

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF GEORGIA LAW
MANDATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

JUDITH KAY BUCK

(Under the direction of JOHN DAYTON)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to study the role of the parent as a stakeholder in educational improvement, the need for parental involvement, and current legislation mandating the participation of parents in Georgia public schools.

This study investigated the following research questions:

1. What does current literature say about parental involvement in schools?
2. What Georgia legislation has mandated parental involvement?
3. How do Georgia laws align with identified areas of effective parental involvement?

The following findings were based on an analysis of evidence obtained from the review of relevant literature, legislation of selected states, and current Georgia law through 2002.

1. The nature of parental involvement in American education has historically changed with societal changes.
2. Parents are vital stakeholders in democratic schools.
3. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required increased parental involvement in public schools.
4. According to the literature, there are six areas of effective parental involvement: basic obligations; school to home communications; volunteering; learning at home; decision-making, governance, and advocacy; and collaboration.
5. Parental involvement defined as negative can have an anti-democratic effect in education.
6. Positive parental involvement has shown to effect academic achievement, grades, school completion, and support for schools.
7. A structured parental involvement program is beneficial to the operation of schools and parent support. Georgia has not mandated a structured parental involvement program like other states. In contrast, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and South Carolina have comprehensive legislation that addresses formalized parental

involvement in schools that include designated personnel, funding, planning, implementation, evaluation and rewards.

8. Georgia laws have:

- mandated actions required of schools to involve parents
- mandated involvement of parents in the education of their children
- mandated actions required of parents in schools
- addressed the need for parental involvement in schools
- addressed identified areas of effective parental involvement: basic obligations, school-to-home communication, decision-making/governance/advocacy, and collaboration with community agencies
- not addressed the areas of parent volunteering at school and parental involvement in learning activities at home
- not been written in a structured manner

INDEX WORDS: Parental involvement, Parent involvement, Parent, Mandates, School legislation, Public school legislation

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF GEORGIA LAWS
MANDATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

JUDITH KAY BUCK

B.A., The University of Florida, 1968

M.Ed., The University of Georgia, 1986

Ed.S., The University of Georgia, 1994

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003

© 2003

Judith Kay Buck

All Rights Reserved

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF GEORGIA LAW
MANDATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

JUDITH KAY BUCK

Major Professor: John Dayton

Committee: C. Thomas Holmes
Karen Loup-Hunt

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2003

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband, Greg, for the many years he has supported my desires to continue my education, and my parents, Roye and Grace Moye, for the love and encouragement they always provided.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reviewed acknowledgement pages of numerous other dissertations, I wondered how anyone ever completed an advanced degree without the help and support of a wide variety of people in their lives. I now know you don't! An endeavor of this magnitude requires more time, energy, and dedication than one individual can muster. It requires the "gemeinschaft" of those who care about your success. Each person in his or her own way gave me the fortitude to complete my doctorate. For their love, words of encouragement, and expertise, I am eternally grateful.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership at The University of Georgia. Dr. Ray Bruce, with his passion for the concept curriculum and supervision, opened the doors for me to visualize myself as an educational leader. To all the members of my committee and my former teachers, Dr. Ken Tanner, Dr. Thomas Holmes, and Dr. John Dayton, I am most appreciative for their belief that I could do this. Without Dr. Dayton as my major professor, there were times that this finale may have never materialized. His guidance, support, encouragement, and expertise were the traits that make one a true teacher and friend. His faith in my ability to complete this endeavor was what sustained me. I owe much to Dr. Sally Zepeda, who always provided tremendous support and words of wisdom. Lastly, in their usual fashion, the department pulled together when Dr. Tanner was unable to serve on my committee and Dr. Loup-Hunt agreed to stand-in for him. They are a wonderful group of professors who continue to honor the field of education!

I suppose none of this journey would have ever happened had it not been for Jim Kahrs, who first said, “When are you going to start your doctorate?” and then repeatedly reminded me that it was “the process” and “not a race.” He gave me the opportunity to learn things I never dreamed of attempting. You are my valued friend and mentor!

To my dearest friend, Janice McLeroy, who without fail was there for me, “thank you” will never be enough! Whether it was to take me to the lake and seclude me with the computer or to call at 6:00 a.m. on the road to tell me “you can do this, just keep a smile on that face”, this “D” is for you!

My thanks also to my friends and colleagues at Shiloh High School, Bill H., Ray, Bill K., Sam, Inga, Bill M., and Pam, who were very understanding, when it meant covering for me so I could attend class or meet a deadline. Kay Holleman kept my feet on the ground and gave me the day-to-day encouragement to handle the life of educator and student. Joy Leathers made sure my commas were in the right place and sentences made sense. Pam Wassel saw me through the eleventh hour.

Peggy Frantz, with her cheerful “come on over” at all hours of the night, provided the technical skills that made it all “look good”. Without her help it would have bogged down in the quagmire. Boston here we come!

To my friends, Georgia and Jim, Henry, Sheila, Herb and Louise, Dennis, Sheron, Matt, Otis, Lea, and so many more, I appreciate the words of encouragement as you passed my way. Those gentle reminders were always when I needed them most.

To my family, Mother, Randy, Teresa, Jim, Christi, Jim, and Mom and Ol’ Dad, who kept encouraging me every time I took two steps forward and one step back, I owe

my love and appreciation. A special thank you to my dear sister, Vicki, and my sister-in-law, Charlotte, for my get-away trips, beaches, and salt air to clear my mind!

It has always been my desire to give my three wonderful children, Dana, Matthew, and Stephanie the opportunity to explore the world (including science museums), to take a chance on the unexpected, and to love to learn. Each of you has so many strengths and talents and best of all you enjoy sharing them with those that need them. Jason, my dear son-in-law and the father of my precious granddaughter, Caroline, has given me the opportunity to complete my world. I hope that my earning this doctorate will be a testimony to them that learning and the excitement of discovery never stop! I love you!

Foremost, where would I be without my dear husband, Greg? All the times you made it possible, whether it was a hug, a needed ink cartridge, or a driver to the UGA library, you were there to make it all right. Your name should be on that sheepskin. You earned it!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Research Questions.....	3
Procedures.....	3
Limitations of the Study.....	5
II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
Background of the Problem	6
Current Perspectives	9
Areas of Parental Involvement.....	12
Legislation.....	25
Selected State Legislation.....	27
Georgia Legislation.....	38
A Plus Education Reform Act of 2001	41
Summary	45
III AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF GEORGIA LAW	
MANDATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.....	47
Current Georgia Laws.....	48

A Plus Education Reform Act of 2001	54
Effective Parental Involvement Based on Relevant Literature	59
Summary	70
IV FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUMMARY	72
Restatement of Purpose	72
Restatement of Procedure	74
Findings	76
Conclusions	78
Epilogue	79
REFERENCES	83
APPENDICES	
A OFFICIAL CODE OF GEORGIA: PARENTAL	
INVOLVEMENT AREAS	89
B OFFICIAL CODE OF GEORGIA: SELECTED SELECTIONS	
MANDATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	90

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is a gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates invention. It shocks us out of sheep-like passivity, and sets us at noting and contriving . . . conflict is the “sine que non” of reflection and ingenuity.

-John Dewey
(Glanz & Neville, 1997)

There is conflict in the American public education system. There is a call for accountability, a demand for improvement. There is conflict in the quest for control and power in American public schools. Educators are concerned with improving educational achievement of students and are looking for answers. Professionals rely on researchers, experts in the field, and inquiry to identify deficits, to seek solutions and to be innovative in the rapidly changing institution called “school.” Educators look to the world of business for models of efficiency, overlooking at times that their customers are quite different from those of the business world (Pajak, 1997; Sarason, 1995). The strength of the American public school system depends on the ability to problem solve in a spirit of community, “gemeinschaft” (DeMoss, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1997).

Parents, as customers and stakeholders, are often left out of the picture (DeMoss, 1999). Occasionally, customer satisfaction is evaluated by token surveys; stakeholders’ involvement is distantly designed by legislation and policies; and actual implementation is left up to the individual school. Thus far, these initiatives have had little impact in the improvement of education.

A change in the power and control of education requires more time and energy than one set of stakeholders has available. It will take a diverse community of learners to improve schools (Barth, 1990; Glickman, 1997; Smyth, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1997). Barth (1990) states that there are passive “sheep” living in the world of status quo depending on sources outside their school for change, and there are innovative “goats” willing to put in the effort to “promote and sustain learning among themselves” (p. 32).

Snyder (1997) advocates the development of “learning communities, work teams, and human resources” (p. 215). As educational supervisors, goats and the sheep must be given the freedom to question, observe, reflect, and personalize along with the support to improve educational achievement. Supervision must focus on more than what occurs instructionally in the classroom. There needs to be a broader arena for improvement that includes the context, location, and participants (Smyth, 1997). It must be acknowledged that each individual is at different stages of growth and brings various cultural values. Sergiovanni (1997) promotes a “community of supervision” where “leaders and followers influence one another in the pursuit of shared purposes” (p. 268). Teachers, students, parents, community, and administrators are all stakeholders in the education of our youth.

The purpose of this dissertation was to study the role of the parent as a stakeholder in educational improvement, the need for parental involvement, and current legislation mandating the participation of parents in Georgia public schools. Because of the essential role of parents in the education process, schools must find effective ways to promote parental involvement.

The history and current status of current parental involvement practices and their effectiveness was studied to determine the relevance to education. Relevant legislation

was reviewed to survey federal and selected states' approaches to parental involvement mandates. Georgia laws current through the 2002 legislative session were analyzed and synthesized to explain Georgia laws mandating parental involvement. Finally, these laws were correlated to effective areas of parental involvement as identified in relevant literature.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

1. What is parental involvement in public schools?
2. What legislation in Georgia has mandated parental involvement?
3. How do Georgia laws align with identified areas of effective parental involvement?

Procedures

The research for this study began with a personal and professional interest in the role of parents in the education of their child. Based on the belief that the role of American public schools is to educate children for a life in a democratic society, a review of democratic schools and their practices pertaining to the parent as a viable participant was conducted. Areas of parental involvement studied included the practices and benefits for individual children as well as an individual school. Literature describing the effect of parental involvement on student academic success was reviewed. Books by scholars in the field and professional journals at the University of Georgia library were searched, and relevant information was identified and analyzed. Significant statements by prominent educational leaders were reviewed on the Internet to ascertain the message being

provided to the general public. The Official Code Of Georgia was reviewed on the Internet and verified at the University of Georgia Law Library.

An extensive search of websites was conducted to gather the most up-to-date information on current legislation and research on the topic. Through this research, the author compiled a database of parental involvement practices and studies in the field of education.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature pertaining to parental involvement, federal involvement, and state laws pertaining to parental involvement. The Education of Secondary and Elementary Schools (ESEA) Act of 2001, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act, was reviewed to identify any provisions mandating participation of parents in schools. Two major Georgia education improvement initiatives, the Quality Basic Education (1984) and the A Plus Education Reform Act (2001), were also reviewed.

Current laws addressed parents' rights and responsibilities involving their own child as well as school-wide activities. A key source of information was obtained from a national web site, "Find Law" on which 125 references of "parent" in Georgia public education were noted. These laws were analyzed to determine which ones directly relate to parental involvement in public schools, kindergarten through grade 12. The official codes of selected states referenced in professional literature were reviewed to identify relevance to parental involvement mandates in public schools. However, the primary data for this study were derived from a review of the Official Code of Georgia.

Chapter III provides an analysis of the current laws in the Georgia Code that pertain to parental involvement in public schools. As the study proceeded, laws were analyzed to identify relevance to research in the field of parental involvement in schools.

Chapter IV provides findings and conclusions concerning the role of parents in Georgia public schools based on the research conducted. The epilogue included the author's comments on the importance of including parents as stakeholders in democratic education.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study were limited to Georgia legislation through the 2002 legislative session. Only laws pertaining to kindergarten through grade 12 public schools were addressed. This study did not include laws specific to special education students. Federal legislation specifically relating to parents' rights and responsibilities of special education students was not included.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter addressed relevant literature concerning parental involvement, including: (A) background of the problem, (B) current perspectives, (C) areas of parental involvement, (D) legislation (E) selected state legislation, (F) Georgia legislation, and (G) A Plus Education Reform Act of 2001.

Background of the Problem

As American education evolved, there was a move toward increased societal responsibility to provide for a greater variety of children's needs for maximum learning, health, and protection. Correspondingly, as the expectations of public schools grew, the involvement of parents declined. Not only were schools expected to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills alone, but they were to provide nutrition, care before and after school, and character development. In many middle and secondary schools, extensive competitive athletic activities required a large commitment of time and money outside the allotted local, state, and federal funds. As a caring, nurturing service institution, schools diligently tried to be all for everyone. Legislative bodies outside the local schools usually made the decisions about what and how these roles would be executed. Teachers and administrators implemented these decisions as best they could within the boundaries of their professional judgment and available resources. The parents were usually removed from inclusion in their child's education unless their child was not succeeding academically or behaviorally.

DeMoss (1999) offered a review of the history of parental involvement based on Alvin Toffler's three eras of revolution in American culture. The first was the agrarian era in which the primary purpose of school was to produce educated citizens who appreciated good literature and had a common religious belief. Most "schools" were located in private homes or churches. The Massachusetts Act of 1647 was the first of its kind to mandate the establishment of reading schools in towns of 100 or more families. There existed high parental control with low teacher pay and autonomy. Parents' morals, knowledge, and trade influenced curriculum and instruction.

The second era was one of efficiency and progressive initiatives couched in the industrial revolution. At the beginning of the 18th century, the governance of schools was focused on standardization with community involvement as reflected in taxpayer support. Citizens still determined setting budget, appointing teachers, maintaining facilities, and supervising teachers and students. The passage of the first compulsory attendance law was in Massachusetts in 1852. The Congress of Parents and Teachers, originally named the National Congress of Mothers, was formed in 1897. "This organization was proactive in helping to pass child-labor laws and pure food and drug acts" (Zepeda & Lagenbach, 1999, p. 117).

In the early 1900s, the focus of control began to shift toward centralized agencies. "The erosion of parental authority and control over local schools could be seen in the increased power given to state, county, and city superintendents" (DeMoss, 1999, p. 12). In 1909, a White House conference was held, addressing the care of dependent children. As a result of this conference, the Children's Bureau was created and established the "official government concern for children" (Zepeda & Lagenbach, 1999). Zepeda and

Lagenbach state: “Membership in the Parent-Teacher Association, PTA, grew from 60,000 in 1915 . . . to nearly 1,500,000 in 1930” (p. 118).

Goals of efficiency, social justice, and democracy often led schools to turn to business as a model for governance and structure. DeMoss (1999) reported that “centralization of power would eventually become the greatest barrier to future change” (p. 13). DeMoss also stated “the increasing professionalism of teachers during the second wave further alienated parents” (p. 14).

The third wave began in the late 40s as men and women were returning from the war. Society was beginning to view the inclusion of all members of society. In response to the exclusion beliefs of the Ku Klux Klan and Hitler’s impact on the world, the inclusion era moved to include less separation and segregation. *Brown v. Board of Topeka* in 1954 was the first time a parent had taken legal action against a school and won, requiring the end of segregation in public schools (DeMoss, 1999).

Federally funded programs, such as Headstart, signified federal involvement, providing formalized programs encouraging parental involvement on advisory boards and parenting skills at home (Zepeda & Lagenbach, 1999). ESEA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, was enacted. Parental involvement was mandated to help plan and evaluate the services provided (Zepeda & Lagenbach, 1999).

During the 1980s, doubt about the success of the American public school system arose and was compiled in the report “A Nation at Risk.” Secretary of Education Richard Riley encouraged every school “to promote partnerships that would increase parental involvement” (Lewis, 1995, p. 430).

Accountability became the focus of school governing agencies. Initiatives such as site-based management and home/school cooperation began to gain momentum. By the end of the century, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which had grown to 6.5 million, offered a solid base for parental involvement (Zepeda & Lagenbach, 1999).

The philosophical differences between educational professionals, bureaucracies, parents, and communities formed a basis of the conflict over control and power that education was experiencing. It was the challenge that created a need for those concerned about education to look for solutions.

Current Perspectives

In the 1960s emphasis on parental involvement of all students, especially young children, increased. Policymakers began to recognize the importance of intervention programs for at-risk and disadvantaged children. An evolution of home intervention programs moved from a deficit model in the 1960s to a different model in the 1970s and eventually to an empowerment model in the 1980s (Rose & Shepard, 1995).

Epstein and Dauber (1991) found a considerable disparity in what teachers believed about urban parents' children and the attitudes of parents themselves. Negative attitudes of teachers toward parents of at-risk children did not agree with the parents' attitudes regarding their perception of a positive involvement. Often school personnel and social workers used a direct, authoritative form of communicating with parents, which lacked a sense of caring and mutual respect.

Lewis (1995) referred to concerns by Eric Hanushek in "Making Schools Work" that productive school reform which had offered parents more choices while holding schools accountable meant parents needed more and better communication. The author

did not support the belief that this would be accomplished through mandating more parental involvement. Lewis elaborated, “Concern about the problems of parental involvement and conflicting solutions offered are to my mind one of the many transformations now occupying schools and society” (p. 431).

Numerous barriers developed over the years that prevented meaningful parent/school relationships. Cultural beliefs related to the perceived authoritative position of the teacher had been perpetuated from the teacher and parents’ perceptions. In some instances, parents themselves had memories of unfavorable experiences of their own school years. Parents may have been unsure how to express their concerns to teachers, especially those of varying economic or education levels or those from diverse cultures (Katz, Aidman, Reese, & Clark, 1996; Jackson & Cooper, 1992; Zepeda & Lagenbach, 1999).

Parental involvement in children’s education promoted student achievement (Barton & Coley, 1992; Epstein, 1986; Holland, 1999; Sanders, 2001; Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998). Studies indicated that parental involvement at all levels had a positive influence on children’s success in school. Students from involved families had higher grades and test scores and better long-term achievement (Almatea, 1998; Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998). Parental involvement positively influenced grades, course credits completed, attendance, behavior, and school preparedness (Simon, 2001).

Crimm’s meta-analysis of 57 quantitative studies produced an effect size that indicated parental involvement had a positive impact on a child’s academic success. The analysis also found that elementary students benefited the most from parent involvement (Crimm, 1992).

