PREPARATION OF BUILDING AND DISTRICT LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS:
AN INVESTIGATION OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CONTENT AND PRACTICES IN
ADMINISTRATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN KANSAS

By

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Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

Although the requirements for family engagement in education are included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), teacher education and administrator preparation programs have offered limited educational opportunities for new teachers and administrators to gain knowledge, skills and practical experience related to family and community engagement. This descriptive study explores the inclusion of family engagement topics, resources, and field experiences in the twenty-one building (principal) and district (superintendent) leadership programs (BDLPs) in Kansas. In this study, faculty and instructors of these leadership programs also reflect on their own preparation to engage families in children's education and their current students' preparation to engage families. Limited professional literature is available that examines the incorporation of family engagement into administrator preparation programs.

This descriptive study, as most descriptive studies addresses the "what" question. "What" are the characteristics of the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation programs in Kansas? This study does not answer the how/when/why questions regarding family engagement in administrator preparation programs, but rather describes the situation in terms of categories, such as, topics used, resources used, and field experiences utilized in programs. An online survey and two follow-up interviews provided the data to describe the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation programs for this research study. The purpose of the study was to describe the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation in Kansas programs as it exists.

The survey (N=53) and interviews (two) revealed several themes. The first theme was that while Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) align administrator preparation programs in

Kansas with the Interstate Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, from this researcher's interview data it may be suggested that IHEs do not have a systematic approach to include topics on family engagement in courses even though two ISLLC standards focus on family engagement. The two IHE interviews conducted for this study suggest the inclusion of family engagement topics in courses was dependent upon the instructor of the courses.

The second theme that developed from the interviews was that faculty and instructors of building and district leadership programs had limited knowledge of current articles or books on the topic of family engagement to use in courses. The two interviewees expressed a lack of awareness of current family engagement resources and a desire for knowledge and access to current resources.

The third theme demonstrated that less than one fourth of instructors stated that their courses required a family engagement field experience and this experience may be as limited as attending one parent-student-teacher conference or another meeting on tardy or discipline issues. The two interviewees for this study stated that the quality of field experiences was dependent on the district level supervisor who was overseeing the student's field experience. Interviewees reported that field experiences with more exposure to families was important and should become a larger part of leadership programs.

Finally, online survey data from this study revealed that instructors believed that their students were more than somewhat prepared to engage families in education, in comparison with reflections on their own preparation in family engagement, in which they reported they had less than some training in family engagement. The two interviewees reported the need for open and frequent conversation between administrator preparation program instructors and practitioners to create a closer connection between practice and theory.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father for the role they played in my pursuit of a Ph.D. My mother graduated from high school when most girls did not. She instinctively knew education was important. While she raised her large family of seven children, she also did what other women did not. She managed several businesses while doing all the appropriate things to see that each of her children had the support necessary to be successful in school. As I watch her at the age of 89 send emails to family and friends, surf the internet, and develop computer skills, I remind myself to be like her. My dad also graduated from high school and after serving in the military, he continued his education using the GI bill to attend Watchmaking School. There was a phrase that dad repeated often in our home and it went like this, "You kids will go to college." He knew the value of education and said it out loud often, creating a curiosity in all of his children for further education. Mom and dad gave me life in more ways than one; they have encouraged me to become a lifelong learner.

I would also like to thank my husband, Dave for his encouragement in the pursuit of my Ph.D. I felt nothing but patient support from you as I sat in my favorite chair working on my dissertation. It was my favorite chair because it was near you as you watched football games each season. Your humor, love and belief in me motivated me. Our children Jacob, Bethany and Meredith have been hoping, watching, waiting and supporting me during this academic marathon. Special thanks to my brother, Bill, who listened to the detailed description of every hurdle and celebrated with me.

