

Exploring School Involvement in Parents of English Language Learners

Elizabeth Vera,
Ph.D., Marla
Israel, Ed.D.,
Nancy
Goldberger,
M.Ed., Laura
Knight-Lynn,
Ph.D., Megan
Polanin, M.A.,
and Lindsay
Viellieu, M.A.



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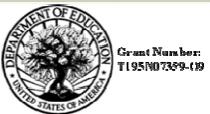
LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

- The population of children from immigrant families is growing *faster than any other group of children in the United States*
- Recent U.S. Department of Education statistics reveal that *over 5 million school-aged children* are categorized as English Language Learners (ELL)
- Parental educational involvement has been widely studied as one of the *most important predictors of school success*, not just in the United States, but in other countries as well



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

- For ELL students, programs that engage family in the educational process, among other interventions, will *effectively improve academic achievement*
- However, this population of parents often faces unique barriers, hindering them from being more actively involved in their children's academic lives:
 - School-based barriers, which may include a negative climate toward immigrant parents
 - Individual barriers such as a lack of dominant language proficiency
 - Logistical barriers such as childcare and work responsibilities which often make it difficult for parents to attend school functions
- Parents can still be *involved in and supportive of* the educational experiences of their children

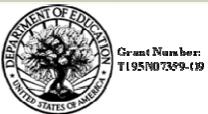


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CHICAGOLAND PARTNERS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (CPELL)

- Part of an English Language Acquisition: National Professional Development program grant
- Collaboration between Loyola University Chicago and four school districts in the Chicagoland area, all of which have a growing ELL population representing more than 40 countries. Districts include FSD72, HSD73, ATSD102, and NSSD112.
- Developed strategies for encouraging participation of ELL parents that has taken current research-based literature into account

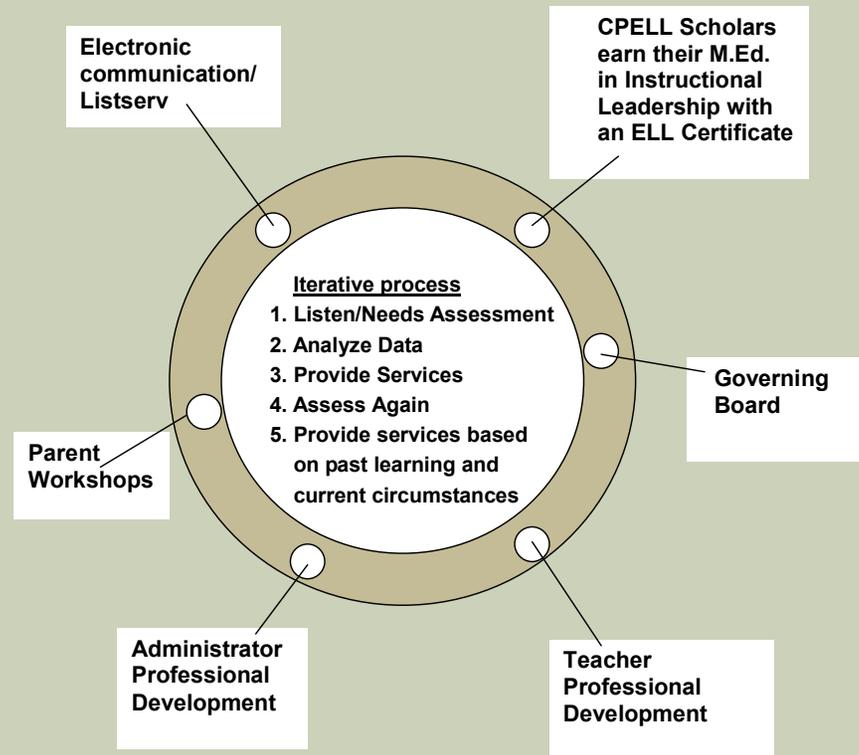
One goal of the CPELL project is to help partner school districts to increase the participation of their ELL parents in education-related activities.



THE ITERATIVE PROCESS

CPELL Capacity Building

The elements that surround the outside of the diagram are the expressions of the work accomplished by the iterative process outlined in the center.



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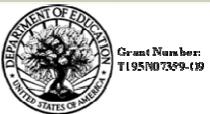
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STEP ONE: CONDUCT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

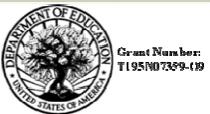
- Surveys were utilized to inquire to ELL parents about the most common and least common ways they are involved in their children's educational experiences:
 - adapted from the *Family Involvement Questionnaire*
 - covers activities such as
 - 1) attending Parent-Teacher conferences
 - 2) monitoring homework
 - 3) using rituals such as bedtimes
 - 4) providing space to do homework
 - 5) utilizing community resources such as museums

- Additionally, we asked parents about what kinds of programs they would be interested in attending.



STEP ONE CHALLENGES

- Performing a needs assessment with ELL parents has its own set of challenges.
 - Qualitative versus quantitative data
 - Translation of materials
 - Procedure for distributing and collecting surveys



STEP TWO: IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Our research indicated that the most highly endorsed barriers to parental involvement were:
 - 1) language barriers
 - 2) lack of knowledge about the U.S. educational system
 - 3) not wanting to interfere with how teachers do their jobs
 - 4) stress from other responsibilities
- *Monitoring homework* was the most frequently endorsed parental involvement activity
 - Parents were less frequently involved with numerous other activities such as using community resources
- Based on this input, CPELL made recommendations to the school districts about the ways in which they might reduce barriers to parent involvement.