Parents' expectations had the strongest relationship with higher student achievement (Rose & Shepard, 1995). Studies showed that teens with higher involved parents were three times more likely to earn a bachelor's degree (Bermis, Krucker, Smith-Ruckhold, & Wiese, 1998). Parental involvement was also linked to lower likelihood of their children dropping out of school (Brogenschneider, 1997).

Some parents delegated full responsibility for their children's education to school personnel, while others saw themselves as having an integral role. A study by Almatea (1998) indicated that as students progressed through the grades, parental involvement declined.

Lewis (1995) stated that concerned parents were worn down by the system and their children's demand for independence. Moreover, parents contended that they would be more supportive if schools seemed more like families and less like fortresses (p. 431).

DuFour and Eaker (1998) described a survey conducted by Henderson and Berla that resulted in emerging findings that concluded:

- When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or parent's educational level.
- The more extensive the parental involvement, the higher the student achievement.
- The more parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior, are more likely to graduate, and are more likely to attend post-secondary education.
- The benefits of involving parents are not confined to the early years; there are significant gains at all ages and grade levels.
- The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is the extent to which that student's family is able to (1) create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers; and (3) become involved in their children's education. (p. 235-236).

Areas of Parental Involvement

Epstein, Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, has studied and written extensively for the last 17 years about issues regarding parental involvement in schools. In 1986 she surveyed parents to ascertain their perceptions of the different kinds of parental involvement. Views suggested that parents favored programs that stressed cooperation between school and home.

Epstein (1987) identified four types of parental involvement in schools:

- basic obligations, including health, safety, and a positive home environment
- school-to-home communications, providing parents' information regarding their children's programs and academic progress
- parent volunteer involvement at school, such as educational and extra-curricular activities
- parental involvement in learning activities at home, including supervision of homework and helping children work on skills that would help them learn in the classroom

In years to come these categories were expanded to include two additional areas:

- parental involvement in school decision-making, governance, and advocacy, including participation in parent/teacher organizations
- parental participation in collaborative exchanges between schools and community organizations, agencies, and businesses (Davies, 1991; Epstein, 2001)

In lower grades parental involvement was usually demonstrated in the form of helping with homework, rewarding good grades, attending parent/teacher conferences, reinforcing good reading habits, and monitoring their children's progress (Ho-Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Rose & Shepard, 1995). Reference to studies by Astone and McLanahan in 1991 and Muller in 1993 suggested that parents of higher socio-economic background were more involved in their children's education.

Wehlburg (1996) summarized parental involvement of secondary students to include parent as communicator, parent as supporter of activities, parent as learner, parent as advocate, parent as decision maker, parent as volunteer, and parent as home activities teacher.

DuFour and Eaker (1998) described six "standards" of parental involvement based on a framework developed by the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. The first, communication needed to be regular, two-way, timely, and meaningful. Next, parenting was supported by providing training, resources, and other services such as transportation. Parents were also encouraged to re-enforce learning at school with learning at home and informing parents about curriculum. The authors also offered suggestions for parents involved with volunteering at school. A parent volunteer coordinator position would help to promote volunteering. Standard five addressed the role of parents in decision-making and advisory positions. Lastly, parents and schools should not overlook the benefits of collaborating with community agencies.

A decade of studies of kindergarten through 12th grade students identified as low-income, well-motivated, high achievers indicated the families shared several common characteristics: (a) a feeling of control over their lives, (b) frequent communication of

high expectations to children, (c) a family dream of success for the future, (d) hard work as a key to success, (e) an active, not sedentary lifestyle, (f) 25 to 35 home-centered learning hours per week, (g) family viewed as a mutual support system and problem-solving unit (h) clearly understood household rules, consistently enforced, (i) frequent contact with teachers, and (j) emphasis on spiritual growth (Campbell, 1992, p. 2). Parents served as role models, standard setters, and transmitters of values in support of their child's success in education.

Communication between home and school was critical to the level of trust, support, and involvement parents had for a school (Loucks, 1992; Warner, 1991). Schools needed the emotional, financial, and physical support of home and community. The principal was often the coordinator in establishing and monitoring basic obligations regarding requirements affecting the student, home-school communications, parental involvement at school, and parental involvement in learning activities at home (Black, 1998; Bradley, 1997; de Kanter, Ginsburg & Miline, 1986; Epstein, 1987; Jacobson, 1997).

Pre-service and in-service training for teachers provided tools, developed perspectives, and established the need for effective communications between schools and parents (Bradley, 1997; Hawk, 1999; Henderson, Marburger & Ooms, 1986; Holland, 1999; Tichenor, 1998). A lack of quantity and clarity of communication caused a “we-they” environment that could lead to apathy or adversity in spite of a call for cooperation (Comer, 1994).

High schools, in an attempt to give more responsibility to the student, often did not emphasize systematic, direct communication with the home. A survey of parents of

freshmen, 1000 8th and 9th grade teachers, and more than 30,000 students in Chicago's public high schools indicated that parents of high school freshmen wanted to get more involved in their children's education but that administrators and teachers often failed to create an environment where parents felt welcome (Manzo, 1998).

Teachers and principals were advised to remain cognizant of the need to make communication with parents two-way, in positive as well as negative situations, such as disciplines that were often defined by policy. Discussion and documentation about setting goals and academic progress were beneficial. Prior planning facilitated communication at planned conferences that involved parents, students, counselors, and teachers.

Schools and their communities were encouraged to provide programs regarding careers, post-secondary education, financial aide, and parenting skills (DeMoss, 1999; Stouffer, 1992; Warner, 1991). Unfortunately, topics chosen were those that the school perceived parents wanted without actual input or evaluation from parents (Elman, 1999).

Technology offered numerous opportunities to facilitate communication between home and school (Bradley, 1997; Jennings, 2000). Schools implemented phone hot lines to inform parents about attendance, homework, academic progress and school activities. Projects such as this were often funded by parent-teacher organizations. In 1995 the \$1.4 million backing of the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care, a group formed by national corporations such as IBM, Exxon, Xerox, and Aetna Life and Casualty, supported technology to help families better balance family and work (Viadero, 1997).

There was a movement in public education to include parents in the decision-making processes of schools. These ranged from support services to decisions regarding discipline, dress codes, and personnel selection.

In the early 1970s, Florida law mandated that all school districts either on the local school or district-level create school advisory committees (SACs). These standing committees included parents and students. They were to represent the community of the school and were obligated to participate in the preparation of the “Annual Report of School Progress” that is distributed to parents. A growing number of state and local school governing bodies implemented policies that included parents on school councils. These councils had advisory and decision making responsibilities.

However, there was uncertainty about how much real power school councils had (DeMoss, 1999; DeMoss, Vaughn, & Lagenbach, 1996). Participation on councils required time, energy, and a strong sense of commitment to the well being of all the students (Dixon, 1992). Parent members who represented the entire student body and the community were selected in an unbiased manner (DeMoss, 1999).

Training, which included knowledge building, group organization and development of decision-making skills, was designed to facilitate the effectiveness of the council (Solomon, 1991). Councils could be a real demonstration of democracy in action.

Parental participation in the planning and the evaluation of programs grew in popularity. Communication of changes in curriculum and instruction often were better received if parents were made aware of what changes were being made and why. Interested parents could participate in action research of school and classroom activities.

Evaluation plans of parental involvement were helpful when they included multiple criteria designed to monitor implementation and outcome (Chapman, 1991; Solomon, 1991).

Several school systems involved parents in the evaluation of teachers. Parents in some New York school systems provided formal feedback of teacher's job performance regarding not just the amount of communication but also the quality of communication. Teacher unions were concerned that teachers might not have the opportunity to defend themselves or see the actual evaluations rendered by parents. Teachers felt parents should not be asked to evaluate pedagogy or teacher knowledge of subject matter. Final procedures included parents' signatures and the return of questionnaires directly to the teacher, which was to be brought to annual evaluation conferences. Parents were also informed that they could send copies to the school administrator (Archer, 1997; Lawton, 1997).

Likewise, Alaskan legislators asked all school districts to incorporate parent feedback into their teacher evaluations and tenure decisions. The Anchorage system mailed forms to parents of all 50,000 of its students. They received such a low response they repeated the procedure, hoping to receive enough useful information to use and to promote parental involvement. Their desire was to identify trends in teacher performance, both good and bad. Local parents' associations and local teachers' unions were divided over the question of parents' rights to remain anonymous. Teachers felt they should be able to know their accuser, and parents were concerned about their children being penalized for a negative review (Sandham, 1998).

A research of the literature did not produce information about studies to use computer technology to improve parental involvement at the local level. However, first hand knowledge by the author was school web sites were providing home school communication. Parents could access calendars of school events, information regarding graduation requirements, profiles of teachers, school vision and mission statements, and successes of students and teachers. E-mail communication between parents and teachers were supplementing telephone and face-to-face conferencing. Parents and teachers were afforded more flexibility in time and place to communicate.

Using various search engines, numerous websites were available to parents and educators about parental involvement. Government agencies, universities, parent interests groups, and coalitions of community agencies established an abundance of web sites to offer information on ways for parents and schools, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve to increase and improve home/school interaction (Trotter, 1996).

Black (1998) advocated that schools must be vigilant about negative types of parental involvement, which could have “disastrous anti-democratic consequences for children and schools” (p. 51). She was especially concerned about groups of parents who put their own personal interests as priority without considering the needs of all the students. “Educators must have a clear understanding about what they mean by parental involvement and keep a ‘delicate balance’ when it comes to inviting parents to be a stakeholder” (p. 52). This was especially true in schools in which the culture of the school was changing. The school had to be diligent about providing strong leadership to foster a strong connection to parental involvement (Glickman, 1997).

Research reviewed by Thorkildsen and Stein (1998) indicated that parents wanted to be involved in their children's education, but they needed assistance and guidance in order to be effective. Most experimental studies on parental involvement limited generalizability because they were conducted with narrowly defined groups. However, samples indicated that communication and intervention programs had a significant, positive effect.

Results of quasi-experimental studies had common themes of the need to conduct multi-year projects and parents' attitudes toward and parent support of involvement programs. Thorkildsen and Stein (1998) also indicated that younger children generally showed greater achievement gains in both reading and math than do older children when their parents were involved.

Correlation studies found that parents with higher education levels were generally more involved. It was also found that younger children were more influenced than older children by parental involvement. Parent expectations had the strongest relationship with higher student achievement.

In a study by the Decision Resources Corporation of 30,000, sophomores from 1100 high schools nationwide produced findings that traditional American values were important predictors of student's success in school as indicated by academic achievement and infrequency of discipline problems. These values were twice as important as family socioeconomic status. Students with parents who valued education and good behavior in school were more likely to have success in school (Hanson & Ginsburg, 1985).

Elman's doctoral study in 1999 found that parents from at-risk communities were involved when schools and teachers made the effort to initiate effective collaborative

partnerships. Data was gathered from 393 primary caregivers and 110 teachers who responded anonymously to surveys in four urban New York public schools.

A qualitative study by DeMoss, Vaughn, and Lagenbach (1996) looked at parents' perceptions of their own involvement from their own children's elementary through secondary years. Overwhelmingly, discussion fell into two categories: decision-making and child support/advocacy at school. In spite of children's desire for parents to become less involved in their education, parents recognized that the children needed their support. Several noted that junior and senior high school educators demonstrated lack of interest in their students' lives.

Parents who were educators felt that it was parents who became more disinterested in the secondary level, and, that most of the time when they became involved, it was because there were problems. The second major finding was the "absence of any real decision making parental involvement in their children's schools" (DeMoss, Vaughn, & Lagenbach, 1996, p. 41).

In a study of conducted of U.S. middle school students, analysis of survey data collected from over a 1000 eighth grade students and their parents indicated little support for correlation between socioeconomic status and greater parental involvement. Moreover, parental involvement was associated with gender and whether the child had a behavioral problem (Ho-Sui-Chu, Willms, & Douglas, 1996).

Results of a longitudinal study of tenth grade boys and girls indicated parental involvement had a large and significant effect on students' grade point average. The pattern of influence was indistinguishable between genders, although girls' parents did indicate a higher level of participation than boys (Keith et al., 1998).

DeMoss studied the culture of parents in a localized educational setting. Her interviews with parents revealed perceptions of parents that were frequently overlooked. Parents felt that request for parental involvement should be genuine and be followed through by school personnel. In decision-making, they felt that participation in the decision-making process was selected based on how agreeable the individual would be with the school; often it was based on socioeconomic status. Participants also felt that it was their responsibility to be involved and to obtain information (DeMoss, 1999).

Most studies have been limited in scope by definition of parental involvement and a narrow view of what it is. Often focusing on limited demographics, it was difficult to not consider the numerous variables, which could bias the results (DeMoss, 1999; Elman, 1999).

The concept of “parent” evolved greatly as society changed and was frequently slighted in the discussion of parental involvement. Children often had multiple parent figures that provided financial, emotional, and physical support. The role of non-custodial parents and the schools relationship with these parties was generally not considered (Elman, 1999).

Recent research on parental involvement addressed the area of middle and secondary schools. A study by Belenardo (2001) included a survey of parents and teachers to measure the “sense of community” perceived in middle schools. Belenardo selected items, including shared values, commitment, belonging, caring, interdependence, and regular contact, to gather responses from both parents and teachers. Teachers reported activities such as parents’ help with homework, communication of academic requirements, and parent-teacher conferences created a strong sense of community.

Parents who were active in schools reported a strong sense of community when the school regularly informed them of their children's progress and school activities. They also felt more welcomed when there was an organized parent volunteer program and the school was actively involved with business and community partners. Parents identified as "not active" felt a sense of community when the school informed them of the school's program to involve parents.

Areas of involvement described by Simon (2001) by schools, families, and communities during high school years focused on parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Parent workshops conducted by the school on topics such as drug and alcohol abuse prevention were popular. Parents also reported attending sessions on financial planning, post secondary opportunities, and college planning. Parents perceived that communication was intermittent or infrequent.

Whereas parent-teacher conferences were popular communication activities in elementary and middle schools, less than one-third of the high school principals reported this activity as a communication procedure. The most frequent volunteer activity was reported as parents' attendance at school activities. Few parents volunteered as aides, monitors, or chaperones. Many questioned their ability to be helpful in the classroom environment and felt their children did not want them at school. Even though a third of the schools surveyed indicated they had a formal parent volunteer program, they actually had only one-eighth of their parents volunteer.

Although parents felt unprepared to help their children with high school homework, most talked to them about school and almost all indicated awareness of

academic progress. One-third of the principals indicated their school did not have a PTA or similar organization. No mention was made of school councils. Community collaboration with schools included job listing and efforts to promote safe and drug free environments. Fewer than half reported having a community service program.

A survey of nine middle school faculties (Belenardo, 2001) indicated a strong correlation ($r=.90$) between their principal's leadership style and their school's sense of community. Principals who were well organized, skilled, analytical, and inspiring had a school with a strong sense of community. Principals who primarily demonstrated human resource approaches to leadership had the smallest correlation ($r=.27$). The role of the principal was vital to the success of parent/community involvement. Graduate programs in education administration needed to include information and training concerning the relevance of parental involvement programs (Hickman, 1999).

In *The Development and Implementation of Parent and Community Involvement Programs* (1995) coordination of a formal, well-publicized parental involvement program communicated to parents that the school had a vested interest in making a place for parents in their children's education. These programs were best when a designated person was given funding and resources to coordinate volunteer programs, maintained a parent room, provided training for teachers to work with parents, and educated parents to the importance of their role in their children's education (Hickman, 1999).

Epstein (2001), known as an expert in the field of parental involvement research, summarized three current themes based on her position as director of the National Network of Partnership Schools and the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. First, schools must establish well-planned and well-implemented family

involvement activities. Parental involvement should not be the result only when their children are in trouble. Second, a variety of activities must be planned to meet the diverse populations and needs of the students. Last, schools, parents, and communities must work as a team to implement and evaluate practices that reach out to all families.

Baker and Soden (1998) summarized the challenges of parental involvement research. They stated that much parental involvement research contained “serious methodological flaws which resulted in a lack of confidence in findings” (p. 6). Flaws in existing research generally consisted of:

- use of non-experimental design
- lack of isolation of parental involvement effects
- inconsistent definitions of parental involvement
- non-objective measures of parental involvement

The authors recommended additional issues that require attention in parental involvement research. These included the location of, the amount of, the comprehensiveness of, the ancillary beneficiaries of, and the differential gender effects of parental involvement.

Research showed that parental involvement could increase academic success. Parents wanted to be involved and should be included as part of democratic schools. Some areas of effective parental involvement had been identified, but there was still uncertainty of how to achieve positive parental involvement by diverse groups of individuals.

Legislation

Some states passed legislation to give emphasis to parental involvement in schools. Legislation regarding parental involvement occurred on the federal and state levels. Much of federal policy and law regarding parental involvement in their children's education was primarily directed to the education of special education students. In these cases, the role and rights of the parent were clearly defined, documented, and distributed to all parties. Federal support of parental involvement had primarily been encouraged by such practices and promoted in the Goals 2000 Proclamation and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Federal initiatives such as Title I programs recognized the importance of parental involvement and longitudinal studies on the effect of partnerships in the institutions that most effect children's learning (Baker & Soden, 1998; Cross, 1991; Epstein, 1991).

With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) passed by the 107th Congress of the United States of America at the first session, documented parental involvement had to occur in each school district receiving Title I funding. The act documented the importance of an organized, continuous, and time- sensitive program to plan, review, and evaluate achievement. Schools must consult with parents in planning and implementing programs, activities, and procedures and develop a written policy. Parental choice of schools and access to supplemental programs had to be available if their children were attending a school identified as needing improvement. Particular attention was paid to parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children.

