The Role of the Elementary Principal in Promoting Parent Involvement: Evidence from Rural, Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools in Pennsylvania

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THE ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL IN PROMOTING PARENT INVOLVEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM RURAL, BLUE RIBBON ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN PENNSYLVANIA

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Alfonso Angelucci
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
May 2008
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ABSTRACT

Title: The Role of the Elementary Principal in Promoting Parent Involvement: Evidence from Rural, Blue Ribbon Elementary Schools in Pennsylvania

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The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Act has amplified the implications of including parents in the education process. The benefits of parental involvement coupled with the teachers' and parents' role in promoting involvement have been researched and studied for many years. Few studies focus solely on the principal's role in promoting parent involvement, however.

This study will examine the specialized association and participation of rural elementary principals in the parent involvement process by focusing on Dr. Joyce Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement. Other frameworks, such as those used by Deborah Meier, Michael Fullan, and Jim Collins are also consulted as a backdrop to the research questions. Five elementary principals of Blue Ribbon Award winning, rural, Pennsylvania elementary schools provided this qualitative study's core data through in-depth, individual, on-site interviews.

In concert with the review of literature, the findings of this study revealed that a principal's visibility, communication abilities, ability to gain teacher
commitment, and ability to garner parents’ trust are paramount to successful principal promotion of parent involvement. Separate interviews with two parent groups from the award-winning schools confirmed the data gathered from the principals.

Future research relative to this study could include the investigation of the role of the parent groups of award-winning schools more deeply to determine their impact on improved student learning.