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STEP THREE: CREATING/IMPLEMENTING PARENT PROGRAMMING

- Information gained about the most and least frequent types of parent involvement + data regarding which topics parents were most interested in attending → parent workshops held at the school that were staffed by university and local school personnel
- It is critically important to “link” parent workshops with a pre-existing school event, like report card pick-up, to increase participation



STEP FOUR: ASSESSING PARENT PROGRAMMING EFFORTS

- Our outcome evaluation data from these events suggest that parents were pleased by the information acquired at the events and valued being in settings with other ELL parents with whom they could share their experiences.
- Qualitative data obtained at these events suggested that attendance increased when the following are provided:
 - 1) translated announcements by both flyer and phone calls
 - 2) native-language translators at the parent events
 - 3) food
 - 4) childcare, and
 - 5) free children's literature in the native language for every family in attendance.



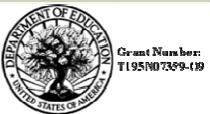
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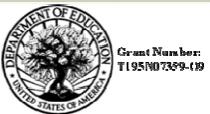
3 LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED

- 1) Given the multitude of ways that parents can be involved in supporting the educational achievement of their children, it is critical for researchers and practitioners to measure *different types of parental involvement* when conducting needs assessments



3 LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED

- 2) It is important to tailor interventions aimed at increasing parental involvement taking into account both the *demographic uniqueness* and *reported existing types of involvement voiced by parents*
- Considering that schools will potentially be less successful in increasing parent participation when targeting interventions to parents of ELL children in general, they should seek to understand the life experiences of the parents of their ELL children before making efforts to increase their involvement

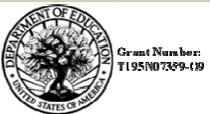


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3 LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED

- 3) Efforts should be made to articulate *positive messages* to ELL parents about the importance of parental involvement as it relates to educational success.
 - Examples include: psycho-educational workshops and efforts made by school administrators and teachers to enforce this message



THE PROCESS IN ACTION

- Since each district starts at their own unique place, custom presentations have been created and delivered to meet their expressed need based on the assessment information.
- During the 4 years of partnership, CPELL has presented numerous ELL parent-focused workshops onsite at various schools within the partner districts. Topics have included:
 - Supporting Your Child's Education
 - Learning Starts at Home: Encouraging Bilingualism and Literacy
 - Supporting Your Child's Academic Excellence
 - It Takes a Village
 - Parents as Advocates



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THE PROCESS IN ACTION (CONTINUED)

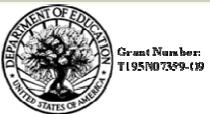
- Growth has been observed in all districts in terms of parental involvement.
- Furthermore, several districts have demonstrated the desire and readiness to dig deeper into the process, resulting in new forms of CPELL/district interaction focused on growing parent involvement.



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4 DISTRICTS = 4 PATHS

- **HSD73** is a large school district comprised of 3,942 students, with a reported 26.3% Hispanic and 17.1% Asian student population. (2011 Illinois Interactive Report Card)
- Originally a half partner, HSD has nearly doubled their involvement with CPELL in the past year, hosting their first CPELL parent event in 2011 to a capacity crowd.
- This district has now begun to host other events for different parent groups to better welcome all families to their school.



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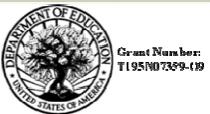


4 DISTRICTS = 4 PATHS (CONTINUED)

- **ATSD102** is a large school district comprised of 1,998 students, with a reported 25.3% Asian and 5% Hispanic student population. (2011 Illinois Interactive Report Card)
- In 2011-12, CPELL has worked with parent groups to support the district's initiative regarding increased ELL parent involvement in school organizations.
- Administrators of the district have invited CPELL to support PTO leadership as they seek to develop a more diverse representation in organizations and in leadership positions.

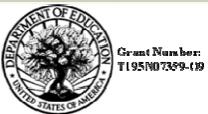
4 DISTRICTS = 4 PATHS (CONTINUED)

- **NSSD112** is a large school district comprised of 4,348 students, with a reported 21.2% Hispanic student population. (2011 Illinois Interactive Report Card)
- CPELL's work with this district has evolved significantly in the administrator and teacher professional development as well as in programming developed for parents.
- In February 2012, a specially focused workshop for the NSSD Latino Family organization has been planned that is geared toward helping parents of middle school students learn how to better prepare their children for high school and eventually college.



4 DISTRICTS = 4 PATHS (CONTINUED)

- **FSD 72 is a small school district comprised of 626 students, with a reported 28.6% Asian and 14.5% Hispanic student population. (2011 Illinois Interactive Report Card)**
- **In 2010, the district wrote specific goals into their strategic plan that reflected their commitment to ELL learners and their families.**
- **To reach these goals, CPELL was asked to create and lead a District Learning Team (DLT) 2010-11 AY. Members of the faculty, administration, and community were invited to participate in this year-long endeavor.**
- **As a result of the work of the DLT, two District Implementation Teams (DIT) have been formed this academic year to carry out the recommendations of the DLT. One DIT focuses on developing a parent ambassador program; the other on a student ambassador program.**



THANK YOU!

■ Questions?

- For more information about the CPELL project, visit us online:

www.luc.edu/cpell

- Contact CPELL via email:

cpell@luc.edu



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