and positive responses from both families and schools (Kreinberg & Thompson 1986; Davies, Burch, & Johnson 1992; Comer 1980).[6] At the same time, studies indicate that parents respond in different ways to involvement efforts and requests. For example, the important influence of family structure is evidenced in the participation patterns of single mothers and mothers who work outside the home. These mothers are less likely than other parents to attend school meetings or school-based workshops

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(Espinoza 1988) but are as or more likely to help their children at home with school work (Epstein 1990; Herrick & Epstein 1991). Other research identifies the critical role of racial and ethnic backgrounds on the ways in which parents interact with their children and schools. This research includes African-American families (Scott-Jones 1987); Hispanic families (Delgado-Gaitan 1992); and Chinese-American families (Sung 1987). In sum, while studies suggest that parents whose children's school or teacher encourages involvement (home or at school) are much more likely to engage in those interactive types of activities than other parents, the evidence underscores the important influence of family background and organization on family-school interactions.

With the conceptual focus on cultural capital as an element of family background which influences patterns of parent interactions with schools, this study considers the relative and reciprocal influence of an organizational (programmatic) commitment to parent involvement in mediating the effects of social class on patterns of parent involvement. The possibility exists that the type, intensity, and conduct of a programmatic commitment to involving parents in school and home learning activities may level some of the effects of social class differences. Alternatively, the programs and policies designed to encourage broad and inclusive participation among parents may actually exacerbate social class differences rather than advance the educational opportunities for all.

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

The nature of family-school relations is both broad and complex. In descriptive analyses of parent involvement, researchers often construct schematic charts which depict parents acting in roles ranging from "advisers" and "advocates" to "home-based tutors" and "traditional audience" (see Brandt 1979; Brown & Haycock 1984; Crespo & Louque 1984; Criscuolo 1986; Romero 1982; Wolfendale 1983). Other researchers diagram the location of potential parent action to include the home and the school and within those broad categories identify activities as either advisory or collaborative (McLaughlin & Shields 1986). The partnership model of family-school involvement in students' education outlined by Epstein (1987) includes five distinct strands: (1) basic obligations of families to create healthy and nurturing home conditions; (2) basic obligations of schools to communicate with families about school practices and programs; (3) volunteer roles for parents which assist teachers and administrators in supporting academic, sports, and other activities; (4) family involvement in skill-building and educational enrichment activities at home which support classroom learning; and (5) parent participation in school decision making and governance through school site councils and other organized policy-making and advocacy groups. The emphasis throughout this and other

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models is on the separable and identifiable activities which comprise school, community, and parent activities (Epstein 1992; Epstein & Dauber 1988).

To be sure, these descriptive role titles are useful for painting in broad brush some of the activities and responsibilities of parents in the education of their children. This book, however, considers parent involvement within a less restrictive framework of parents' experiences and perceptions in the context of schooling. The focus rests with the nature of parents' and teachers' requests of each other (e.g., information, attendance, time, participation, cooperation, etc.) and with the nature and quality of their responses. For example, teachers might request parents to help with homework, attend meetings and school events, employ a tutor, and reinforce reading skills as well as to ensure that their child is dressed, fed, and on time. Parents' requests of teachers may range from the vague and general—ensuring their child receives a "good education"— to the more directed and precise—advancement to a new reading group, extra support and direction, regular progress reports, classroom volunteer and observation opportunities, approval of curricular materials, and flexible appointment hours. Both parents and teachers might request the respect of the other but may have very different conceptions of this term, depending upon whether they view families and schools as separate, parallel institutions or mutually supporting, overlapping enterprises. The point here is to avoid a checklist or time sheet approach which merely records the number of interactions; my interest rests with the explanations parents and teachers give for what they do or what they fail to do and in the value or meaning these interactions (or their absences) represent.