District policies and procedures needed to be reviewed to determine compliance with federal regulations. Districts also needed to coordinate and integrate parental involvement activities with other programs, such as Head Start, Reading First, and Early Reading First. At least 1% of the district's basic grant allocation was reserved for parental involvement activities, and parents had to be involved in deciding how these funds were to be used. According to the NCLB Act, each school district must:

- provide assistance to parents in understanding topics such as the state's content standards, academic standards, and state and local academic assessments
- provide materials to help parents work with their children to achieve academic achievement
- educate all school personnel with the assistance of parents in the value and utility of parental involvement program
- coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with other parental involvement programs
- undertake development of activities for teachers, principals, and other educators regarding involving parents and providing funding for parental involvement activities

States have increasingly become instrumental in mandating, funding, and encouraging partnerships between parents and schools. States, which were referred in journals, were reviewed to assess the degree of attention paid to parental involvement. Also, a survey of 50 states' legislative codes for parental involvement laws revealed

selected states, which had codes pertaining to strong parental involvement programs. The legislative codes of these states were reviewed for comprehensiveness.

Selected State Legislation

California

California implemented school improvement programs which reflected their belief that state leadership should not dictate a formula for parental involvement, but rather enable schools to understand and implement practices that were useful at each site, recognizing and respecting the diversity of attitudes, cultures, skills and needs of individual families (Solomon, 1991). California emphasized parental involvement was a “critical dimension of effective schooling” (California Code § 51120).

California Code § 51100 stated, “It is essential to our democratic form of government that parents and guardians of school age children attending public schools and other citizens participate in improving public education institutions.” All participants were to benefit when schools, pre-school through high school “genuinely welcome, encourage, and guide families into establishing equal partnerships with schools to support pupil learning.”

The State Board of Education adopted a policy urging the creation of parental involvement programs in all schools with the belief that “parental involvement and support in education of children is an integral part of improving academic achievement and should be properly designed and implemented based on prior experience and research” (California Code § 11500). “Governing boards of each school district must adopt a policy on parental involvement” (California Code § 11504).

Programs provided flexibility for local schools to best meet the needs of the local community (California Code § 11501). Programs needed to help parents develop techniques and strategies to assist their children's learning at home, including understanding the developmental needs. They were to build consistent and effective communication between home and school, including the children's progress and an annual statement identifying specific objectives of the program. The training of teachers and administrator regarding how to communicate with parents was included. Parental involvement programs were to be integrated into the school's master plan for accountability.

Other parental involvement activities included the opportunity to observe in classrooms, to volunteer time and resources, to receive results of children's performance, to examine curriculum materials, and to participate as a member of a parent advisory committee. Parents were also encouraged to monitor their children's attendance, ensure that homework was completed and turned in on time, participate in extracurricular activities, monitor and regulate television viewing, work with their children at home to extend classroom learning activities, and participate in decisions relating to the education of their own children or to the total school program (California Code § 51101).

Other sections of the California Code addressed issues concerning student records (California Code §§ 49069-49072). The 29 pages in §§ 48900-48926 addressed discipline codes, consequences, and procedures. Communication by the school to the parents included information regarding school calendars, the importance of investing for future college education, required high school exit exams, the availability of student fingerprinting, sexual harassment, student access to the internet, required student

attendance and attendance zones, and the availability of state funds to cover the costs of advanced placement exams (California Code §§ 48980-48985).

Funds were provided to implement parental involvement programs. The Nell Soto Parent Involvement Program was established to provide grants to schools in which a majority of teachers and parents agreed to strengthen the communication between schools and parents. Funding was appropriated for teachers and teacher paraprofessionals for training and compensation for home visits or community meetings. An evaluation of the program's impact on improving academic achievement and the increase of the involvement of parents in their children's education was required (California Code §§ 51120-51124).

Another program that was established was the Teresa P. Hughes Family-School Partnership Award and Grant Program. Grants of up to \$15,000 could be awarded by the State Department of Education to a school to establish or expand a family outreach program. Financial support could be used for interpreters, to provide transportation for pupils and parents to school functions, to provide childcare or food for special school events other parents were invited to attend, or to encourage parents to serve as coaches or coordinators in pupil activities. It was also identified that a regular system of communication to remind and encourage parents to attend school functions was an option (California Code § 51132). Non-monetary awards such as plaques or signs could be awarded by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to school districts and county offices that could demonstrate effective participation and progress in the areas designated (California Code § 51133).

The Tom Haydon Community-Based Parent Involvement Grant Program allocates state funds to school districts for “the purpose of contracting with nonprofit community based organizations to offer training courses for parents and guardians of school age children to enhance parent and guardian involvement in the education of their children in public schools.” Districts must demonstrate an “ability to recruit and retain parent populations with traditionally low participation rates, including, but not limited to, immigrant and low-income parents.” Grants, not to exceed \$40,000 per school site, could be used to train parents about school governance, homework collaboration, child development, child motivational skills, and development of study habits. Other areas of training included parent-teacher conferencing; gang, violence, and drug prevention; college preparation; children’s health and nutrition; and parenting (California Code §§ 51140-51143).

Florida

Title XLVIII of the Florida Statutes covered laws pertaining to K-20 education. In addition to laws mandating parent responsibility for attendance and health issues, parents were included in discipline of their children. Parents also had the right to receive communication about the instructional materials used in their children’s school. In the area of public school choice, parents could seek private school options as well as obtaining scholarships to attend another school if their children were assigned to a “failing” school (Florida Statutes, 2002).

Florida, in 1973, was one of the first states to mandate the involvement of parents in public school governance. School Advisory Committees (SAC) were created in all public schools consisting of parents; they were elected by the school’s parents, teachers

and administrator. They were instrumental in writing the school improvement plan, including the evaluation of the school's progress. Florida SACs were involved in problem areas such as budget, curriculum issues, desegregation, and textbook selection (Hickman, 1999).

Illinois

Illinois established the Urban Education Partnership Grant in 1987. Acknowledging the complexity and breadth of the need to improve education, collaborative partnerships with parents and community were established in an effort to coordinate resources, solve problems, and provide more chances for student success. Multi-year grants were important to provide adequate time to implement programs and measure their success. Evaluation of programs was based on multiple criteria such as attendance, discipline, report card grades, level of parental involvement and not just scores on achievement tests (Chapman, 1991).

Kentucky

In the East, a state that has taken legal steps to address the involvement of parents is the Commonwealth of Kentucky. By mandating the creation of school councils in 1990 the state that greatly increased the decision making power of parents in their children's school (White, 1997).

The state of Kentucky adopted legislation that specifically addressed the structure of school councils. Kentucky laws, effective July 15, 2002, provided for local school councils consisting of two parents, three teachers, and one principal or administrator, who served as chair. The memberships of the council could be increased but only proportionately. A school having an enrollment that was eight percent or more minorities

had to have at least one minority member. It was required that meetings be open to the public. Decision-making power given to the members of the council included the recommendation of new hires but not the dismissal or transfer of existing personnel. When a vacancy in the principal-ship occurred, the school council had to recruit and interview candidates from a pool recommended by the local superintendent. The superintendent completed the hiring process (KRS 160.345(2)(a-b)).

Other significant decision-making power afforded the council involved instructional materials, curriculum, assignment of students to classes and programs within the school, selection and implementation of discipline and classroom management techniques, extracurricular programs, and determination of the school day and week. It was the responsibility of the council to review data on its students' performance as shown by the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. Then, each school council, with the involvement of parents, faculty, and staff, was to develop and adopt a plan to ensure that each student made progress (KRS § 160.345).

Massachusetts

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2003 enacted Senate Bill, No. 251, An Act to Increase Parental Involvement in Education. Subject to appropriation, the department established grant program for the purpose of encouraging school districts to devise and implement programs to increase parental involvement in their children's academic experience. These programs had to include but were not limited to:

1. providing parental involvement coordinator/parent liaison position
2. increasing the frequency or available times of parent/teacher conferences

3. improving communication via the internet or other means, between classroom teachers and school parents with regard to homework assignments, current lesson plans and other school related issues
4. establishing or expanding existing programs to provide training to parents for the purpose of volunteering in the classroom or assisting their child with education projects at home
5. increasing parental involvement at the middle school and high school levels

An annual report had to be file on the grant programs including the amount of the grant, the purpose for which it was used, and the effectiveness of the program.

Minnesota

Section 124D 895 of the Minnesota Statues (2002) was the “Parental Involvement Programs.” This article included “Program goals”, “Plan contents,” and “Plan activities.”

Program goals required school systems to develop guidelines and model plans for parental involvement programs. These included the following areas:

1. engage the interests and talents of parents or guardians in recognizing and meeting the emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of their school age children
2. promote healthy self-concepts among parents or guardians and other family members
3. offer parents or guardians a chance to share and learn about educational skills, techniques, and ideas
4. provide creative experiences for parents or guardians and their school-age children, including involvement from parents or guardians of color
5. encourage parents to actively participate in their district’s curriculum advisory committee . . . in order to assist the school board in improving school desegregation/integration

The program plan contents had to include the following:

1. program goals
2. means for achieving program goals
3. methods for informing parents or guardians, in a timely way, about the program
4. strategies for ensuring the full participation of parents or guardians, including those parents or guardians who lack literacy skills or whose native language is not English, including involvement from parents or guardians of color
5. procedures for coordinating the program with kindergarten through grade 12 curriculum
6. strategies for training teachers and other school staff to work effectively with parents or guardians
7. procedures for parents or guardians and educators to evaluate and report progress toward program goals
8. a mechanism for convening a local community advisory committee composed primarily of parents or guardians to advise a district on implementing a parental involvement program

The program plan activities contained in the model plan had to include:

1. educational opportunities for families that enhance children's learning development
2. educational programs for parents or guardians on families' educational responsibilities and resources
3. the hiring, training, and use of parental involvement liaison workers to coordinate family involvement activities and to foster communication among families, educators, and students
4. curriculum materials and assistance in implementing home and community-based learning activities that reinforce and extend classroom instruction and student motivation
5. technical assistance, including training to design and carry out family involvement programs

6. parent resource centers
7. parent training programs and reasonable and necessary expenditures associated with parents' attendance at training sessions
8. reports to parents on children's progress
9. use of parents as classroom volunteers, or as volunteers in before and after school programs for school-age children, tutors, and aides
10. soliciting parents' suggestions in planning, developing, and implementing school programs
11. educational programs and opportunities for parents or guardians that are multicultural, gender fair, and disability sensitive
12. involvement in a district's curriculum advisory committee or school building team
13. opportunities for parent involvement in developing, implementing, or evaluating school and district segregation/integration plans

The structured program of parental involvement mandated specific activities of local school systems. This acknowledgement of the importance of parental involvement gave credence to parental participation in schools.

South Carolina

The South Carolina Code of Laws included Title 59 – Education. Chapter 28 addressed the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act. The purpose of this act focused on three areas:

1. heighten awareness of the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children throughout their schooling
2. encourage the establishment and maintenance of parent-friendly school settings

3. emphasize that when parents and schools work as partners, a child's academic success can best be assured" (South Carolina Code § 59-28-110)

Districts and schools were required by the State Board of Education to develop long-range plans to include parental involvement goals, objectives, and an evaluation piece. Schools and districts that had significant increases in parental involvement beyond stated goals would be recognized. Systems had to also establish criteria for staff development on school initiatives and activities shown by research to increase parental involvement (South Carolina Code § 59-28-130). The State Superintendent of Education had to develop parental involvement programs by each local school board of trustees to include training programs in conjunction with higher education institutions that were "responsive to racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity." The State Superintendent of Education also was required to "work collaboratively with the Commission on Higher Education to incorporate parental involvement training into teacher preparation and principal education programs" (South Carolina Code § 59-28-140).

It was also mandated that the State Superintendent "promote parental involvement for all levels from Pre-K through grade 12, with particular emphasis on middle and high school levels where parental involvement is currently least visible." (South Carolina Code § 59-28-150) Of significance was the fact that there was a designated Department of Education staff position whose specific role was to "coordinate statewide initiatives to support school and district parental involvement" (South Carolina Code § 59-28-150). Other areas of focus included staff development, technical assistance, statewide conferences, and the encouragement of enrollment of the State Department and local

school districts in national organizations that promoted “proven parental involvement frameworks, models, and practices” (South Carolina Code § 59-28-150). Monitoring and evaluation of programs statewide were conducted by a statewide system to determine effectiveness and identify best practices (South Carolina Code § 59-28-150).

Local school board trustees were to provide for all faculty and staff parental involvement orientation and training for all faculty and staff. Incentives and formal part of the superintendent’s evaluation. Superintendents had to consider designating a faculty contact for the district to coordinate parental involvement initiatives and coordinate community and agency collaboration to support parents, their children, and a staff member to serve as a liaison for the district. It was required of each school principal to “designate space within the school specifically for parents which contains materials and resources on ways parents and schools can and should partner for a child’s academic success” (South Carolina Code § 59-28-170).

Recognizing that the role of the parent in parental involvement was essential, § 59-28-180 stated expectations of the parent. These included attending parent-teacher conferences, ensuring attendance and punctuality, monitoring and checking homework, and communicating with school and teachers (South Carolina Code § 59-28-180).

The Education Oversight Committee had to survey parents to determine the effectiveness of efforts to increase parental involvement. Using this information, a public awareness campaign was required to promote the importance of parental involvement. In cooperation with businesses, community agencies, and faith communities, entities were encouraged to adopt parent-friendly policies and support parental involvement (South Carolina Code § 59-28-190). The Education Oversight Committee was to work with the

Department of Commerce, the Department of Revenue, and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce to develop recommendations for tax credits for employers to provide release time for school conferences or for attendance at school activities (South Carolina Code § 59-28-220).

Georgia Legislation

Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia contained laws pertaining to schools and education in Georgia. One hundred and eleven sections of the 2002 Code contained expectations of schools in relation to parents, and parents as it pertained to the education of their own children and schools in general. Forty-three of those sections addressed parental involvement in the education of students in kindergarten through grade twelve in public schools. Some required behavior on the part of the parent, others addressed expectations of the school in regard to parents, and the remainder addressed the role of the local and state boards of education.

Section 20-2-132 was a one-line sentence that stated the need for increased parental and community involvement in schools. Likewise, parents were to be provided with information on the quality of schools and the academic achievement of public school students in Georgia (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-131).

The definition of “parent,” according the Georgia law included natural and adoptive parents, legal guardians, and those acting in loco parent (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-641). Definitions of migrant and multiracial students were stated in O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-189 and 20-2-2040, respectively.

For at-risk students, a law stating that uniform methods of determining eligibility for free and reduced meal programs was covered in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-66. It was required that parents be notified about the program regularly.

Parents had the right to request records from other educational settings. Also, parents had to give prior consent for the release of medical and educational records of these institutions (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133). Upon enrollment, parents had to provide records from previous schools their children had attended (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670). Transferring students had to provide academic records from the previous school (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670). Parents could not be denied the right to inspect the records of their children (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-720).

Public schools could also require that parents provide an official copy of their children's social security number. Provisions were also included should a parent object to the incorporation of the social security number into the school records (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150).

Laws were included that required other information from parents before a school had to enroll the children. Section 20-2-770 addressed the relationship of the State Board of Education and the Department of Human Resources to "promulgate rules and regulations to provide for a nutritional screening, and eye, ear, and dental examinations for each student entering the first grade." Parents would be issued a certificate to present to the school. If parents objected to required immunization of their children, the parents could request exemptions based on religious grounds. Consequences for not following this statute carried consequences of a fine or imprisonment (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-71).

Student safety was addressed in § 20-2-1185 in the requirement that each school had to have an established school safety plan to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel. A variety of laws referred to student conduct and discipline (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-736 through 20-2-768). Parents were to be included in the development of local policies designed to improve student behavior and discipline (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-735). Likewise, local boards had to distribute to parents the adopted code of conduct (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-736). Should a discipline problem occur in the classroom, a teacher followed a designated process for having the student removed from his class (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738).

Corporal punishment was permissible provided the child's parent, upon request, was given a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment. This form of punishment could not be administered if the parents, on the day of enrollment, filed a valid reason that such punishment not be administered to their child (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-731). Students could even be denied enrollment if they had been convicted of a felony (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-768).

There was a reference to consequences for parents who continued to act inappropriately in the presence of students after being advised to stop. These could include rejection from the campus and the administration of legal charges (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1182).

Parental involvement in curriculum and instruction included issues pertaining to sex education and AIDS education in § 20-2-143. Character education as referenced in § 20-2-145 stated the requirement that the State Board of Education had to develop a

comprehensive character education program by the start of the 1997-1998 school year for K-12.

A systematic report of the academic progress of an at-risk student had to be provided to such student's parent. The parent of a student who was to be retained had to be notified in writing and had a right to appeal the decision (O.C.GA. § 20-2-670).

Following the practice of other states, guidelines and requirements for charter schools included parent participation in the development and application to the state for said school (O.C.GA. §§ 20-2-2063 & 20-2-2068).

State school report cards were required to provide parents with information about appropriate student performance and the school completion performance (O.C.GA. § 20-2-143). "Grading" of individual schools based on given criteria could result in a deficiency report of a "D" or "F." With that determination, an improvement team appointed by the State Department of Education would assign a school improvement team to intervene. Parents would be included in this process and, if they so chose, they could opt to relocate their child to another public school (O.C.GA. § 20-14-41).

A Plus Education Reform Act

Governor Roy Barnes of Georgia initiated the development of the A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000, House Bill No. 1187, which officially became effective July 1, 2000. It was intended as an enhancement of the previous Quality Basic Education Act. O.C.GA. § 20-2-132 specifically included the statement; "It is the intent of the General Assembly the primary goals of this article shall be as follows, (12) An increase in parents and community involvement in schools." A review of this bill indicated a variety of sections intended to increase parental involvement in Georgia public schools.

Strengthening the historic compulsory attendance laws was the lowering of the age of initial enrollment of a child from age seven to six (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.1). Permission by the parent or guardian was required to release information regarding attendance unless subpoenaed by the courts or for verification of attendance by the Department of Public Safety (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-697). Parents were required to send their child to a school or provide a bona fide home schooling (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-290). For the purpose of enrollment, parents or guardians were also required to submit a certificate of immunizations as designated by the Department of Health (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-771.1).

Mandates, which included the parent participation in academics, ranged from requests of placement to waiver requests for charter schools and communication of academic and behavioral progress. Parents had to be instrumental in the submission of a petition for a charter school; “A petition submitted by a majority of the parents or guardians of students enrolled at the petitioning must be present at the public meeting” (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-206).

A new mandate for statewide end-of-course tests to be developed and implemented December 2000 included involvement of parents at an awareness and communication level. “Each school system shall distribute study guides, developed by the State Board of Education, to students who do not perform satisfactorily on one or more parts . . . to parents of such students” (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-281 (h)).