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My very first class in my doctoral program was with Mary Morningstar as my instructor. As I sat there scared and wondering if I was doing the right thing, each week Mary wooed me back to class with interesting class discussions. She gave me a confidence that I was in the right place pursuing the right thing. Her warmth and friendliness calmed me and led me during the early days of my program. I am grateful that upon Earle's retirement, Mary chose to advise me through the completion of my dissertation.

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I will always respect Sally Roberts for her quick answer to a stranger's (me) request to be on my dissertation committee. When a faculty member left my committee, I approached Sally Roberts and introduced myself and asked for her participation on my doctoral committee. It was without hesitation that she responded, "I would be happy to." I knew I was so fortunate to have her on my committee with her quick, kind response.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thirty years of research and a long history of federal and state legislation have demonstrated the importance of parent involvement in their children's learning and development. For the first time in federal law a definition is provided for parent involvement, appearing in the 2001 reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), commonly known as the *No Child Left Behind Act (*NCLB). Parent involvement is defined as:

> Regular, two-way and meaningful communication about student learning and other school activities, including: (a) assisting their child's learning, (b) being actively involved in their child's education at school, (c) serving as full partners in their child's education and being included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committee to assist in the education of their child, and (d) the carrying out of other activities such as those described in Title I section 1118 (*No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001, Title I**,** Part A Section 1118)**.**

This definition of parent involvement requires that schools develop a productive relationship with every student's family in order to establish a partnership approach to a child's education. Recently, in current talks about reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), parent*/*family involvement has been renamed parent/family engagement because the National Workgroup on Family, School and Community Partnerships believes it is possible for parents or a family to be involved without being engaged in their children's learning. For example, a family may be involved in fundraising efforts at a school and yet not engaged in their children's learning. Until reauthorization of ESEA is finalized, the terms parent

involvement and family engagement are used interchangeably. Additionally, the term family replaces the term parent because of the diverse makeup of today's families.

Although the requirements for family engagement in education are now documented in ESEA, teacher and administrator preparation programs have offered limited educational opportunities for preservice teachers and administrators to gain knowledge, resources, and skills related to parent and community engagement. Curriculum in teacher preparation programs is often limited to parent/teacher conferences, parent concerns, newsletters, and working within the community. Teacher education and administrator programs must promote proactive strategies rather than reactionary strategies that often happen after a negative situation with a student has occurred (Gray, 2001). If teachers and administrators do not receive such training in their preparation programs, opportunities to acquire these skills while on the job are limited (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Teacher and administrator preparation programs have the potential to serve as an important forum for infusing family engagement practices into teacher and administrator training.

Statement of the Problem

A review of the literature shows that while there has been limited research on family engagement in teacher preservice programs, there has been even less research on family engagement in administrator preparation programs. Redding (2005) presented a call to "rally the troops" to examine the issues and investigate variables related to the topic of family engagement in teacher and administrator preparation programs. Findings from previous studies show that the principal is key to building partnerships between parents and the school (Johnstone & Hiatt, 1997). Hiatt-Michael (2011) believes that the tone of such partnerships is established through administrators' willingness to reach out and collaborate with families and the community. From

the parent's perspective, parents also state that the principal is important to teacher and school

relationships which lead to establishing family school partnerships.

Personnel Preparation Standards for Teacher and Administrator Programs

States have a significant responsibility to ensure all of its schools have competent

leadership. States determine the way principals are selected, prepared, licensed, hired, evaluated,

supported, developed, promoted, and compensated. Principal effectiveness standards describe

the skills, knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors of successful school leaders. States can use

these standards to increase the effectiveness of new leaders (Briggs, Cheney, Davis & Moll,

2012).

Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, and Lopez (1997) have argued for teacher and administrator

preparation in family engagement. They call for thorough examinations of the standards of

professional education organizations. Professional organizations such as the National Council for

the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Teacher Education Accreditation

Council (TEAC) both accrediting organizations for teacher preparation programs, provide a

framework for the establishment of teacher preparation programs in colleges and universities by

establishing standards for each program. As recently as July of 2013, NCATE and TEAC have

combined to become the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). CAEP

continues to have NCATE and TEAC accredit teacher education programs until the programs

become available in their next accreditation cycle for CAEP accreditation.