AIMS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This book bridges two relevant, yet traditionally disconnected discussions related to school organization and the influence of social class on patterns of parent participation. The research blends an organizational study with issues of social stratification by examining the impact of community, choice, and commitment (programmatic) on family-school interactions. Discussion and analyses are drawn from case studies of three elementary schools: a Catholic school, a magnet school, and a public neighborhood school. The intent rests with describing the elements of social class which affect the ways in which parents participate in their children's schooling, examining how these elements influence the nature and quality of family-school interactions, and explaining the processes through which school organization mediates the influence of social class on family-school interactions.

Chapter 2 examines the implications of the generational, organizational, and philosophical chasms which fracture relationships between families and a Catholic parish school. The importance of nonacademic school programs is highlighted by demonstrating the ways in which these extracurricular activities

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unify the disparate sets of parents within the parameters of space and time. Chapter 3 examines the case of the Carlton Magnet School by identifying the ways in which the school community is constructed. School-based social networks between socially and economically differentiated school parents are promoted by extensive communication channels, required participation, and school choice. Chapter 4 provides a template against which to compare the nature of community and family-school interactions in the previous chapters on public- and private-sector choice schools. The situation at Western School reflects a critical absence of social cohesion and communication despite a multifaceted parent volunteer program. The chapter argues against traditional, piecemeal, programmatic approaches to enhancing parent participation in schools and asserts the need to examine the organizational processes and structures which contribute to elements of a school community. The nature and function of community in each of the three schools and the organizational arrangements are revisited in chapter 5. The analysis focuses on refining the concept of school community and its implications for mediating the influence of social class on family-school interactions. The final chapter contributes to the ongoing discourse among school officials, policy makers, and researchers regarding parent involvement and school organization. Policy recommendations are proposed which are aimed at achieving two separate but complementary goals: (1) building community among parents; and (2) building connections between parents and school staff. The objectives lie with promoting better communication, understanding, and trust between families and schools in order to enhance the experiences and expectations of both parents and school staff.

NOTES

1. It is neither the design nor the intent of this study to examine the assertions embedded in the research on social class differences in family life as they relate to particular childrearing practices (see Bronfenbrenner 1966; Heath 1982; Kohn 1969; Rubin 1976; Wright & Wright 1976). This study is concerned with the ways in which class culture facilitates or impedes parents' management of the process of schooling. While examining the educational values of parents across social class, this book does not include analyses of social class differences associated with linguistic patterns and occupational socialization, which are important influences on the educational outcomes of students. This book focuses on the factors which influence parents in their negotiation of the schooling process and not on the broad and complex question of differential educational outcomes by social class.

2. In this study social class is defined by an individual's occupational status, education, and income level.

3. This study focuses on the influence of social class on parent participation in schooling and is not designed to examine the influence of social class on students' achievement.

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4. It is certainly true, however, that some neighborhood schools, particularly those that serve middle- and upper-middle-class families who can establish residence in neighborhoods with "good" schools reflect elements of both value and functional communities. The point here is that in general, these influences are less prevalent and less pervasive than in either public/choice or nonpublic schools.

5. This concept of choice does not overlook the issue of choice as exercised by families with the financial means and information to establish residence in neighborhoods served by "good" or "desirable" public schools. However, the primary focus of this study rests with the set of explicit and implicit understandings, expectations, and assumptions which influence patterns of parent participation in those schools which are recognized by all participants as "schools of choice." Public, neighborhood elementary schools do not reflect the level of choice embodied in magnet schools or private schools; the issue of choice is solely that of some individual families.

6. Family Math is a program designed to involve parents in home activities which reinforce mathematical concepts and applications. The strategies and techniques used in the program emphasize the fun and enjoyment of the learning activities and are shared with parents through a series of workshops which emphasize the wide and natural application of mathematics. The Schools Reaching Out program is designed to promote parent-school linkages in low-income communities. The program includes a community portrait project to celebrate the school and its local community's historical, social, and cultural traditions; regular home visits to school families; a parent's center furnished to provide parents with an array of social and educational materials; and staff development to strengthen family-school partnership techniques. The Yale Child Study Center program was developed by Dr. James Comer in 1968 to address the psychological, social, and academic competencies of children. The Comer program includes a governance and management team (with parent representatives); a parent participation program; a mental health child study team; and a professional development program for school staff.

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