Parents must also receive information regarding progress of schools, including the one their child attended. “An annual report regarding evaluation of progress made on performance indicators shall be published in a format that can be easily understood by

parents and other members of the community who are not professional educators” had to be distributed annually (O.C.G.A. § 20-14-33).

Parents were also encouraged to participate actively in the planning of their children’s academic achievements. Grants were funded by the State “to encourage grant recipients to develop and implement written compacts among teachers, parents and students.” The voluntary compacts that were offered for each class, in which a student was enrolled, stated that students and parents were invited to a conference with the teacher, within the first 30 days after enrollment to discuss the terms of the compact. “The State Board shall prescribe criteria, policies, and standards deemed necessary for the effective implementation” (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-258).

In public middle schools, “a student who was performing at or above grade level should be allowed to take additional academic classes if the parent requested it subject to available space.” In regard to students performing below grade level, the student “would receive additional time designated for academic instruction to bring him to grade level” (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-290).

The State Board of Education required the “dissemination of student performance in the annual school report card distributed to the parent, guardian, conservator, or other person having lawful control of a student at school” (O.C.G.A. § 20-14-34).

Parents were also referenced in relation to annual teacher evaluations that utilized a model instrument for each classification of professional personnel certificated by the Professional Standards Commission. Included was a criterion regarding “Communication and interpersonal skills in relation to students, parents, and other school personnel” (O.C.G.A. § 20-3-210).

Georgia joined numerous other states in mandating formal parental involvement in school councils to be formed at individual public schools.

The General Assembly recognizes the need to improve communication and participation of parents and the community in the management and operation of local schools. The General Assembly believes that parent and community support is critical to the success of students and schools. The intent of this article is to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process. The establishment of school councils is intended to help local boards of education develop and nurture participation, bring parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of mutual respect for each other's concerns, and share ideas for school improvement. School councils shall be reflective of the school community. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85)

Communities and schools needed to be brought closer together. There was to be a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems and improve academic achievement. In addition, school councils were to provide support for teachers and administrators and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85). Members were to be elected by a vote of all parents once a year. Training would be provided by the local board of education (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86).

Relating to chronic disciplinary problem students, the new mandate amended the method of communication with the student's parent or guardian. Anytime a teacher or principal identified a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal would be required to notify the student's parent by telephone call and by certified mail with return receipt requested or first class mail. Parents had to be informed of the disciplinary problem and invited to attend a conference to devise a discipline behavior correction plan (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-765).

Upon return from expulsion or suspension, parents were to be notified to attend a conference to develop a discipline and behavior plan. If a parent did not attend, it did not prevent the student from being readmitted (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-766).

In extreme cases the local board of education could, by petition to the juvenile court, proceed against a parent or guardian for failure to cooperate. If the court found that a parent willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by the principal, the court could order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference, order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deemed appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for a hearing, the court could impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent who willfully disobeyed an order of the court" (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-766.1).

Due to the public's interest in providing opportunities to have their children attend schools of quality, the legislature set in place sections that would accommodate such requests on a limited basis. Parents or guardians "could elect to request reassignment to a public school that is located within the school district . . . if the school to which the student was assigned does not have available permanent classroom space" (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-294).

Further, if a student's place of residence was located closer to a school other than the assigned school, the student could apply to attend the closest school (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-294). Transportation would need to be provided by the parent.

Summary

A review of the literature was conducted for documents pertaining to parental involvement in public schools. The historical review indicated a resurgence of interest in

the role of the parent in democratic schools. Research on parental involvement indicated a positive influence on academic achievement. There appeared to be an improvement in grades, attendance and school completion rates. Parental trust and support of schools increased when a strong parental involvement program existed.

Literature written by scholarly experts emphasized the importance of including parents as viable stakeholders in democratic schools. Recent changes in the control of public schools called for increased parental involvement. This conflict over control had created a new focus on the role of parents.

An examination of Georgia laws revealed specific laws that mandated parental involvement in grades K-12 of public schools. In Chapter III, these laws were scrutinized to better inform the reader of the nature of laws requiring action on the part of the parent and action on the part of the school.

CHAPTER III
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF GEORGIA LAW MANDATING
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This chapter provides an analysis of the current status of Georgia law mandating parental involvement. There are two sections in this analysis. The first section reviews all education laws in Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia, which make reference to parental involvement.

Section two analyzes the laws as they pertain to the research reviewed in Chapter II. Effective parental involvement includes basic obligations, school to home communication, volunteering at school, being active in learning activities at home, advocating and participating in decision making, and collaborating with schools and communities (Epstein, 2001; Simon, 2001; Wehlburg, 1996).

Research revealed a variance in laws mandating parental involvement in their own children's education and in that of the entire school. Georgia laws varied greatly in comparison to other selected states with legislated parental involvement programs.

Recent federal law, the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), required increased parental involvement in public schools. Under this Act, parents were a vital component of democratic schools. Therefore it was prudent to examine the nature of laws addressing parental involvement.

Current Georgia Laws

The 2002 Official Code of Georgia was analyzed for sections relating to mandated parental involvement in Georgia public schools. Only legislation pertaining to grades kindergarten through 12 were addressed.

The intent to recognize parents as necessary participants was specifically noted. Section 20-2-132 stated the need for increased parental involvement in schools. Likewise, parents were to be provided with information on the quality of schools and the academic achievement of public school students in Georgia (O.C.G.A. §20-2-131). This section also included “Providing an environment where parents and the community can participate in school activities and support school personnel as they work with students and address their academic needs.”

The definition of “parent” according to Georgia law included natural and adoptive parents, legal guardians, and those acting in loco parent or having legal custody of a child (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-641). A definition for “migrant student” meant a one who had within the past 12 months had become a student, moved across state or school district lines with a parent or a member of the child’s immediate family to “obtain temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity” (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-189). Much further back in the Codes, in § 20-2-2040, there was a definition of the term “multi-racial student” meaning “having parents of different races.”

For at-risk students, a law stating that uniform methods of determining eligibility for free and reduced meal programs was covered in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-66. It was required that parents be notified regularly about availability of the program.

Parents had the right to request records from other educational settings. Likewise, parents had to give prior consent for the release of students' medical and educational records of these institutions (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133). Upon enrollment parents had to provide records from previous schools their children had attended (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670). A transferring student had to provide academic records from the previous school (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670). Parents could not be denied the right to inspect the records of their children. However, parents could only inspect and review records on their own children and, if the material included information on another student, that information had to be kept confidential. This section also stated that a child's education record could not be withheld from a non-custodial parent unless a court order had specifically removed those rights of the non-custodial parent or unless parental rights had been terminated (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-720).

Public schools could also require that parents provide an official copy of their children's social security number. Each system had to establish and implement a plan to give public appropriate notice of the information required of every student prior to the beginning of each school year. Students who did not have a social security number could be provisionally admitted if the parent completed a postage-paid application for a number at the time of enrollment. If a parent objected, this requirement could be waived by signing a statement to that effect (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150).

Laws were included that required other information from a parents before a school had to enroll their children. Section 20-2-770 addressed the relationship of the State Board of Education and the Department of Human Resources to "promulgate rules and regulations to provide for a nutritional screening, and eye, ear, and dental

examinations for each student entering the first grade.” Parents would be issued a certificate to present to the school (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-770).

For the purpose of enrollment, parents or guardians were also required to submit a certificate of immunizations as designated by the Department of Health. If parents objected to required immunization of the child, the parents could request in writing exemption based on religious grounds. Consequences for not following this statute carried consequences of a fine or imprisonment (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-771).

Section 20-2-772 mandated that the Department of Human Resources was authorized and directed to work in cooperation with the State Board of education to promote rules and regulations to provide for screening of public school children for scoliosis. Prior approval of parents was not required; however, advance written notice of the time of the screening had to be given to the parents. Parents could object and the student had to be exempt.

Student safety was addressed in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185. It required that each school have an established school safety plan to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia’s children, teachers, and other school personnel. A variety of laws referred to student conduct and discipline (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-736 through 20-2-768). Parents were to be included in the development of local policies designed to improve student behavior and discipline (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-735). Likewise, local boards had to distribute to parents the adopted code of conduct (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-736). Should a discipline problem occur in the classroom, a teacher could follow a designated process for having the student removed from his class (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738).

Corporal punishment was permissible provided the child's parent, upon request, was given a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment. This form of punishment could not be administered if the parents, on the day of enrollment, filed a valid reason that such punishment not be administered to their child (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-731). Students could be denied enrollment if they had been convicted of a felony (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-768).

Also included was a reference to consequences for parents who continued to act inappropriately in the presence of minor children after being advised to stop. Behaviors that included insult or abuse of any public school teachers, public school administrator, or any public school bus driver were not allowed. Consequences could include rejection from the campus. Failure to comply with such request could result in the parent being found guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction, be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.00 (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1182).

Parents, who were found to have brought a frivolous suit against an educator before a court, would be liable for all reasonable court costs, attorney's fees, and expenses. Likewise, if any civil action brought by a parent against an educator or complaint made or filed with the local board of education or the Professional Standards Commission, the local board had to provide counsel (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1000).

Parental involvement in curriculum and instruction included issues pertaining to sex education and AIDS education in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-143. Course materials had to include instruction relating to biology, conception, pregnancy, birth, sexually transmitted disease, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome. It also had to include information about the legal consequences of parenthood, including the legal obligation of both parents

to support a child. Legal penalties for failing to do so could result in suspension or revocation of a parent's license and occupational or professional licenses. Parents of students enrolled in this course could elect, in writing, that their children not receive this instruction.

Character education, as referenced in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-145, stated the requirement that the State Board of Education had to develop a comprehensive character education program by the start of the 1997-1998 school year for K-12. This "character curriculum" was to focus on "courage, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, respect for the creator, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue." This program had to be implemented by the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year and had to provide opportunities for parental involvement in establishing expected outcomes.

Section 20-2-140 required the State Board of Education to establish graduation competencies that had to be "mastered". The board was also required to provide opportunities to master a uniform, sequenced core curriculum at the discretion of the student and the student's parents.

A systematic report of the academic progress of at-risk students had to be provided to such students' parents. Parents of students who were to be retained had to be notified in writing by first-class mail. Parents had a right to know the composition and functions of the placement committee. A unanimous decision of the committee was needed to retain the student. If parents disagreed with the decision of the placement committee, they could appeal the decision to a placement committee composed of the

principal, the student's parent and the teacher of the subject. Parents had to be notified of the assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at grade level.

Notification of the time and place of the placement committee meeting had to be sent to parents in writing via first-class mail (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-283).

Section 20-2-290 mandated the implementation of an early intervention program. This program was to serve students at-risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level identified in first grade. A similar program was to be implemented for students with identified academic performance below grade level in grades one through five. Parents had to receive information on the assessment instrument used to make the determination. The school also had to notify parents in a timely manner and offer an opportunity for a conference to discuss the student's academic performance and the role of the early intervention program.

Following the practice of other states, guidelines and requirements for charter schools included parent participation in the development and application to the state for said school (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2063, 20-2-2068).

State school report cards were required to provide parents with information about appropriate student performance and the school completion performance (O.C.G.A. § 20-14-34). "Grading" of individual schools based on given criteria could result in a deficiency report of a "D" or "F." With that determination, a school improvement team would be appointed by the Department of Education to conduct an on-site evaluation to determine the cause for the school's low performance, and parents would be included in this process (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-35). If a school received a grade of D or F for a period of

three consecutive years, one option that parents could chose would be to relocate their children to another public school (O.C.GA. § 20-14-41).

A Plus Education Reform Act

As noted in Chapter II, the Official Code of Georgia was significantly modified with the passing of House Bill 1187, the A Plus Education Reform Act. Previous laws were updated to reflect the growing concern for school improvement and academic achievement.

Strengthening the historic compulsory attendance laws was the lowering of the age of initial enrollment of a child from age seven to six (O.C.GA. § 20-2-690). Parents were responsible for the enrollment of their children, age 6 through 16.

Attendance records of individual students were to remain confidential. Permission by the parent or guardian was required to release information regarding attendance unless subpoenaed by the courts or for verification of attendance by the Department of Public Safety (O.C.GA. § 20-2-697). Also regarding attendance,

“Every parent, guardian, or person having control or charge of any child or children between their sixth and seventeenth birthdays shall enroll and send child or children to a public school, private school, or a home study program that meets the requirement for a public school.” (O.C.GA. § 20-2-690)

Mandates, which included the parent participation in academics, ranged from requests of placement to waiver requests for charter schools and communication of academic and behavioral progress. Parents had to be instrumental in the submission of a petition for a charter school, “a petition submitted by a majority of the parents or guardians of students enrolled at the petitioning must be present at the public meeting” (O.C.GA. § 20-2-2063).

A new mandate for statewide end-of-course tests to be developed and implemented by December 2000 included involvement of parents at an awareness and communication level. “Each school system shall distribute study guides, developed by the State Board of Education, to students who do not perform satisfactorily on one or more parts . . . to parents of such students” (O.C.GA. § 20-2-281).

Parents also had to receive information regarding progress of elementary and secondary schools, including the one their child attends. “An annual report regarding evaluation of progress made on performance indicators shall be published in a format that can be easily understood by parents and other members of the community who are not professional educators” must be distributed annually (O.C.GA. § 20-14-27).

Parents were also encouraged to actively participate in the planning for their child to improve and enhance the student’s academic achievement. Grants were funded by the State “to encourage grant recipients to develop and implement written compacts among teachers, parents and students.” Such compacts were to be voluntary, offered for each class in which a student was enrolled and state that students and parents were invited to a conference with the teacher, within the first thirty days after enrollment to discuss the terms of the compact. “The State Board shall prescribe criteria, policies, and standards deemed necessary for the effective implementation” (O.C.GA. § 20-2-258).

In public middle schools, “A student who is performing at or above grade level shall be allowed to take additional academic classes instead of exploratory classes if parents of such students requested such assignment, subject to available space”. In regard to students performing below grade level, the student “shall receive additional

time designated for academic instruction to bring such students to grade level” (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-290).

The academic success of an entire school was to be evaluated each year on state prescribed criteria. The State Board of Education required the “dissemination of appropriate student performance and school completion performance portions of school report cards annually to the parent, guardian, conservator, or other person having lawful control of a student at school” (O.C.G.A. § 20-14-34).

Parents were also referenced in relation to annual teacher evaluations that included using a model instrument for each classification of professional personnel certificated by the Professional Standards Commission. A criterion which stated, “Communication and interpersonal skills as they relate to interaction with students, parents, other teachers, administrators, and other school personnel” was mandated (O.C.G.A. § 20-3-210).

Georgia joined numerous other states in mandating specific parental involvement in school councils to be formed at individual public schools.

The General Assembly recognizes the need to improve communication and participation of parents and the community in the management and operation of local schools. The General Assembly believes that parent and community support is critical to the success of students and schools. The intent of this article is to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process. The establishment of school councils is intended to help local boards of education develop and nurture participation, bring parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of mutual respect for each other’s concerns, and share ideas for school improvement. School councils shall be reflective of the school community. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85)

Members of the school council included two parents of students enrolled in the school, excluding employees who are parents or guardians of such students. Election of council members was to occur in the spring of each year. “The electing body for parent members shall consist of all parents and guardians eligible to serve as a parent member of the school council.” The local board was required to provide training to assist schools in forming a school council and to assist school council members in the performance of their duties (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86).

Relating to chronic disciplinary problem students, the new mandate amended the method of communication with students’ parent or guardian.

Any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call and by certified mail with return receipt requested or first class mail the student’s parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite such parent or guardian to attend a conference with the principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-765)

Parents were required to participate in the re-entry of a disruptive student:

Before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return from an expulsion or suspension, the school to which the student is permitted to be readmitted shall request by telephone call and either by certified mail with return receipt requested or first-class mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference with the principal or his designed to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student from being readmitted to school. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-766)

In extreme cases, the local board of education could, by petition to the juvenile court, proceed against a parent or guardian who failed to comply with reasonable request of parents for a meeting. If the court found that a parent or guardian willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by the principal pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-765 or O.C.G.A. § 20-2-766, the court could order the parent or guardian

to attend such a conference, order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deemed appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for a hearing, the court could impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeyed an order of the court (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-766).

In response to public interest in opportunities to have their children attend schools of quality, the legislature set in place sections that would accommodate such requests on a limited basis. Parents or guardians "may elect to request reassignment to a public school that is located within the school district . . . if the school to which the student has been assigned does not have available permanent classroom space." The parent or guardian may apply to the local board in writing within seven days of notification of assignment to the student's parent or guardian (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-294).

Further, if a student's place of residence is located closer to a school other than the assigned school the student by the local board of education, regardless of the school district in which the school is located, and the distance or travel time is excessive as determined by the State Board of Education and the school to which the student is applying to attend is the closet available public school offering a regular program and has space available (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-294).

Through the implementation of House Bill 1187, the legislature has significantly increased opportunities to improve schools' communication with parents and their participation in school activities on an individual basis as well as school wide.

Effective Parental Involvement Based on Relevant Literature

Research indicates six areas of parental involvement that positively effect academic success (Epstein, 1986, 1999; Simon, 2001)

- Basic obligations
- School to home communications
- Parent volunteering at school
- Parental involvement in learning activities at home
- Parental involvement in decision-making, governance and advocacy
- Collaboration and exchange between schools and community agencies.

An analysis of Georgia laws revealed that some sections are aligned with identified areas but others are not addressed. Some laws fall outside the areas noted in the relevant literature. On occasion a law may apply to more than one area. This information is graphically shown in Appendix A.

Basic Obligations

Basic obligations were described in the literature as activities pertaining to health, safety, and a positive home environment. Parents are required to provide basic information and opportunities for their child to support their education.

For the at-risk student, a law stating that uniform methods of determining eligibility for free and reduced meal program is covered in O.C.GA § 20-2-66. It was required that parents be notified about the program.

A variety of laws referred to student conduct and discipline O.C.GA. (§§ 20-2-736 through 20-2-768). Parents were to be included in the development of local policies designed to improve student behavior and discipline (O.C.GA. § 20-2-735). Likewise,

local boards had to distribute to parents the adopted code of conduct (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-736).