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), an accrediting

organization for the preparation of education leaders, as well as other education organizations,

provide guidance through standards. Over 32 states have adopted the ISLLC standards or use a

modified version of them. Kansas is one of those states (Briggs et al., 2012). These standards

include and require preparation for teachers and administrators in working with parents. While each teacher education and administrator program may be diverse in its design, it is important to recognize that almost all states have parent involvement as part of a required standard for state licensure for both teachers and administrators. Even though standards for parent involvement are required in the NCATE and ISLLC standards, these particular standards continue to receive little attention in preservice training for teachers and administrators (Epstein, 2001; Harris & Jacobson, 2005; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Lynn, 1997).

To summarize, while teacher and administrator preparation programs have required program standards to prepare teachers and administrators to engage parents in their children's learning, little is known about how these preparation programs address the standards through content, resources and practical experiences in working with families. It is this researcher's desire to contribute to the small base of research on the status of family engagement in teacher and administrator preparation programs specifically in the state of Kansas by ascertaining the specific content of existing family engagement activities within preservice administrator programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the number and nature of existing family engagement topics, resources, and field experiences in Kansas administrator preparation programs to ascertain how each program prepares administrators to engage families in their children's learning. This study has three Phases. Phase 1 is a literature review of the available research on family engagement content in teacher and administrator preparation programs. The literature review examines the standards for family engagement in national education organizations as well as the Kansas state educator and administrator standards which serve as the

foundation for content in teacher and administrator preparation programs. Phase 2 is the collection of e-mail addresses of university professors who teach courses in the building and district level administrator preparation programs in Kansas. This phase has been deemed critical to the success and validity of the study. The Colorado State Department of Education completed a similar study on teacher preparation programs and reported that their data would have been more accurate and extensive if they had gathered the e-mails of professors who actually taught the courses and sent the surveys to them rather than the deans of the school of education (Sullivan, Miller & Lines, 2012). The survey will be administered online to faculty members who teach courses in the administrator preparation programs in Kansas. Phase 2 also includes two follow-up interviews. One interview will be with a faculty member from a large public university and a second interview with a faculty member from a small public university. These two programs will be identified by the researcher as a large public institution (over 15,000 students) and a smaller public institution (under 15,000 students) that contain both the building and district level programs. Phase 3, the final phase, is to interpret the results of the survey using qualitative and quantitative measures.

This study will explore both formal programmatic structures (e.g., coursework, field experiences) and informal structures (e.g. readings, papers, group projects) in place for preparing administrators to engage families. While there are many topics that may be analyzed in administrator preparation programs, the scope of this study, however, is limited to the content and experiences related specifically to the preparation of building and district level administrators in Kansas to engage families in their children's education. This research does not address questions related to administrator preparation programs beyond this narrow scope.

Because this is an area of limited research, a descriptive study research design was used because it allowed the researcher to describe the current state of family engagement in administrator preparation programs. This study does not answer the how/when/why questions regarding family engagement in administrator preparation programs, but rather describes the situation in terms of categories, such as, topics used, resources used, and field experiences utilized in programs. An online survey and two follow-up interviews provided the data to describe the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation programs for this research study. A descriptive study design for this research allowed for the exploration of the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation in Kansas programs as it currently exists.