Corporal punishment was permissible provided the child's parent, upon request, was given a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment. This form of punishment could not be administered if the parents, on the day of enrollment, filed a valid reason that such punishment not be administered to their child (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-731).

Laws indicating the authority of the teacher to manage his or her classroom and discipline students require proper notification to the principal, who in turn must notify a parent. Teachers of must file a report regarding students who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach. A copy of the report that is filed with the principal must be sent to the parent along with information regarding how the student's parents may contact the principal. If a student support services team meeting is to be held or discipline action is taken, the parent must be given written notice within one school day. Reasonable attempt must be made to confirm the written notification was received by the parent (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737).

On and after July 1, 2000, a teacher had the authority to remove from his or her class a student who had previously been referred to the principal or who posed an immediate threat to the safety of the student's classmates or the teacher. Within one day of the removal, a principal had to notify parents of such actions to the parent, make reasonable attempts to confirm receipt of the notice, and information on how to contact the principal. Should a discipline problem occur in the classroom, a teacher could follow

a designated process for having the student removed from his class (O.C.GA. § 20-2-738).

Section 20-2-739 required the Department of Education to provide training programs in conflict management, resolution and in cultural diversity. This training was to be voluntarily implemented by local boards of education for school personnel, parents, and students.

Parents were to be included in the development of local policies designed to improve student behavior and discipline. Improvement of the student-learning environment could include a student support process that would involve parents (O.C.GA § 20-2-735).

The Department of Education was now required to provide training in conflict management and resolution and in cultural diversity for implementation by local boards for parents, school employees, and students (O.C.GA. § 20-2-739).

A new law defining “bullying” was put on the books. The definition includes “willful attempt to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so.” It could also mean “an intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm”. A student who has committed the offense of bullying three times in one year would be assigned to an alternative school. Parents had to be notified of these rules regarding bullying and the penalties for such actions. This information had to be posted at the middle and high school and included in student and parent handbooks. Student code of conduct had to include a form that the student’s parent would sign and return to school (O.C.GA. § 20-2-751).

Section § 20-2-770 addresses the relationship of the State Board of Education and the Department of Human Resources to “promulgate rules and regulations to provide for a nutritional screening, and eye, ear, and dental examinations for each student entering the first grade”. Parents would be issued a certificate to present to the school.

For the purpose of enrollment, parents or guardians were also required to submit a certificate of immunizations as designated by the Department of Health. If parents objected on the grounds that immunization conflicted with their religious beliefs, the code did not apply unless a disease was in epidemic stages. The parent had to furnish an affidavit swearing or affirming that the immunization required conflicted with the religious beliefs of the parent. Any parent who did not comply with this code would be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction would be punished by a fine of not more than \$100.00 or by imprisonment for not more than 12 months (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-771).

Section 20-2-772 provides for the screening of public school children for scoliosis. Prior approval of parents was not required. However, advanced written notice of the time of screening had to be given to parents. If parents objected, the child had to be exempt from the screening.

For the purpose of enrollment, parents or guardians were also required to submit a certificate of immunizations as designated by the Department of Health (O.C.G.A § 20-2-771). Parents failing to comply could be fined.

There are consequences for parents who continue to act inappropriately in the presence of students after being advised to stop. These could include rejection from the campus and possible legal charges (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1182).

Student safety was addressed in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 in the requirement that each school have an established school safety plan to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel.

School to Home Communications

School-to-home communications activities include providing parents with information regarding their child's programs and academic progress.

For the at-risk student, a law stating that uniform methods of determining eligibility for free and reduced meal programs is covered in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-66. It was required that parents be notified about the program.

Public schools could also require that parents provide an official copy of their child's social security number. Provisions were included should a parent object to the incorporation of the social security number into the school records (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150).

Parents had the right to request student records from other educational settings. Likewise, parents had to give prior consent for the release of medical and educational records of these institutions (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133).

Section 20-2-153 addressed the need for an early intervention program for students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level. Schools were required to provide time notice and an opportunity for a conference with the parent to discuss the student's academic performance and the role of the early intervention program.

Likewise, a parent must be notified in writing by first-class mail by the school principal regarding a student's performance below grade level on an assessment instrument. Parents should also be notified of any retest, the acceleration, differentiation,

or additional instructional program to which the student was assigned. If a student was to be retained, the principal must notify the parent in writing by first-class mail. The notice must describe the option of the parent to appeal the decision to retain the student and describe the composition and functions of the placement committee, as well as the time and place for convening the committee (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-283).

Upon enrollment a parent had to provide records from previous schools their child had attended (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-670). A transferring student had to provide academic records from the previous school (O.C.G.A. § 20-2- 670). Parents could not be denied the right to inspect the records of their child (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-720).

Corporal punishment was permissible provided the child's parent, upon request, was given a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment. This form of punishment could not be administered if the parents, on the day of enrollment, filed a valid reason that such punishment not be administered to their child (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-731).

Parents were to be included in the development of local policies designed to improve student behavior and discipline. Parental involvement processes had to be designed to create the expectation that parents, teachers, and school administrators would work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance. Communication was to be open and address student behavior that distracted from the learning environment (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-735).

Likewise, local boards had to distribute to parents the adopted code of conduct (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-736). A form for the parent to sign and return to the school must be

included. Local boards had to provide opportunities for parental involvement in developing and updating student codes of conduct.

Laws indicating the authority of the teacher to manage his or her classroom and discipline students require proper notification to the principal, who in turn must notify a parent. Teachers of must file a report regarding students who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach. A copy of the report that is filed with the principal must be sent to the parent along with information regarding how the student's parents may contact the principal. If a student support services team (SST) meeting is to be held or discipline action is taken, the parent must be given written notice within one school day. Reasonable attempt had to be made to confirm written notification was received by the parent (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737).

On and after July 1, 2000, a teacher had the authority to remove from his or her class a student who had previously been referred to the principal or who posed an immediate threat to the safety of the student's classmates or the teacher. Within one day of the removal, a principal had to notify parents of such actions to the parent, make reasonable attempts to confirm receipt of the notice, and information on how to contact the principal. Should a discipline problem occur in the classroom, a teacher could follow a designated process for having the student removed from his class (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738). Parents of a student may be required to participate in conferences that the principal requests (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738).

The Department of Education was now required to provide training in conflict management and resolution and in cultural diversity. Implementation by local boards for

parents, school employees, and students was the responsibility of local boards (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-739).

A new law defining “bullying” was put on the books. The definition included “willful attempt to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so”. It could also mean “an intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm”. A student who has committed the offense of bullying three times in one year would be assigned to an alternative school. Parents had to be notified of these rules regarding bullying and the penalties for such actions. This information had to be posted at the middle and high school and included in student and parent handbooks. Student code of conduct had to include a form that the student’s parent would sign and return to school (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751).

If a judgment or finding was rendered in favor of a defendant educator by a parent and arising out of or resulting from the discipline of the student or was found to be frivolous or without cause, all reasonable court costs, reasonable attorney’s fees, and reasonable expense would be assessed against the plaintiff (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1000).

Student safety was addressed in (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185) in the requirement that each school have an established school safety plan to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia’s children, teachers, and other school personnel. Plans would need to be reviewed and updated monthly, if necessary and submitted to the local emergency management agency.

State Board of Education required the “dissemination of appropriate student performance and school completion performance portions of school report cards annually

to the parent, guardian, conservator, or other person having lawful control of a student at school". The school report card must be posted on a website at the local and state level (O.C.G.A. § 20-14-34). Section 20-14-35 stated that if an on-site visit was required, the auditor must obtain information from various parties including the parents of students enrolled in the local system.

Volunteer

Parent volunteer involvement at school included activities that support sports, student performances, and other activities. At the end of the 2002 session of the Georgia Legislature, there were no laws relating to parent volunteers in school.

Learning at Home

Parental involvement in learning activities at home included such things as reading, working with homework and promoting educational activities. As of the end of the 2002 session of the Georgia Legislature, there were no laws relating to parents providing learning activities at home.

Decision Making, Governance, and Advocacy

Parental involvement in school decision-making, governance, and advocacy was the area that includes parents' participation in school councils, PTA, and etc. This could be involvement with one's own child or for the good of the whole school or system.

Section § 20-2-140 that the State Board of Education shall establish competencies that each student is expected to master prior to completion of a student's public school education. Parents have the discretion to take advantage of these opportunities.

Parental involvement in curriculum and instruction included issues pertaining to sex education and AIDS education in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-143. A parent has the right to elect, in writing, that their children not receive such a course of study.

Character education, as referenced in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-145 stated the requirement that the State Board of Education had to develop a comprehensive character education program by the start of the 1997-1998 school year for level K-12. Local boards had to provide opportunities for parental involvement in establishing expected outcomes of the character education program.

Section § 20-2-153 addresses the need for an early intervention program for students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level. Schools are required to provide time notice and an opportunity for a conference with the parent to discuss the student's academic performance and the role of the early intervention program.

Likewise, a parent must be notified in writing by first-class mail by the school principal regarding a student's performance below grade level on an assessment instrument. Parents should also be notified of any retest, the acceleration, differentiation, or additional instructional program to which the student is assigned. If a student is to be retained, the principal must notify the parent in writing by first-class mail. The notice must describe the option of the parent to appeal the decision to retain the student and describe the composition and functions of the placement committee, as well as the time and place for convening the committee (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-283).

Likewise, local boards have to distribute to parents the adopted code of conduct (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-736). Parents were to be included in the development and review of this document.

Laws indicating the authority of the teacher to manage his or her classroom and discipline students require proper notification to the principal, who in turn must notify a parent. The teacher must file a report regarding students who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to teach. A copy of the report that is filed with the principal must be sent to the parent along with information regarding how the student's parents may contact the principal. If a student support services team meeting is to be held or discipline action is taken, the parent must be given written notice within one school day. Reasonable attempt had to be made to confirm that the written notification was received by the parent (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-737).

Should a discipline problem occur in the classroom, a teacher could follow a designated process for having the student removed from his class (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-738).

Section 20-2-739 stated that local boards should provide training in conflict management and resolution and in cultural diversity be developed. Implementation by boards for school employees, parents, and students was to be voluntary.

Screening for scoliosis need not require parent approval was not required. However, parents were to be notified and, if they objected, they could communicate that to the school (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1000).

Collaboration

The sixth area calls for participation of parents in collaboration and exchanges between schools and community organizations, agencies, and business.

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-132 stated the need for increased parent involvement in schools. Likewise parents were to be provided with information on the quality of schools and the academic achievement of public school students in Georgia (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-131).

The school safety plan required parental collaboration with community leaders, local law enforcement, fire service public safety, and emergency management agencies. These plans had to be submitted to the local emergency management agency (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185).

School councils provided numerous opportunities for parents to collaborate with the school and community (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-85 & 20-2-86). In the request for, development, implementation, and review of charter schools parents were a vital element as they worked with the community and businesses (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2063 & 20-2-2068).

Summary

Georgia legislation has been passed to emphasize the importance of parental involvement. However, the laws as written in the Official Code of Georgia, 2002, were not presented in a logical and orderly manner as noted in Appendix A. Laws pertaining to similar topics such as enrollment were dispersed through the chapter. The definition of parent was located in three diverse sections, §§ 20-2-189, 20-2-641, and 20-2-2040. Requirements for enrollment were also spread throughout the chapter; § 20-2-150, social security number; § 20-2-770, health screening for nutrition, eye, ear, and dental; § 20-2-771, immunizations; § 20-2-772- scoliosis; and § 20-2-670, student records. Therefore, the first part of this chapter provided a review of the laws, identified for this study, in groupings by subject.

Laws were frequently written in very lengthy sentences such as:

If any civil action is brought against any educator or any report or complaint is made or filed against any educator with the county or local board of education, the Department of Education, the Professional Standards Commission, or any other person on behalf of a student and arising out of or relating to the discipline of such student, it shall be the duty of the county or local board of education employing such educator to provide counsel for the educator, if requested by the educator, unless such board of education determines, after an independent investigation of the report or complaint, that the act or omission of the educator constituted willful or wanton misconduct or constituted gross misconduct in violation of the express written policies of the board of education. (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1000)

The second part of this chapter defined the areas of parental involvement identified in the literature and analyzed Georgia laws which addressed these areas. Laws pertaining to four out of six of these areas were located and included in the designated area: basic obligations; school-to-home communications; decision making, governance, and advocacy. Two areas of effective parental involvement, volunteering at school and learning activities at home were not mentioned, in the Georgia Code.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUMMARY

This chapter provides a restatement of the purpose and a summary of parental involvement and laws in Georgia. Findings and conclusions based on an analysis of the data collected for the study are also presented.

The chapter is organized as follows:

1. Restatement of Purpose
2. Restatement of Procedures
3. Findings
4. Conclusions
5. Epilogue

This study is based on legislation addressing parental involvement, with a focus on current Georgia laws mandating parental involvement, kindergarten through grade 12. The following questions were addressed:

1. What is parental involvement in public schools?
2. What legislation in Georgia has mandated parental involvement?
3. How do Georgia laws align with identified areas of effective parental involvement?

Restatement of Purpose

There is conflict in the American public education system. There is a call for accountability, a demand for improvement. There is conflict in the quest for control and

power in American public schools. Educators are concerned with improving educational achievement of students and are looking for answers. Professionals rely on researchers, experts in the field, and inquiry to identify deficits, to seek solutions and to be innovative in the rapidly changing institution called “school.” Educators look to the world of business for models of efficiency, overlooking at times that their customers are quite different from those of the business world (Pajak, 1997; Sarason, 1995). The strength of the American public school system depends on the ability to problem solve in a spirit of community, “*gemeinschaft*” (DeMoss, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1997).

Parents, as customers and stakeholders, are often left out of the picture (DeMoss, 1999). Occasionally, customer satisfaction is evaluated by token surveys; stakeholders’ involvement is distantly designed by legislation and policies; and actual implementation is left up to the individual school. Thus far, these initiatives have had little impact in the improvement of education.

A change in the power and control of education requires more time and energy than one set of stakeholders has available. It will take a diverse community of learners to improve schools (Barth, 1990; Glickman, 1997; Smyth, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1997). Barth (1990) states that there are passive “sheep” living in the world of status quo depending on sources outside their school for change, and there are innovative “goats” willing to put in the effort to “promote and sustain learning among themselves” (p. 32).

Snyder (1997) advocates the development of “learning communities, work teams, and human resources” (p. 215). As educational supervisors, goats and the sheep must be given the freedom to question, observe, reflect, and personalize along with the support to improve educational achievement. Supervision must focus on more than what occurs

instructionally in the classroom. There needs to be a broader arena for improvement that includes the context, location, and participants (Smyth, 1997). It must be acknowledged that each individual is at different stages of growth and brings various cultural values. Sergiovanni (1997) promotes a “community of supervision” where “leaders and followers influence one another in the pursuit of shared purposes” (p. 268). Teachers, students, parents, community, and administrators are all stakeholders in the education of our youth.

The purpose of this dissertation was to study the role of the parent as a stakeholder in educational improvement, the need for parental involvement, and current legislation mandating the participation of parents in Georgia public schools. Because of the essential role of parents in the education process, schools must find effective ways to promote parental involvement.

The history and current status of current parental involvement practices and their effectiveness was studied to determine the relevance to education. Relevant legislation was reviewed to survey federal and selected states’ approaches to parental involvement mandates. Georgia laws current through the 2002 legislative session were analyzed and synthesized to explain Georgia laws mandating parental involvement. Finally, these laws were correlated to effective areas of parental involvement as identified in relevant literature.

Restatement of Procedure

The research for this study began with a personal and professional interest in the role of parents in the education of their child. Based on the belief that the role of American public schools is to educate children for a life in a democratic society, a review of democratic schools and their practices pertaining to the parent as a viable participant

was conducted. Areas of parental involvement studied included the practices and benefits for individual children as well as an individual school. Literature describing the effect of parental involvement on student academic success was reviewed. Books by scholars in the field and professional journals at the University of Georgia library were searched, and relevant information was identified and analyzed. Significant statements by prominent educational leaders were reviewed on the Internet to ascertain the message being provided to the general public. An extensive search of websites was conducted to gather the most up-to-date information on current legislation and research on the topic. The Official Code Of Georgia was reviewed on the internet and verified at the University of Georgia Law Library. Through this research, the author compiled a database of parental involvement practices and studies in the field of education.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature pertaining to parental involvement, federal involvement, and state laws pertaining to parental involvement. The Education of Secondary and Elementary Schools (ESEA) Act of 2001, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act, was reviewed to identify any provisions mandating participation of parents in schools. A major Georgia education improvement initiative, The A Plus Education Reform Act of 2001, was also reviewed.

Current laws addressed parents' rights and responsibilities involving their own children as well as school-wide activities. A key source of information was obtained from a national web site, "Find Law" on which 125 references of "parent" in Georgia public education were noted. These laws were analyzed to determine which ones directly relate to parental involvement in public schools, kindergarten through grade 12. The official codes of selected states referenced in professional literature were reviewed to

identify relevance to parental involvement mandates in public schools. However, the primary data for this study were derived from a review of the Official Code of Georgia.

Chapter III provides an analysis of the current laws in the Georgia Code that pertain to parental involvement in public schools. As the study proceeded, laws were analyzed to identify relevance to research in the field of parental involvement in schools.

Chapter IV provides findings and conclusions concerning the role of parents in Georgia public schools based on the research conducted. The epilogue included the author's comments on the importance of including parents as stakeholders in democratic education.

Findings

The following findings are based on an analysis of evidence obtained from the review of relevant literature, legislation of selected states regarding parental involvement, and an analysis of current Georgia law.