Research Question

The present study asked one overarching research question with five more research objectives to be specified. This research question and its objectives are crucial to understanding issues surrounding the preparation of administrators to engage families in their children's education. The research question is: How do building and district leadership programs (BDLP's) in Kansas institutions of higher education (IHEs) prepare future K-12 administrators to engage families in their children's education? The following five objectives will be examined in this study:

1. To determine what types of topics on family engagement, if any, Kansas building and district leadership programs (BDLPs) provide in their administrator preparation courses (e.g. benefits of family engagement, barriers to family engagement, etc.);

2. To determine what types of family engagement resources, if any, are used in Kansas BDLPs to prepare administrators to engage families (e.g., textbooks, websites, articles, webinars, research);

3. To determine what types of experiences, if any, to engage families, are provided in Kansas BDLPs (e.g., homework assignments, family interviews);

4. To determine the reflections of faculty and instructors on their own preparation in family engagement and the perceptions of faculty and instructors on how well prepared their own students are to engage families in their children's education.

5. What do faculty members and instructors consider as barriers to including family engagement content into courses in BDLPs and what do they consider as most helpful to preparing their students to engage and work collaboratively with families?

The following chapters in this study include a review of the existing literature on the preparation of teachers and administrators to engage families in their children's education, the methodology used in this research study, the results of the research study and a discussion of the results. Finally, recommendations are made for state departments of education and institutions of higher education based on the findings of this research study.

<center>**CHAPTER II**</center>

<center>**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**</center>

This review of existing literature focuses on the following topics: (a) Federal mandates on family engagement, (b) Benefits and barriers of family engagement in education, (c) Teacher preparation program standards, (d) Efforts to incorporate family engagement into teacher education, (e) Administrator preparation program standards, and (f) Efforts to incorporate family engagement into administer preparation programs. Since the majority of administrators have previously been teachers and completed teacher preparation programs, it is important to examine the literature on teacher preparation programs as well as administrator preparation programs. This clarifies if either preparation program prepares educators to engage families in their children's education. A more thorough examination of the literature will be provided by examining both teacher and administrator preparation programs and their efforts to include family engagement in their curriculum and practices.

<center>**Family Engagement Federal Mandates**</center>

Thirty years of research and a long history of federal and state legislation have demonstrated the importance of parent involvement in their children's learning and development. Since the mid-1960's, federal education legislation has included some language about the need for schools to involve families in their children's education (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

For the first time in federal law, a definition is provided for parent involvement in the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly known as the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). Parent involvement is defined as:

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Regular, two-way and meaningful communication about student learning and other

school activities, including: (a) assisting their child's learning, (b) being actively involved

in their child's education at school, (c) serving as full partners in their child's education

and being included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committee to

assist in the education of their child, and (d) the carrying out of other activities such as

those described in Title I 1118. (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 175).

This definition requires that schools actively seek to develop a productive relationship with

every student's parent(s) or family. This relationship as identified in (c) above refers to a

partnership. Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, and Davies (2007) identify several beneficial effects of

family-school partnerships: (a) partnerships are closely linked to student academic achievement,

(b) partnerships build and sustain public support for schools, (c) families and community

members can help schools overcome challenges, (d) teachers benefit from positive partnership

involvement, and (e) partnerships meet the legal requirements of legislated education reform. In

order for schools to develop partnerships, they must provide enough resources and support so

that each student will have a parent or other adult who knows how to advocate for their child's

educational rights, address academic expectations, access resources to help the child meet these

expectations and fulfill responsibilities on committees and parent organizations (Henderson,

2002).

Recently, in current talks about reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary*

Education Act (ESEA) parent/family involvement has been renamed parent/ family engagement

because national researchers believe it is possible for parents or a family to be involved in school

without being engaged in their children's learning (Redding, Murphy, & Sheley, 2011). For

example, a family may be involved in fundraising efforts such as at the school carnival while not

being engaged in their child's academic learning. Until reauthorization of ESEA is finalized, the terms parent/family involvement and parent/family engagement are used interchangeably. Additionally, the term family replaces the term parent because of the diverse makeup of today's families.