1. The nature of parental involvement in American education has historically changed with societal changes (DeMoss, 1999).
2. Parents are vital stakeholders in democratic schools (Barth, 1990; DeMoss, 1999; Glickman, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1997; Smyth, 1997).
3. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required increased parental involvement in public schools.
4. According to the literature, there are six areas of effective parental involvement: basic obligations; school to home communications; volunteering; learning at home; decision-making, governance, and advocacy; and collaboration. These areas may apply to a parental

activity with their own child or to the school in general (Epstein, 2001; Simon, 2001; Wehlburg, 1996)

5. Parental involvement defined as negative can have an anti-democratic effect in education (Black, 1998).
6. Positive parental involvement has shown to effect:
 - Academic achievement (Barton & Coley, 1992; Crimm, 1992; Epstein, 1986; Holland, 1999; Sanders, 2001)
 - Grades (Keith et al., 1998)
 - School completion (Brogenschneider, 1997)
 - Support for schools (DeMoss, Vaughn, & Lagenbach, 1996)
7. A structured parental involvement program is beneficial to the operation of schools and parent support (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Epstein, 2001; Hickman, 1999).
8. Georgia has not mandated a structured parental involvement program like other states. In contrast, California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and South Carolina have comprehensive legislation that addresses formalized parental involvement in schools that include designated personnel, funding, planning, implementation, evaluation and rewards. (California Code, 2002; Massachusetts General Laws, 2003; Minnesota Statutes, 2002; South Carolina Code, 2002).
9. Georgia laws have
 - mandated actions required of schools to involve parents
 - mandated involvement of parents in the education of their children

- mandated actions required of parents in schools
- addressed the need for parental involvement in schools
- addressed identified areas of effective parental involvement: basic obligations, school-to-home communication, decision-making/governance/advocacy, collaboration with community agencies
- not addressed the areas of parent volunteering at school and parental involvement in learning activities at home
- not been written in a structured manner (O.C.G.A., 2002)

Conclusions

Based on the findings, this study concluded that:

1. Research suggests that parental involvement can have beneficial academic and social effects.
2. Democratic schools need involved parents.
3. The role of parents in schools is gaining legislative support.
4. Federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, has increased parental involvement in communication, planning, and reviewing progress of students and programs. These requirements have filtered down to the state level.
5. According to the literature, there are six areas of effective parental involvement: basic obligations; school to home communications; volunteering; learning at home; decision-making, governance, and advocacy; and collaboration. These areas may apply to a parental activity with their own child or to the school in general.

6. Georgia laws address only limited areas of parental involvement. The Georgia legislature has passed legislation in the areas of basic obligations and communication with parents. The introduction of school councils has provided opportunities for parents to be involved with school wide decision-making and advocacy. Collaboration with community agencies and businesses is encouraged.
7. Georgia legislation could be improved by enhancements in organization and clarity.
8. Georgia legislation mandating parental involvement may be enhanced by studying the legislation of other states, such as California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and South Carolina, with the goal of developing a more structured program. Proposals should provide flexibility for local schools to meet the needs of the community.

Epilogue

As a nation, we are in constant change and turmoil and this couldn't be any clearer than in the microcosm of schools. As noted in the beginning of this study, our educational system has undergone tremendous evolution that has greatly affected the roles of the key players. Parents as stakeholders have been gradually pushed to the background.

Only in the last few decades has there been a resurgence of parental involvement in public schools. As demonstrated in the increased interest of parents in home schooling, vouchers, and charter schools, parents are calling for more involvement in the education of their children. Government policymakers are responding with increased

mandates that promote home/school communication, teacher evaluation and certification, parental involvement in decision-making in school issues, and responsibility of parents to support schools.

Society is becoming more diverse in language, cultural beliefs, and values. Democratic leadership for promoting diversity goes beyond having minorities as part of the organization. Glickman and Mells (1997) advocate the involvement of all members with their own ideas and at times contradictory perspectives. Without doubt there is conflict in the way schools are serving students and their parents. These are forcing changes in the structure and mindset of schools and its stakeholders.

As schools begin to work in teams, roles previously established as leadership are shifting also. It will require the relinquishing of power and control. Snyder (1997) states that the primary supervisory task is to develop professional learning communities that not only acquire new knowledge and skills, but also learn how to study and respond exceptionally well to their natural work and learning environments. Leadership will be a shared experience among team members for implementing and accountability for sustaining the quality of the various supervisory functions (Sergiovanni, 1987). Defining those roles will be controversial and difficult, but essential.

The complexity and breadth of the demands of school will require more knowledge, time, energy, and resources than teachers and principals may currently have to identify, to problem solve, and implement school improvement. It will take teamwork as described by Snyder, Sergiovanni, and Glickman in *Educational Supervision: Perspectives, Issues, and Controversies* (Glanz, J. & Neville, R., 1997). Barth (1990) speaks of teachers, parents, and principals acting as a community of learners who work

together to influence schools in ways others cannot. Zepeda and Mayers (2000) state in their book, *Supervision & Staff Development in the Block*:

Perhaps no group of stakeholders has a greater interest in student success than do parents. In response to this interest, many districts and states mandate that teacher staff development include training on how to involve parents. However, a great potential for learning and growth is lost if schools fail to show parents how to be involved in their child's education. (p. 32)

Through the implementation of the A Plus Education Act, the legislature has significantly increased opportunities to improve schools' communication with parents and to improve their participation in schools. As high stakes testing and accountability programs are implemented, the need for notification of tests, remediation opportunities, and communication of results of tests will be a critical public relations activity. Informed parents who are given the opportunity to help their children will benefit the most from work of the schools.

Additional time and energy on the parts of parents and educators will add to the already busy schedules of both parties if provisions of additional time and resources are not allotted. This can be seen in the implementation of school councils. Training for participation on school councils and actual meeting time will generally occur after school hours, extending the time commitment of all parties.

Because education laws are the work of politicians, with each election, new legislators present their formula for success in public schools. In November 2002, a new governor of Georgia, Sonny Perdue, was elected and immediately began proposing changes in the laws addressing education. Even as this dissertation is being finalized, proposal for changes in laws reviewed for this study were being debated.

This dissertation began with a quote from John Dewey:

Conflict is a gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates invention. It shocks us out of sheep-like passivity, and sets us to noting and contriving . . . conflict is the “sine que non” of reflection and ingenuity. (Glanz & Neville, 1997)

The American Heritage Dictionary (1985) defines gadfly as “one that acts as a constructively provocative stimulus” and “one habitually engaged in provocative criticism of existing institutions”. Parental involvement, and constructive criticism are necessary to the healthy evolution of schools. American public schools, as a democratic institution, need the involvement of parents.

Federal and state legislation have addressed the role of parents in education. Georgia laws mandating parental involvement in public schools for kindergarten through grade 12 have already been enacted on a limited basis. Further study of parental involvement in Georgia public schools, and research of effective parental involvement would provide legislators, educators and parents with additional knowledge to improve the education of their children.

REFERENCES

- Almatea, E. (1998). Family-school collaboration: An approach to restructuring family school relationships. *University of Florida Education Times*, 3(2), 3-7.
- American Heritage Dictionary* (1985). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Archer, J. (1997). Rochester mulls voice in rating teachers. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved July 13, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org?ew/1997.html>
- Baker, A., & Soden, L. M. (1998). The Challenges of Parent Involvement Research. ERIC Digest, Number 134.
- Barth, R. (1990). *Improving schools from within: Teachers, parents, and principals make a difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Barton, P., & Coley, R. (1992). America's smallest school: The family, policy information report. *Educational Testing Service*. Retrieved July 11, 2002 from <http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/abstrcts/ed349320.html>
- Belenardo, S. J. (2001). Practices and conditions that lead to a sense of community in middle schools. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 85(627), 33-45.
- Bermis, D., Krucker, M., Smith-Ruckhold G., & Wiese. V. (1998). Parents as partners in career education. South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, 37-46.
- Black, S. (1998). Parent support. *The American School Board Journal*, 185(40), 50- 53.
- Bradley, A. (1997). Parents. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved August 15, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1997/10parent.h17.html>
- Brogensneider, K (1997). Parental involvement in adolescent schooling: A proximal process with transcontextual validity. *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, 59(3), 718-733.
- California Codes (2002). Retrieved January 27, 2003 from www.leginfo.ca.gov
- Campbell, L. (1992). Parents and schools working for student success. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 76(543), 1-4.

- Chapman, W. (1991). The Illinois Experience: State grants to improve schools through parent involvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(5), 355-358.
- Comer, J. (1994). Parents will need to own the task. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved July 10, 2002 from <http://www.edwee.org/ew/vol-14/05comer.h14>
- Crimm, J. A. (1992). Parent involvement and academic achievement: A meta-analysis. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, 1992).
- Cross, C. (1991). The FIRST grants: Federal leadership to advance school and family partnerships. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(5), 383-388.
- Davies, D. (1991). Schools reaching out: Family, school, and community. *Phi Delta Kappan* 72(5), 376-382.
- de Kanter, A., Gingsburg, A., & Miline, A. (1986). Parent involvement strategies: A new emphasis on traditional parent roles. (Designs for compensatory education: Conference proceedings and papers). Retrieved July 11, 2000 from <http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu>
- DeMoss, S. (1999). A Conceptual Analysis of a Parent-Culture's Perceptions of Parental Involvement. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1999).
- DeMoss, S., Vaughn, C., & Lagenbach, M. (1996). Parental perceptions of long-term involvements with their children's schooling. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin* 80, (583), 34-43.
- Dixon, A. (1992). Parents: Full partners in the decision making process. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin* 76, (543) 15-18.
- DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, Indiana. National Educational Services.
- Elman, R. (1999). *The relationships among school-home communication, parent, and teacher attitudes, and teachers' practices with parent involvement*. (Doctoral dissertation, Fordham University). Retrieved July 13, 2001 from <http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit>
- Epstein, J. (1986). Parents' reactions to teacher practices of parental involvement. *Elementary School Journal*, 86(3), 277-294.
- Epstein, J. (1987). *Parent Involvement: What research says to administrators*. *Education and Urban Society – Special issue on school family relations: Issues for Administrators*. Retrieved July 13, 2002 from <http://www.ericweb.tc.columbia.edu/abstracts>

- Epstein, J. (1991). Paths to partnership: What we can learn from federal, state, district, and school initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(5), 345-349.
- Epstein, J. (2001). Introduction to the special section. New directions for school, family, and community partnerships in middle and high schools. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 85(627), 1-6.
- Epstein, J., & Dauber, S. (1991). School programs and teacher practices of parent involvement in inner city elementary and middle schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 3(15), 289-306.
- Florida Statutes (2002). Retrieved January 26, 2003 from www.flsenate.gov/statutes
- Glanz, J., & Neville, R. (1997). *Educational supervision: Perspectives, issues, and controversies*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.
- Glickman, C. (1997). *An open response to the draft of the A plus education reform act. Insites*, 10(1), 1.
- Glickman, C., & Mells, R. (1997). Why is advocacy for diversity in appointing supervisory leaders a moral imperative? In J. Glanz & R. F. Neville (Eds.). *Educational supervision: Perspectives, issues, and controversies*. (p. 341-348). San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Gordon, S. (1997). Has the field of supervision evolved to a point that it should be called something else? Yes. In J. Glanz & R. F. Neville (Eds.). *Educational supervision: Perspectives, issues, and controversies*. (pp.114-123). San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Hanson, S., & Ginsburg, A. (1985). Gaining ground: Values and high school success. Retrieved July 11, 2002 from <http://ericweb.tc.columbia.edu/abstracts/ed268069.html>
- Hawk, P. (1999). How do I know if my child's teacher is qualified? Retrieved July 11, 2002 from <http://www.access.org/resources/parent/teacher.html>
- Henderson, W., Marburger, C., & Ooms, R. (1986). Beyond the bake sale. An educator's guide to working with parents. Retrieved July 15, 2002 from <http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/abstracts.ed270508.html>
- Hickman, C. (1999). The future of high school success: The Importance of parent involvement programs. Retrieved February 25, 2003 from <http://horizon.unc.edu/projects/hsj/Hickman.asp>

- Ho-Sui-Chu, E., & Willms, J. D. (1996). Effects of parental involvement on eighth grade achievement. *Sociology of Education*, 69(2), 126-141.
- Holland, H. (1999). Putting parents in their place. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved July 13, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.lrg/ew/ewprintstory.cfm?slug+03hollan>
- Jackson, B., & Cooper, B. (1992). Involving parents in improving urban schools. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 76 (543), 31-38.
- Jacobson, L. (1997). PTA issues parent-involvement standards for schools. *Education Week on the Web*, Retrieved July 13, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/vol-16/18pta>
- Jennings, M. (2000). 'Attendance Technology' easing record keeping burden. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved July 13, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ewstory.cfm?slug=swipe>
- Katz, L., Aidman, A., Reese, D., & Clark, A. (1996). How can parent-teacher differences be prevented or resolved? Retrieved July 13, 2002 from *Parents* <http://www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/ptdiff.html>
- Keith, T., Keith, P., Quirk, K., Sperduto, J., Santillo, S., & Killings, S. (1998). Longitudinal effects of parental involvement on high school grades: similarities and differences across gender and ethnic groups. *Journal of School Psychology*, 36(3), 335-357.
- Kentucky Revised Statutes (2002). Retrieved August 25, 2002 from www.daviess.k12.ky.us
- Lawton (1997). Parents in N.Y. District to critique teachers. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved July 11, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1997/03roch.h17>
- Lewis, A. C. (1995) Changing views of parental involvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(6).
- Loucks, H. (1992) Increasing parent/family involvement: Ten ideas that work. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 76(543), 19-23.
- Manzo, K. K. (1998) Getting parents involved. *Education Week on the Week*. Retrieved July 13, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1998/11rco12>
- Massachusetts General Laws (2003). Retrieved April 2, 2003 from www.state.ma.us/legis/bills
- Minnesota Statutes (2002). Retrieved March 30, 2003 from www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us

- National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office. Author.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Public Law 107-110 (January 8, 2002).
- Official Code of Georgia (2003). *West's Code of Georgia*.
- Pajak, E. (1997). Should educational supervision be influenced by business management practice? No. In J. Glanz & R. F. Neville (Eds.). *Educational supervision: Perspectives, issues, and controversies*. (pp. 210-219). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Rose, H., & Shepard, R. (1995). The power of parents: An empowerment model for increasing parent involvement. *Education*, 15(3), 373-377.
- Sanders, G. S. (2001). Parents and schools working for student success. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 85(627), 53-61.
- Sandham, J. L. (1998). Davis signs law on parent involvement; vetoes pesticide bill. *Education Week on the Web*, Retrieved July 13 from http://www.edweek.org/ew/ew_printstory.cfm
- Sarason, S. B. (1995). Parental involvement and the political principle: Why the existing governance structure of schools should be abolished. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sergiovanni, T. (1997). How can we move toward a community theory of supervision? Wrong theory? Wrong practice? In J. Glanz & R. F. Neville (Eds.). *Educational supervision: Perspectives, issues, and controversies*. (pp. 263-280). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Simon, B. S. (2001). Family involvement in high school: Predictors and effects. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 85(727), 9-18.
- Smyth, J. (1997). Is supervision more than the surveillance of instruction? In J. Glanz & R. F. Neville (Eds.). *Educational supervision: Perspectives, issues, and controversies*. (pp. 285-295). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Snyder, K. (1997). What is the new supervisory role in an age of complexity? In J. Glanz & R. F. Neville (Eds.). *Educational supervision: Perspectives, issues, and controversies* (pp. 299-314). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Soloman, Z. (1991). California's policy on parent involvement: State leadership for local initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappa*. 72(5), 359-362.

- South Carolina Code of Laws (2001). Retrieved November 5, 2002 from www.lpitr.state.sc.us/code
- Stouffer, B. (1992). We can increase parent involvement in secondary schools. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 76(543), 5-9.
- The Development and Implementation of Parent and Community Involvement Programs. (1995). Studies of Educational Reform: Parent and Community Involvement in education. Retrieved August 25, 2002 from <http://www.ed.gov>
- Thorkildson, R., & Stein, M. R. (1998). Is parent involvement related to student achievement? Exploring the evidence. *Phi Delta Kappa Research Bulletin*, 22.
- Tichenor, M. (1999). Pre-service teachers' attitudes toward parent involvement: Implications for teacher education. *The Teacher Educator*, 33(4), 23-25.
- Trotter, A. (1996). New web site seeks to help parents make the home-school connection. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved July 11, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/vol-16/04tech>
- Viadero, D. (1997). School hot line found to boost parent involvement. *Education Week on the Web*. Retrieved July 13, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1997/36vmail.h16>
- Warner, I. (1991). Parents in touch: District leadership for parent involvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(5), 372-375.
- Wehlburg, C. (1996). The future of high school success: The importance of parental involvement programs. *The High School Journal*, 79 (2), 125-128.
- White, K. (1997). Kentucky panel backs adding council parent. *Educational Week on the Web*. Retrieved August 25, 2002 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/1997/12ky>
- Zepeda, S. J., & Lagenbach, M. S. (1999). *Special Programs in regular schools: Historical foundations, standards, and contemporary issues*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Zepeda, S. J., & Mayers, R. S. (2000). *Supervision & staff development in the block*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

APPENDIX A

OFFICIAL CODE OF GEORGIA: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AREAS

O.C.GA	Description	Basic Obligation	Communications	Volunteer	Learning & Home	Decision Making Advocacy	Collaboration
20-2-66	Free & reduced lunch	X	X				
20-2-85(b)	Council representative					X	X
20-2-86	Council membership = 2 parents					X	X
20-2-131	Information on quality of schools		X				X
20-2-132	Increase parent involvement					X	
20-2-133	Release of records		X				
20-2-140	SBOE establish competencies					X	
20-2-143	Sex/AIDS education					X	
20-2-145	Character curriculum					X	
20-2-150	Social security number required		X				
20-2-153	Early intervention program		X			X	
20-2-189 *	Migrant student						
20-2-258	Grants for parent compacts					X	
20-2-281	State end-of -course tests		X				
20-2-283	Retention of student		X			X	
20-2-290	Middle school exploratory					X	
20-2-294	Permanent classrooms/transfer		X			X	
20-2-641 *	Parents definition						
20-2-670	Enrollment of student		X				
20-2-690	Enrollment @ 6	X					
20-2-697	Attendance records	X					
20-2-720	Student records		X				
20-2-731	Corporal punishment	X	X				
20-2-735	Discipline	X	X				
20-2-736	Code of conduct	X	X			X	
20-2-737	Discipline referral	X	X			X	
20-2-738	Student removal from class	X	X			X	
20-2-739	Conflict management/Cultural diversity	X	X			X	
20-2-751	Bullying	X	X				
20-2-765	Chronic discipline problem	X	X				
20-2-766	Chronic discipline problem	X	X			X	
20-2-766.1	Failure to attend conference		X				
20-2-768	Refused enrollment/Felony	X					
20-2-770	Health Screening/Enrollment	X					
20-2-771	Immunization	X					
20-2-772	Scoliosis	X					
20-2-1000	Parent complaint/Educator		X			X	
20-2-1182	Parent misconduct/Children present	X					
20-2-1185	School safety plan	X	X			X	X
20-2-2040 *	Multiracial						
20-2-2063	Charter school		X			X	X
20-2-2068	Withdraw charter		X			X	X
20-14-34	School report card		X				
20-14-35	School performance audit		X			X	
20-14-41	Deficient school D or F on student performance		X			X	

* Denotes section of O.C.GA. that does not align with an identified area of parental involvement

APPENDIX B
OFFICIAL CODE OF GEORGIA
SELECTED SECTIONS MANDATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following sections of the Official Code of Georgia were identified as pertaining to parental involvement in kindergarten through grade 12 of public schools.