ESEA Flexibility Turnaround Principles

Since the reauthorization of NCLB is long overdue and currently stalled, in 2012, the federal government provided guidelines for states that wanted to apply for the ESEA Flexibility Waiver which would exempt states from the annual targets set for student achievement under NCLB. Kansas applied for the waiver and after further clarification with the federal government the waiver was granted (Kansas ESEA Flexibility Waiver, 2012). One of the stipulations to receive the waiver was that the state agreed that the 15% lowest performing schools in the state labeled focus and priority schools would implement meaningful interventions aligned with the (ESEA Flexibility Turnaround Principles, 2012). These interventions are to be selected with family and community input. The seven turnaround principles include: (a) providing strong leadership, (b) ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction, (c) redesigning the school day, week or year, (d) strengthening the school's instructional program, (e) using data to inform instruction, (f) establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline, and (g) providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement. The inclusion of family engagement in the ESEA Flexibility Turnaround Principles by the USDE acknowledges the engagement of families as a meaningful intervention in order to improve the academic achievement of students in low performing schools (ESEA Flexibility Turnaround Principles, 2012).

Although the requirements for family involvement in education are now documented in ESEA and the ESEA Flexibility Waiver, general and special education teacher education programs have offered limited educational opportunities for new teachers to gain knowledge and skills related to parent and community involvement (Gray, 2001). Curriculum is often limited to parent/teacher conferences, parent concerns, newsletters, and working within the community. Gray (2001) calls these actions "reactionary strategies," because they often occur after an incident has occurred in a negative situation. Teacher education programs must promote proactive strategies such as interactive homework, positive phone calls home, teacher introduction letters, student led parent teacher conferences, and partnership building strategies. If teachers do not receive such training during preservice education, opportunities to acquire it within the schools are limited (Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Teacher education has the potential to serve as an important forum for the infusing of family involvement practices into teacher preservice training. Nevertheless, parent involvement has yet to take a central role in the teacher education curriculum (Harris, Jacobson, & Hemmer, 2004).

Benefits of and Barriers to Family Engagement in Education

An examination of research has revealed the benefits of family involvement in student achievement and school reform efforts and school policies (Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997). Family and community involvement has a powerful and positive impact on student achievement. According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), students who have involved parents, no matter their income or background, were more likely to: (a) earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs, (b) be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits (c) attend school regularly (d) have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school, and (e) graduate and go on to post-secondary education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This

research demonstrates that engaging families in their children's education is not just an appropriate thing to do but rather a necessary component to increase student achievement and overall success. Teacher preparation plays a critical role in family-school partnerships, since the ideas formed during this time can influence and educator's entire career. Unfortunately, a recent teachers' survey reported that one of the missing elements in their teacher education program was coursework on working with families (Hiatt-Michael, 2001).

Quellmalz, Shields, and Knapp (1995) have indicated that the benefits of family involvement were not restricted to student achievement. Their national study resulted in a guide for successful school-based reform that found that bringing schools and community members together in school reform efforts lead to building better school improvement plans (Quellmalz, Shields, & Knapp, 1995). Parents were seen as consumers and schools were responsible to provide them with information about the merits of their school. Schools that receive Title 1 funding are required to develop parent involvement policies and school-parent compacts. School-parent compacts are written agreements of shared responsibility between parents, teachers and the students for student learning. Compacts must define the teacher's and parent's goals for student achievement, and outline each stakeholder's role in achieving these goals (Shartrand et al. 1997). While the premise for requiring the school-parent compact is to foster partnerships between families and educators to support student learning, the compact alone cannot establish partnerships in which the teacher has not been adequately trained to sustain (Shartran, et al. 1997).

Although parent involvement has been shown to be beneficial it is often difficult to engage all families for various reasons. Research by Wandersman, Stone, Lindsay, Snell-Johns, Ford and Amaral (2002) categorized barriers to family involvement as: practical, personal or

institutional. Practical barriers involved issues of: (a) lack of time, (b) lack of transportation, (c) lack of childcare and, (d) communication barriers and work schedules. Personal barriers included: (a) old school fears and frustrations (b) anxiety parents feel about their child's behavior or performance, (c) past negative experiences and (d) mistrust of the educational system. Institutional barriers were created by school staff, such as (a) an unawareness among teachers of how they can encourage parent involvement, (b) belief that the promotion of parental involvement is too time-consuming, (c) belief that parents are troublesome, and (d) having limited knowledge of ways families can be involved. With proper attention, teachers can learn how to successfully work with students' parents and families to overcome barriers (Hunzicker, 2004; Katz & Bauch, 1999). Teacher preparation programs have the opportunity to create curriculum that addresses barriers to family engagement and develop strategies to help teachers overcome these barriers (Wandersman, Stone, Lindsay, Snell-Johns, Ford & Amaral, 2002).

The Harvard Family Research Project, describes family engagement as "a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development" (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010, p. 2). In the past, schools could wait for families to initiate engagement in their children's learning, but today's political environment and accountability climate requires the schools to consider how they are partnering with parents to support student learning. Teacher education programs that incorporated family involvement proved to be one of the most potentially effective methods for reducing barriers to home-school partnerships (Chavkin, 1991). When teacher education focused on preparation for home-school relationships, educators were

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more confident and better prepared to solve complicated family involvement issues. (Weiss, Kreider, Lopez, & Chatman, 2005).

Teacher Preparation Program Standards

The majority of school and district administrators have first been employed as teachers. The move from teacher to administrator is a natural progression since teachers are familiar with the educational needs of children and may have previously led departments or committee work in their schools. For many teachers, seeking an administrative role is the only way to grow in the education profession (Glendenning, 2005). Since most administrators have first been practicing teachers and completed the traditional teacher preparation programs, it is important to examine undergraduate teacher preparation program standards to understand if these programs provide training in family engagement.

Despite the fact that research demonstrates the importance of family engagement in education, studies show that teachers feel ill-equipped to interact with their students' families (Lynn, 1997; Tichenor, 1998; Turner, 2000). Teachers seldom have any formal preparation in teacher preservice programs to work with families (de Acosta, 1994; Epstein, 2001; Epstein, Sanders, & Clark, 1999; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997). Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, and Lopez (1997) have argued for teacher and administrator preparation in family engagement. They call for thorough examinations of the standards of professional education organizations. Professional organizations such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), both accrediting organizations for teacher preparation programs, provide a framework for the establishment of teacher preparation programs in colleges and universities by establishing standards for each program. As recently as

July of 2013, NCATE and TEAC have combined to become the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). CAEP continues to have NCATE and TEAC accredit teacher education programs until the programs become available in their next accreditation cycle for CAEP accreditation.

The new Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue, developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers, outline what teachers should know and be able to do to ensure every K-12 student reaches the goal of becoming college and career ready. These standards serve as a resource for states, districts, professional organizations, teacher education programs, teachers, and others as they develop policies and programs to prepare, license, support, evaluate, and reward teachers (InTASC, 2011).

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), an accrediting organization for the preparation of education leaders, as well as other education organizations, provide guidance through standards. Over 32 states have adopted the ISLLC standards or use a modified version of them. Kansas is one of those states (Briggs et al., 2012). These standards include and require preparation for teachers and administrators in working with parents. While each teacher education and administrator program may be diverse in its design, it is important to recognize that almost all states have parent involvement as part of a required standard for state licensure for both teachers and administrators. Even though standards for parent involvement are required in the NCATE and ISLLC standards, these particular standards continue to receive little attention in preservice training for teachers and administrators (Epstein, 2001; Harris & Jacobson, 2005; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Lynn, 1997). By examining the standards of these

professional organizations, the foundation for including family engagement content into teacher preservice curriculum and courses cannot be ignored.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