§ 20-2-66: Prescribe uniform methods of determining eligibility for free or reduced price meals that are discreet and accessible. Each participating school system shall establish a method to regularly notify parents of the availability of the program.

§ 20-2-85b: The management and control of public schools shall be the responsibility of local boards of education, and the school leader shall be the principal. School councils shall provide advice, recommendations, and assistance and represent the community of parents and businesses. Each member of the council, as a community representative, shall be accorded the respect and attention deserving of such election.

§ 20-2-86: Membership on the council shall be open to teachers, parents, and business representatives selected from all businesses that are designated school business partners. Any member may withdraw from the council by delivering to the council a written resignation and submitting a copy to the secretary of the council or school principal. Should school council members determine that a member of the council is no longer active in the council, the council may, by a vote of five members of the council, withdraw such person's membership status, effective as of a date determined by the

council. (1) Two parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding employees who are parents or guardians of such students; an employee of the local school system may serve as a parent representative on the council of a school in which his or her child is enrolled if such employee works at a different school. (g) After providing public notice at least two weeks before the meeting of each electing body, the principal of each school shall call a meeting of electing bodies during the month of May each year for the purpose of selecting members of the school council as required by this Code section. The electing body for the parent members shall consist of all parents and guardians eligible to serve as a parent member of the school council, and the electing body for the teacher members shall consist of all certificated personnel eligible to serve as a teacher member of the school council. (k) The members of the council are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:

(5) Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community. School councils are advisory bodies. The councils shall provide advice and recommendations to the school principal and, where appropriate, the local board of education on any matter, including but not limited to, the following: School calendar; School codes for conduct and dress; Curriculum, program goals, and priorities; The responses of the school to audits of the school as conducted by the Office of Education Accountability; Preparation and distribution to the community of a school profile which shall contain data as identified by the council to describe the academic performance, academic progress, services, awards, interventions, environment, and other such data as the council deems appropriate; In the case of a vacancy in the position of school principal, the recommendation of a school principal from a list of qualified applicants submitted by the local board of education and local school superintendent to

the council; School budget priorities, including school capital improvement plans; School-community communication strategies; Methods of reporting to parents and communities other than through the school profile; 10 Extracurricular activities in the school; School-based and community services; Community use of school facilities; Recommendations concerning school board policies; Receiving and reviewing reports from the school principal in executive sessions regarding the performance of school personnel in achieving the school's student achievement goals; provided, however, that such sessions shall be subject to Code Section 50-14-3; and The method and specifications for the delivery of early intervention services."

§ 20-2-131: Providing parents and the general public with information on the quality of schools and the achievement of the public school students in Georgia; Providing an environment where parents and the community can participate in school activities and support school personnel as they work with students and address their academic needs; Providing for parent and community participation in the establishment of school programs, policies, and management so that the school and community are connected in meaningful and productive ways and providing support for teachers and school leaders in addressing the school's needs;

§ 20-2-132: An increase in parental and community involvement in schools.

§ 20-2-133: Except for a child who is in the physical custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Human Resources or any of its divisions and who receives services from a local unit of administration pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection, any child placed by the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Human Resources or any of its divisions in a facility operated by or under contract with

the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Human Resources who remains in that facility for more than 60 continuous days and any child who is a patient in a facility licensed by the State of Georgia to deliver intermediate care for the mentally retarded and which follows the federal regulations for intermediate care for the mentally retarded, who has been determined as appropriate for that level of care by the Department of Community Health or its designee, who has been admitted to such facility after evaluation and recommendation by developmental service teams of the Department of Human Resources, and who remains in that facility for more than 60 continuous days shall be treated by the local unit of administration of the school district in which the facility is located as eligible for enrollment in the educational programs of that local unit of administration; provided, however, that the child meets the age eligibility requirements established by this article. The local unit of administration of the school district in which these facilities are located is responsible for the provision of all educational programs, including special education and related services, free of charge to these children as long as the children remain in such facilities. However, except as provided in this paragraph, placement in such a facility by the parent or by another local unit of administration shall not create such responsibility; When the custodian of any child notifies a local unit of administration, as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, that the child may become eligible for enrollment in educational programs of a local unit of administration, the custodian of the records of that child shall transfer the educational records and Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) and all education related evaluations, assessments, social histories, and observations to the appropriate local unit of administration. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the custodian of the

records has the obligation to transfer these records and the local unit of administration has the right to receive, review, and utilize these records. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, upon the request of a local unit of administration responsible for providing educational services to a child described in paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection, the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Human Resources shall furnish to the local unit of administration all medical and educational records in the possession of the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Human Resources pertaining to any such child, except where consent of a parent or legal guardian is required in order to authorize the release of any of such records, in which event the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Human Resources shall obtain such consent from the parent or guardian prior to such release.

§ 20-2-140: The State Board of Education shall establish competencies that each student is expected to master prior to completion of the student's public school education. The state board shall also establish competencies for which each student should be provided opportunities, at the discretion of the student and the student's parents, to master. Based upon these foregoing competencies, the state board shall adopt a uniformly sequenced core curriculum for grades kindergarten through 12. Each local unit of administration shall include this uniformly sequenced core curriculum as the basis for its own curriculum, although each local unit may expand and enrich this curriculum to the extent it deems necessary and appropriate for its students and communities.

§ 20-2-143: Each local board of education shall prescribe a course of study in sex education and AIDS prevention instruction for such grades and grade levels in the public school system as shall be determined by the State Board of Education. Such course of

study shall implement either the minimum course of study provided for in subsection (b) of this Code section or its equivalent, as approved by the State Board of Education. Each local board of education shall be authorized to supplement and develop the exact approach of content areas of such minimum course of study with such specific curriculum standards, as it may deem appropriate. Such standards shall include instruction relating to the handling of peer pressure, the promotion of high self-esteem, local community values, the legal consequences of parenthood, and abstinence from sexual activity as an effective method of prevention of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome; The State Board of Education shall prescribe a minimum course of study in sex education and AIDS prevention instruction which may be included as a part of a course of study in comprehensive health education for such grades and grade levels in the public school system as shall be determined by the state board and shall establish standards for its administration. The course may include instruction concerning human biology, conception, pregnancy, birth, sexually transmitted diseases, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome. The course shall include instruction concerning the legal consequences of parenthood, including, without being limited to, the legal obligation of both parents to support a child and legal penalties or restrictions upon failure to support a child, including, without being limited to, the possible suspension or revocation of a parent's driver's license and occupational or professional licenses. A manual setting out the details of such course of study shall be prepared by or approved by the State School Superintendent in cooperation with the Department of Human Resources, the State Board of Education, and such expert advisers as they may choose; Any parent or legal guardian of a child to whom the course of study

set forth in this Code section is to be taught shall have the right to elect, in writing, that such child not receive such course of study.

§ 20-2-145: The State Board of Education shall develop by the start of the 1997-1998 school year a comprehensive character education program for grades K-12. This comprehensive character education program shall be known as the "character curriculum" and shall focus on the students' development of the following character traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, respect for the creator, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue. Such program shall also address, by the start of the 1999-2000 school year, methods of discouraging bullying and violent acts against fellow students. Local boards shall implement such a program in all grade levels at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school years and shall provide opportunities for parental involvement in establishing expected outcomes of the character education program.

§ 20-2-150: No child or youth shall be admitted to any public school of the state until the parent or guardian provides to the proper school authorities an official copy of that child's social security number which shall be incorporated into the official school records pertaining to that child or youth. Each local unit of administration shall establish and implement a plan for providing the public appropriate notice of the information required of every student under its jurisdiction prior to the beginning of each school year. School authorities may provisionally admit a child for whom an official social security number has not been provided if the parent or guardian completes a postage-paid

application for a social security number at the time of enrollment. A parent or guardian who objects to the incorporation of the social security number into the school records of a child may have the requirement waived by signing a statement objecting to the requirement.

§ 20-2-153: The early intervention program shall serve students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level, including but not limited to students who are identified through the first grade readiness assessment required by (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-151 and 20-2-281) and students with identified academic performance below grade levels defined by the Office of Education Accountability in (O.C.G.A. § 20-14-31) for any criterion-referenced assessment administered in accordance with (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-281) for grades one through five. Local school systems shall devise a process for the identification of such students at the beginning of each school year and also during the school year as a continuous process of early identification and monitoring. School systems may use indicators such as but not limited to the student's scores on previous assessments, the student's classroom performance in the same or previous years, and other reliable indicators to identify such students. A student shall be assigned to the early intervention program, as soon as is practicable after the student is identified, as at risk or after the results of the first-grade readiness assessment or the criterion-referenced assessment is known. The school shall provide timely notice and an opportunity for a conference with the student and his or her parents or guardians to discuss the student's academic performance and the role of the early intervention program.

§ 20-2-189: As used in this Code section, the term "migrant student" means a child who is a student in a public school and who has, within 12 months prior to first

becoming a student in such school, moved across state or school district lines with a migrant parent or guardian to enable the child, the child's parent or guardian, or a member of the child's immediate family to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity.

§ 20-2-258: The State Board of Education shall provide grants to qualified public elementary and secondary schools and local school systems, subject to appropriation by the General Assembly. The purpose of such grants shall be to encourage grant recipients to develop and implement written compacts among teachers, parents, and students. Such compacts shall be entered into voluntarily and shall describe the commitments made by the student, the student's teacher, and the student's parents to improve and enhance the student's academic achievement. Grant recipients shall ensure that a compact is offered for each class in which a student is enrolled and that students and parents are invited to a conference with the teacher, within the first 30 days after enrollment, to discuss the terms of the compact. The state board shall prescribe criteria, policies, and standards deemed necessary for the effective implementation of this Code section.

§ 20-2-281: (e) The State Board of Education shall adopt end of course assessments for students in grades nine through 12 for all core subjects to be determined by the state board. (g) The State Board of Education shall administer the end-of-course assessments for core subject areas as defined by state board policy. The state board shall promulgate a schedule for the development and administration of all end-of-course tests by December 1, 2000. (h) The Department of Education shall develop study guides for the criterion reference tests and end-of-course assessments administered pursuant to subsections (a) and (e) of this Code section. Each school shall distribute the study guides

to students who do not perform satisfactorily on one or more parts of an assessment instrument administered under this Code section and to the parents or guardians of such students.

§ 20-2-283: The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified in writing by first-class mail by the school principal or such official's designee regarding the student's performance below grade level on the assessment instrument, the retest to be given the student, the accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction program to which the student is assigned, and the possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level for the next school year; The school principal or the principal's designee shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher regarding the decision to retain the student. The notice shall describe the option of the parent, guardian, or teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student and shall further describe the composition and functions of the placement committee as provided for in this subsection, including the requirement that a decision to promote the student must be a unanimous decision of the committee; If the parent, guardian, or teacher appeals the decision to retain the student, then the school principal or designee shall establish a placement committee composed of the principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher of the subject of the assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at grade level and shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the time and place for convening the placement committee;

§ 20-2-290(b): Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, local boards of education shall schedule each middle school so as to provide, subject to other provisions of this subsection and at the option of the local school board, either: (1) A minimum of

four and one-half hours of instruction in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and such other academic subjects as the State Board of Education shall prescribe; and an interdisciplinary team of academic teachers with common planning time of 85 minutes.; or (2) A longer school day, to include a minimum of five hours of instruction in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and such other academic subjects as the State Board of Education shall prescribe; and an interdisciplinary team of academic teachers with common planning time of 85 minutes. Without limiting the choices, the local board shall have the authority to schedule exploratory and physical education classes for the remainder of the school day. For students not performing on grade level, as defined by the Office of Education Accountability, the additional time shall be designated for academic instruction to bring such students to grade level performance. For students performing at or above grade level, such additional time may be used to further advance the student or to instruct in other academic subjects such as foreign language. A student who is performing at or above grade level shall be allowed to take additional academic classes instead of exploratory classes if the parent or guardian of such a student requests such assignment, subject to available space. Until implementation of accountability standards by the Office of Education Accountability, for any middle school with a combined total of 50 percent scoring good or very good in the previous school year on the first administration of the state eighth grade writing assessment and at the fiftieth percentile or above on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills eighth grade composite score, the local board is authorized to allow for a school day of a minimum of four and one-half hours of academic instruction. After the implementation of the accountability standards by the Office of Education Accountability, for any middle school scoring an A

or B on the absolute student achievement standard, the local board is authorized to allow for a school day of a minimum of four and one-half hours of academic instruction. Local school systems shall comply with this subsection in order to qualify for the middle grades program.

§ 20-2-294: (a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that students receive academic instruction in permanent classrooms where possible and, further, that students be transported to schools that are within a reasonable distance from the student's place of residence. In order to allow for hardships imposed by inadequate classroom space and excessive distances, this Code section authorizes students to receive education services outside the school district in which they reside, subject to rules promulgated by the State Board of Education. (b) A student enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school in this state may elect to request reassignment to a public school that is located within the school district in which the student resides other than the one to which the student has been assigned by the local board of education if the school to which the student has been assigned does not have available permanent classroom space in which the student can attend classes and a school within the district in which the student resides has permanent classroom space available. At any time during the school year in which a student is assigned to nonpermanent classroom facilities for instruction, the parent or guardian of a student may apply to the local board for reassignment. (c) If the student's place of residence is located closer to a school other than the school assigned the student by the local board of education, regardless of the school district in which the closer school is located, and the distance or travel time to the school to which the student has been assigned is, in the determination of the State Board of Education, excessive, and the

school which the student is applying to attend is the closest available public school offering a regular program to the student's residence and has available permanent classroom space, the State Board of Education may authorize the student to attend the closer school. State Quality Basic Education Program funds, including the local five-mill share, allotted to the sending district shall be reallocated to the receiving district in an amount correlated to the number of transferred students. A student's request for reassignment shall be submitted in writing to the district offices of both the district in which the student resides and the district in which the student is requesting to attend school no later than seven days following the assignment of the student to a school and notification of assignment to the student's parent or guardian. Upon assignment of nonresident students, the district that is providing services may elect to make application to the state for funds that represent the difference between the dollar amount per full-time equivalent student represented by the state program funds received and the total dollar amount per full-time equivalent student expended by the district for a similarly enrolled student; provided, however, that local transportation costs shall not be included in the amount requested. The Department of Education shall request funds in the midterm adjustment amount sufficient to provide for these costs after the amounts submitted have been adjusted to account for students moving between the same two districts so as to subtract the base cost, represented as the lesser of the two local district costs per full-time equivalent student amounts, from the greater amount.

§ 20-2-641: As used in this article, the term: "Local school system" means all county, city, independent, and other public school systems in existence in this state.

"Parents" means the natural or adoptive parent or parents, legal guardian, or other person

or persons standing in loco parent is to or having legal custody of a child eligible and entitled to receive an education grant under this article, who is actually paying or who will pay the tuition cost of attendance of such child at a school which qualified such child to receive a grant pursuant to this article.

§ 20-2-670: A transferring student applying for admission to a grade higher than the sixth grade shall as a prerequisite to admission present a certified copy of his or her academic transcript and disciplinary record from the school previously attended. In lieu of complying with the provision of subsection (a) of this Code section, a transferring student may be admitted on a conditional basis if he or she and his or her parent or legal guardian executes a document providing the name and address of the school last attended and authorizing the release of all academic and disciplinary records to the school administration. The parent or guardian shall be notified of the transfer of such records and shall, upon written request made within ten days of such notice, be entitled to receive a copy of such records. Within five days of the receipt of a copy of such records, the parent or guardian may make a written request for and shall be entitled to a hearing before the principal of the school or his or her designee which is the custodian of such records for the purpose of challenging the content of the records. The student or his or her parent or legal guardian shall also disclose on the same document as the release whether the child has ever been adjudicated guilty of the commission of a designated felony act as defined in O.C.G.A. § 15-11-63 and, if so, the date of such adjudication, the offense committed, the jurisdiction in which such adjudication was made, and the sentence imposed. Any form document to authorize the release of records which is provided by a school to a transferring student or such student's parent or legal guardian

shall include a list of designated felony acts. The student or his or her parent or legal guardian shall also disclose on the document whether the student is currently serving a suspension or expulsion from another school, the reason for such discipline, and the term of such discipline. If a student so conditionally admitted is found to be ineligible for enrollment pursuant to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2, or is subsequently found to be so ineligible, he or she shall be dismissed from enrollment until such time as he or she becomes so eligible.

§ 20-2-690: Every parent, guardian, or other person residing within this state having control or charge of any child or children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays shall enroll and send such child or children to a public school, a private school, or a home study program that meets the requirements for a public school, a private school, or a home study program.

§ 20-2-697: (a) Visiting teachers and attendance officers shall receive the cooperation and assistance of all teachers and principals of public schools in the local school systems within which they are appointed to serve. It shall be the duty of the principals or local school site administrators and of the teachers of all public schools to report, in writing, to the visiting teacher or attendance officer of the local system the names, ages, and residences of all students in attendance at their schools and classes within 30 days after the beginning of the school term or terms and to make such other reports of attendance in their schools or classes as may be required by rule or regulation of the State Board of Education. All public schools shall keep daily records of attendance, verified by the teachers certifying such records. Such reports shall be open to inspection by the visiting teacher, attendance officer, or duly authorized representative at

any time during the school day. Any such attendance records and reports which identify students by name shall be used only for the purpose of providing necessary attendance information required by the state board or by law, except with the permission of the parent or guardian of a child, pursuant to the subpoena of a court of competent jurisdiction, or for verification of attendance by the Department of Public Safety for the purposes set forth in subsection (a.1) of Code Section 40-5-22.