While NCATE and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) have recently consolidated to become the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the NCATE standards are currently used to accredit teacher education programs until the programs become available in its next cycle of accreditation under CAEP. It should be noted that as Educator Preparation Programs (EPP's) under CAEP become available for renewal of accreditation, the new CAEP standards include family engagement as a disposition that educators should be able to perform to work effectively in today's schools (CAEP website, 2013).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) continues to be recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) as an accrediting organization for teacher preparation programs. NCATE's purpose is to ensure that institutions of higher education produce school personnel that are competent and qualified who can help all students learn (NCATE, 2011). The 2008 NCATE Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions are designed to determine whether schools, colleges, and departments of education meet the standards for the preparation of teachers and other school personnel. This accreditation process ensures the public that graduates of these programs have acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn (NCATE, 2011).

The six NCATE standards provide a framework for preparing educators to work effectively in P-12 programs and schools. The NCATE Standards include: Standard 1: Candidate

Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions, Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit

Evaluation, Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice, Standard 4: Diversity, Standard

5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development, and Standard 6: Unit Governance and

Resources. For assistance in addressing each Professional Standard, institutions are provided a

rubric and the dispositions included in each standard that preservice teachers are expected to

learn. The rubric for each Standard's dispositions includes Not Acceptable, Acceptable and

Target categories. The Target category descriptions are used in this research. Collaboration and

work with families are addressed in two standards:

Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions. Disposition

1c. Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates. *"They"*

(teachers) know how students learn and how to make ideas accessible to them. They consider

school, family, and community context in connecting concepts to students 'prior experiences and

applying the ideas to real-world issues (NCATE Standards, p.18). Disposition 1g. Professional

Dispositions for All Candidates: *Candidates work with students, families, colleagues, and*

communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators

as delineated in professional, state, and intuitional standards (NCATE Standards, p. 20).

Through the NCATE Standard 1c and 1g dispositions, NCATE expects preservice

students to learn to foster relationships with parents and families to support student learning in

their teacher preparation program. In disposition 1c, teachers are asked to consider the family

context as they connect students to prior experiences. In disposition 1g, teachers are expected to

reflect professional dispositions of all state, professional and institutional standards toward

families. The inclusion of verbiage about families in the NCATE Standard 1 demonstrates an

awareness of working with families as a necessary disposition in teacher preparation programs (NCATE Standards, 2008).

       Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice. Standard 3 of the NCATE standards states that, "*the unit (teacher preparation program) designs, implements, and evaluates field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school professionals develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn"* (NCATE Standards, p. 29). Further explanation of the candidate's field experience includes: Disposition 3b. Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice: *Candidates observe and are observed by others. They interact with teachers, families of students, administrators, college or university supervisors, and other interns about their practice regularly and continually"* (NCATE Standards, p. 30).

       According to the NCATE standards, clinical experiences, or student teaching, should introduce teacher candidates to the responsibilities of their professions including interaction with students' families and communities to support student learning. In every teacher preparation program, the field or clinical experience is an invaluable component. These experiences provide teacher candidates with the opportunity to collaborate with other professionals as well as students and family members (Grossman, 1999). Grossman (1999) reported that student teachers perceive from cooperating teachers that student struggles are due to uncaring, uninvolved parents. This is a critical and possibly harmful effect on preservice teachers because Grossman (1999) also reports that ideas formed in student teaching may last throughout the career of the educator.

Kansas Professional Education Standards based on the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC).

In 1987, the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) made up of national education organizations and state education agencies was formed. In 1992, InTASC released the InTASC Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development: A Resource for State Dialogue (InTASC, 2011). The original goal of INTASC was to reform the preparation and professional development of new or beginning teachers through the development of professional education standards, general education standards, and content standards for teacher education programs to build their professional educator coursework (InTASC, 2011). These standards were recently updated in 2011 changing the emphasis from new or beginning teachers to professional practice standards for the developmental stages of any teacher. The new standards also change the word students to learners (InTASC, 2011). The state of Kansas is currently in the process of updating the Kansas Professional Education Standards to align with the new InTASC standards (Coleman Interview, 2011).