§ 20-2-720: No local school system, whether county, independent, or area, shall have a policy of denying, or which effectively prevents, the parents of students who are in attendance at or who have been enrolled in any facility within such system the right to inspect and review the education records of their children. A parent shall be entitled to inspect and review only information relating to his or her own child and if any material or document in a child's record includes information on another student, such information regarding any other student shall not be made available for inspection or review except to the parents of that student. Both parents of a child shall be entitled to inspect and review the educational records of their child or to be provided information concerning their child's progress. Information concerning a child's education record shall not be withheld from the noncustodial parent unless a court order has specifically removed the right of the noncustodial parent to such information or unless parental rights have been terminated.

§ 20-2-731: The principal or teacher who administered corporal punishment must provide the child's parent, upon request, a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment and the name of the principal or assistant principal, or designee of the principal or assistant principal, who was present; provided, however, that such an explanation shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent civil action brought as a

result of the corporal punishment; and (5) Corporal punishment shall not be administered to a child whose parents or legal guardian has upon the day of enrollment of the pupil filed with the principal of the school a statement from a medical doctor licensed in Georgia stating that it is detrimental to the child's mental or emotional stability.

§ 20-2-735: No later than July 1, 2000, each local board of education shall adopt policies designed to improve the student-learning environment by improving student behavior and discipline. These policies shall provide for the development of age-appropriate student codes of conduct containing standards of behavior, a student support process, a progressive discipline process, and a parental involvement process. The State Board of Education shall establish minimum standards for such local board policies. The Department of Education shall make available for utilization by each local board of education model student codes of conduct, a model student support process, a model progressive discipline process, and a model parental involvement process. Parental involvement processes developed pursuant to this subpart shall be designed to create the expectation that parents and guardians, teachers, and school administrators will work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance and will communicate freely their concerns about and actions in response to student behavior that detracts from the learning environment.

§ 20-2-736: Local boards of education shall provide for the distribution of student codes of conduct developed pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-735 to each student upon enrollment. Local boards of education shall provide for the distribution of such student codes of conduct to the parents or guardians of each student through such means as may best accomplish such distribution at the local level and are appropriate in light of the

grade level of the student, including distribution of student codes of conduct to students and parents or guardians jointly. Local boards of education may solicit the signatures of students and parents or guardians in acknowledgment of the receipt of such student codes of conduct, as may be suitable to the grade level of the student. In addition, student codes of conduct shall be available in each school and classroom. (b) Local boards of education shall provide for disciplinary action against students who violate student codes of conduct. (c) Local boards of education shall provide opportunities for parental involvement in developing and updating student codes of conduct

§ 20-2-737: (a) Local board policies adopted pursuant to (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-735) shall require the filing of a report by a teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior that repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his or her class or with the ability of such student's classmates to learn, where such behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct. Such report shall be filed with the principal or the principal's designee within one school day of the most recent occurrence of such behavior, shall not exceed one page, and shall describe the behavior. The principal or the principal's designee shall, within one school day after receiving such a report from a teacher, send to the student's parent or guardian a copy of the report and information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or the principal's designee. (b) If student support services are utilized or if disciplinary action is taken in response to such a report by the principal or the principal's designee, the principal or the principal's designee shall send written notification to the teacher and the student's parents or guardians of the student support services being utilized or the disciplinary action taken within one school

day after such utilization or action and shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that such written notification has been received by the student's parents or guardians. Such written notification shall include information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or the principal's designee.

§ 20-2-738: (a) A teacher shall have the authority, consistent with local board policy, to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or the principal's designee to maintain discipline in the classroom. The principal or the principal's designee shall respond when a teacher refers a student by employing appropriate discipline management techniques that are consistent with local board policy.

(b) On and after July 1, 2000, a teacher shall have the authority to remove from his or her class a student who repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the student's classmates to learn, where the student's behavior is in violation of the student code of conduct, provided that the teacher has previously filed a report pursuant to (O.C.G.A. §20-2-737) or determines that such behavior of the student poses an immediate threat to the safety of the student's classmates or the teacher. The teacher shall file with the principal or the principal's designee a report describing the student's behavior, in one page or less, by the end of the school day on which such removal occurs or at the beginning of the next school day. The principal or the principal's designee shall, within one school day after the student's removal from class, send to the student's parents or guardians written notification that the student was removed from class, a copy of the report filed by the teacher, and information regarding how the student's parents or guardians may contact the principal or the principal's designee. Within one school day of

taking action pursuant to subsection (e) of this Code section, the principal or the principal's designee shall send written notification of such action to the teacher and the parents or guardians of the student and shall make a reasonable attempt to confirm that such written notification has been received by the student's parents or guardians. (g) Parents or guardians of a student who has been removed from class pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section may be required to participate in conferences that may be requested by the principal or the principal's designee; provided, however, that a student may not be penalized for the failure of his or her parent or guardian to attend such a conference. (h) The procedures contained in this Code section relating to student conferences and notification of parents or guardians are minimum requirements. Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to limit the authority of a local board of education to establish additional requirements relating to student conferences, notification of parents or guardians, conferences with parents or guardians, or other procedures required by the Constitutions of the United States or this state.

§ 20-2-739: On and after July 1, 2000, the Department of Education shall provide training programs in conflict management and resolution and in cultural diversity for voluntary implementation by local boards of education for school employees and participation by parents and guardians, and students.

§ 20-2-751.4: (a) As used in this Code section, the term "bullying" means: (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm. (b) Each local board of education shall adopt policies, applicable to students in grades six through 12 that

prohibit bullying of a student by another student and shall require such prohibition to be included in the student code of conduct for middle and high schools in that school system. Local board policies shall require that, upon a finding that a student has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school. Each local board of education shall ensure that students and parents of students are notified of the prohibition against bullying, and the penalties for violating the prohibition, by posting such information at each middle and high school and by including such information in student and parent handbooks. Any student handbook, which is prepared by a local board or school, shall include a copy or summary of the student code of conduct for that school or be accompanied by a copy of the student code of conduct for that school. If a student handbook contains a summary of the student code of conduct, then a full copy of the student code of conduct shall be made available for review at the school. When distributing a student code of conduct, a local school shall include a form on which the student's parent or guardian may acknowledge his or her receipt of the code, and the local school shall request that the form be signed and returned to the school.

§ 20-2-765: Any time a teacher or principal identifies a student as a chronic disciplinary problem student, the principal shall notify by telephone call and by certified mail with return receipt requested or first-class mail, the student's parent or guardian of the disciplinary problem, invite such parent or guardian to observe the student in a classroom situation, and request at least one parent or guardian to attend a conference with the principal or the teacher or both to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan.

§ 20-2-766: Before any chronic disciplinary problem student is permitted to return from an expulsion or suspension, the school to which the student is to be readmitted shall request by telephone call and by either certified mail with return receipt requested or first-class mail at least one parent or guardian to schedule and attend a conference with the principal or his or her designee to devise a disciplinary and behavioral correction plan. Failure of the parent or guardian to attend shall not preclude the student from being readmitted to the school. At the discretion of the principal, a teacher, counselor, or other person may attend the conference. The principal shall ensure that a notation of the conference is placed in the student's permanent file.

§ 20-2-766.1: The local board of education may, by petition to the juvenile court, proceed against a parent or guardian as provided in this Code section. If the court finds that the parent or guardian has willfully and unreasonably failed to attend a conference requested by a principal pursuant to Code Section 20-2-765 or 20-2-766, the court may order the parent or guardian to attend such a conference, order the parent or guardian to participate in such programs or such treatment as the court deems appropriate to improve the student's behavior, or both. After notice and opportunity for hearing, the court may impose a fine, not to exceed \$500.00, on a parent or guardian who willfully disobeys an order of the court entered under this Code section. The court may use its contempt and other powers specified in Code Section 15-11-62 to enforce any order entered under this Code section.

§ 20-2-768: (a) Each local board of education is authorized to refuse to readmit or enroll any student who has been suspended or expelled for being convicted of, being adjudicated to have committed, being indicted for, or having information filed for the

commission of any felony or any delinquent act under O.C.G.A. § 15-11-28 which would be a felony if committed by an adult. If refused readmission or enrollment, the student or the student's parent or legal guardian has the right to request a hearing pursuant to the procedures provided for in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-754.

§ 20-2-770: The Department of Human Resources is authorized and directed, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, to promulgate rules and regulations to provide for a nutritional screening and eye, ear, and dental examinations for each student entering the first grade in the public schools of this state and at such other times as such rules and regulations shall provide. Such rules and regulations shall provide procedures for local boards of health to provide for such examinations and screenings and for the issuance of a certificate to the parent or parents of children entering the first grade indicating that such examinations and screenings have been made, and such certificates shall be turned in to the school officials at the time of enrollment. Such rules and regulations shall further provide that the examinations and screenings required in this Code section may be made by private practitioners and authorize the certification provided for in this Code section by such private practitioners.

§ 20-2-771: This Code section shall not apply to a child whose parent or legal guardian objects to immunization of the child on the grounds that the immunization conflicts with the religious beliefs of the parent or guardian; however, the immunization may be required in cases when such disease is in epidemic stages. For a child to be exempt from immunization on religious grounds, the parent or guardian must first furnish the responsible official of the school or facility an affidavit in which the parent or guardian swears or affirms that the immunization required conflicts with the religious

beliefs of the parent or guardian. Any responsible official permitting any child to remain in a school or facility in violation of this Code section, and any parent or guardian, who intentionally does not comply with this Code section, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$100.00 or by imprisonment for not more than 12 months. The Department of Human Resources may adopt rules and regulations for the enforcement of this Code section. The Department of Human Resources and the local board of health, or either of them, may institute a civil action in the superior court of the county in which the defendant resides for injunctive relief to prevent a threatened or continuing violation of any provision of this Code section.

§ 20-2-772: (a) In addition to any other requirements of this part, the Department of Human Resources is authorized and directed, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, to promulgate rules and regulations to provide for the screening of public school children for scoliosis. (b) The rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section shall not require the prior approval of parents or legal guardians of public school children for the screening of such school children for scoliosis. However, such rules and regulations shall provide for advance written notice of the time of such screening to be given to parents and legal guardians of such public school children. If the parent or legal guardian of a child objects to such child being screened for scoliosis, such child shall be exempt from such screening.

§ 20-2-1000: If a judgment or finding is rendered in favor of a defendant educator in any action, complaint, disciplinary proceeding, or other administrative proceeding brought by a student, a parent or guardian of a student, or any other person on

behalf of a student and arising out of or resulting from the discipline of such student or if the complaint is found to be nonmeritorious, frivolous, or without just cause, all reasonable court costs, reasonable attorneys' fees, and reasonable expenses incurred by the defendant educator in defending such action or complaint shall be assessed by the court, agency, or other tribunal against the plaintiff and shall be paid by the plaintiff. Any educator shall have a right to bring an action or a counterclaim against the plaintiff in any such action or proceeding for any damages suffered by the educator as a result of the actions of the student or the filing of any frivolous or nonmeritorious action, complaint, or report. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to apply to any educator filing a complaint as required by the rules, regulations, or code of ethics of the Professional Standards Commission; any child abuse reporting statute; any applicable local board of education rule, regulation, or policy; or any State Board of Education rule, regulation, or policy. If any civil action is brought against any educator or any report or complaint is made or filed against any educator with the county or local board of education, the Department of Education, the Professional Standards Commission, or any other regulatory agency or tribunal by a student, a parent or guardian of a student, or any other person on behalf of a student and arising out of or relating to the discipline of such student, it shall be the duty of the county or local board of education employing such educator to provide counsel for the educator, if requested by the educator, unless such board of education determines, after an independent investigation of the report or complaint, that the act or omission of the educator constituted willful or wanton misconduct or constituted gross misconduct in violation of the express written policies of the board of education. Neither testimony given in such independent investigation nor

the results of any such independent investigation by the board of education shall be admissible in any other proceeding. The provision of counsel to such educator shall be for an educational purpose and any funds available to the board of education may be expended for such purpose. Any attorneys' fees recovered pursuant to subsection (c) of this Code section attributable to the services furnished by any counsel provided to an educator by his or her employer shall be paid to the employer.

§ 20-2-1182: Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at the public school in question who has been advised that minor children are present and who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above-designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.00.

§ 20-2-1185: (a) Every public school shall prepare a school safety plan to help curb the growing incidence of violence in schools, to respond effectively to such incidents, and to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism. School safety plans of public schools shall be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, community leaders, other school employees and school district employees, and local law enforcement, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. School

safety plans of private schools may be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, other school employees, and local law enforcement, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. Such plans shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated annually. Such plans of public schools shall be submitted to the local emergency management agency.

§ 20-2-2040: As used in this article, the term "multiracial" means having parents of different races.

§ 20-2-2063: A petition which is submitted by a charter petitioner to a local board or the state board under Code Section 20-2-2064 shall: (1) Describe a plan for improvement that addresses how the charter petitioner proposes to improve student learning and meet minimum state standards; (2) Outline proposed verifiable academic or vocational performance based criteria or verifiable academic and vocational performance based criteria that will be used during the term of the charter to measure the progress of the charter petitioner in improving student learning and meeting minimum state standards; (3) Describe how parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, as well as the faculty, instructional staff, and the broader community, were and will be directly and substantially involved in developing the petition, developing and implementing the improvement plan, and identifying academic or vocational performance based criteria; (4) Describe how the concerns of parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, faculty, instructional staff, and the broader community will be solicited and addressed in evaluating the effectiveness of the improvement plan; (5) Provide for the charter school to be subject to the control and management of the local board of the local

school system in which the proposed charter school will be located, as provided in the charter and in a manner consistent with the Constitution; (6) Provide for a governing body, the majority of the members of which shall be parents or guardians of students enrolled in the charter school who are not employed by the school or by the local school system in which the charter school is located, which shall be: (A) Responsible for carrying out the terms of the charter; (B) Subject to the control and management of the local board for that school system, as provided in the charter and in a manner consistent with the Constitution; and (C) Subject to the provisions of Chapter 14 of Title 50 and Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50; (7) For petitions filed by charter petitioners other than a local school, specify whether the charter petitioner elects that the charter school be organized and operated as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of this state; (8) Provide for personnel matters involving the faculty, instructional staff, and other employees of the charter school including, but not limited to, employment status, certification, and evaluation; (9) Provide for financial policies and procedures proposed to be followed by the charter school to assure sound fiscal management and by the local board to assure a predictable flow of funds to the charter school; (10) Specify the proposed duration of the charter, not to exceed five years; and (11) Provide for the extent to which the charter school will be subject to the provisions of this title and state and local rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; provided, however, that the provisions of this article shall apply to the charter school notwithstanding any provision in the charter to the contrary.

§ 20-2-2068: (a) The state board may declare a charter null and void if a majority of the parents or guardians of students enrolled at the charter school who are present at a public meeting called with two weeks' advance notice and for the purpose of deciding

whether to request the state board to declare the charter null and void vote to approve such request and such majority of parents or guardians vote to affirm such request at another public meeting, which occurs within 30 days of the first meeting and which is called with two weeks' advance notice for the purpose of affirming the earlier vote. (c) The terms of a charter may be amended during the term of the charter upon the approval of the local board, the state board, and a majority of the governing body of the charter school or, in the case of a charter school which was formerly a local school, a majority of the faculty, instructional staff, and parents or guardians present at a public meeting called with two weeks' notice and for the purpose of deciding whether to amend the terms of the charter. (e) The governing body of a charter school shall provide an annual report to parents or guardians, the community, the local board, and the state board, which indicates the progress made by the charter school in the previous year in implementing its improvement plan.

§ 20-3-210: (B) With respect to a petition submitted by a local school, such petition has been agreed to by a majority of the parents or guardians of students enrolled at the petitioning local school present at a public meeting called within two weeks' advance notice for the purpose of deciding whether to submit the petition to the state board:

§ 20-14-27: (a) The office shall submit the following reports to the council: (2) An annual report regarding elementary and secondary education shall be submitted no later than December 1 of each year, commencing December 1, 2001. The elementary and secondary education report shall be an evaluation of the progress made on performance indicators identified and defined by the office and approved by the council for all

elementary and secondary education programs administered by the Department of Education. The elementary and secondary education report shall include information concerning results of the state's investment in each public school and each public school system; (b) Each report provided for in this Code section shall be published in a format that can be easily understood by parents and other members of the community who are not professional educators.

§ 20-14-34: The State Board of Education shall adopt rules requiring dissemination of appropriate student performance and school completion performance portions of school report cards annually to the parent, guardian, conservator, or other person having lawful control of each student at the school. On written request, the local school system shall provide a copy of a school report card to any other party. These reports shall be posted on a website at both the state and local school system level.

§ 20-14-35: In making an on-site school performance audit, the auditor shall obtain information from administrators, teachers, and parents of students enrolled in the local school system. The audit may not be closed until information is obtained from each of those sources. The office shall adopt rules regarding obtaining information from parents and using that information in the auditor's report and obtaining information from teachers in a manner that prevents a school or school system from screening the information.

§ 20-14-41: (a) If a school has a grade of D or F on student performance for the absolute student achievement standard or on progress on improved student achievement as determined by the office, the office, in the audit report on an individual school, shall report findings and recommend appropriate levels of interventions for that school, based

on a scale of increasingly severe interventions, to the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education shall prescribe the appropriate level of intervention and may include one or more of the following increasingly severe interventions: (4) Appointing a Department of Education school improvement team to: (A) Conduct a comprehensive on-site evaluation of each low-performing school to determine the cause for the school's low performance and lack of progress that includes presentations by the chairperson of the local board of education, the school principal, a parent member of the local school council, and other school personnel; 6) If a school has received a grade of D or F for a period of three consecutive years or more, the State Board of Education shall implement one or more of the following interventions or sanctions, in order of severity: (D) Mandate that the parents have the option to relocate the student to other public schools in the local school system to be chosen by the parents of the student with transportation costs borne by the system.