The new InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue, outline what teachers should know and be able to do to ensure every K-12 student reaches the goal of becoming college and career ready. These standards serve as a resource for states, districts, professional organizations, teacher education programs, teachers, and others as they develop policies and programs to prepare, license, support, evaluate, and reward teachers (InTASC, 2011). Each standard includes a performance, essential knowledge, and critical disposition category to demonstrate the many complex roles of teachers. The performance category includes that which can be observed and assessed, essential knowledge demonstrates

knowledge necessary for effective practice and procedures, and critical dispositions focus on the

habits of professional action for teachers (InTASC, 2011).

The new InTASC Standards contain ten standards that provide a framework for

professional educator coursework for teacher education programs in Kansas. Four standards

include language on interacting with families:

Standard 1: Learner Development. Performance 1(c) *The teacher collaborates with*

families, communities, colleagues, and other professionals to promote learner growth and

development. Standard1: Learner Development: Critical Disposition 1 (k) *The teacher values the*

input and contributions of families, colleagues, and other professionals in understanding and

supporting each learner's development. Standard one focuses on learner development and the

collaboration with families to promote learner development along with the value teachers assign

to the contribution of families to support each learner's development (InTASC, 2011, pg. 10).

Standard 2: Learning Differences. Critical Disposition 2(m) *The teacher respects*

learners as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds, and various skills,

abilities, perspectives, talents, and interests. Standard two emphasizes a respect for the

difference in learner's backgrounds (InTASC, 2011, pg. 11).

Standard 3: Learning Environments. Performances 3 (a) *The teacher collaborates with*

learners, families, and colleagues to build a safe, positive learning climate of openness, mutual

respect, support, and inquiry. Critical Disposition: 3(n) *The teacher is committed to working with*

learners, colleagues, families, and communities to establish positive and supportive learning

environments. Standard three focuses on the necessity of collaboration with families to establish

safe, positive and supportive learning environments (InTASC, 2011, pg. 12).

Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration. Performances 10 (d) *The teacher works collaboratively with learners and their families to establish mutual expectations and ongoing communication to support learner development and achievement.* Performance 10 (g) *The teacher uses technological tools and a variety of communication strategies to build local and global learning communities that engage learners, families, and colleagues.* Essential Knowledge: 10 (m) *The teacher understands that alignment of family, school, and community spheres of influence enhances student learning and that discontinuity in these spheres of influence interferes with learning.* Critical Disposition 10 (q) *The teacher respects families' beliefs, norms, and expectations and seeks to work collaboratively with learners and families in setting and meeting challenging goals* (InTASC, 2011, pg. 19). Standard ten embraces the responsibility of the teacher to foster a relationship with parents to support student learning. This standard reflects cooperation between families and educators as necessary to support student achievement and the student's overall well being. This standard aligns the family, school, and community spheres of influence to enhance student learning and to work collaboratively with families in setting goals and establish expectations (InTASC, 2011, pg. 19).

Efforts to Incorporate Family Engagement into Teacher Education

In order to succeed at establishing family-school partnerships, preservice students and teachers need training and experiences that prepare them for the task. Unfortunately, few teacher education programs have addressed family engagement in meaningful ways and teachers seldom have any formal preparation - preservice or inservice - to work with parents and families (de Acosta, 1994; Epstein, 2001; Epstein, Sanders, & Clark, 1999; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Shartrand, Weiss, Kredider, & Lopez, 1997). When researchers examined 60 teacher education programs in 22 states, they found little substantial coursework

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emphasizing parent and family involvement. While 88% of the courses mentioned family

engagement, these courses focused primarily on parent teacher conferences. Fewer than 25%

taught how to communicate with parents or understand parents and families. Less than 25% gave

students an opportunity to work directly with parents or even to hear from parent guest speakers

(Lynn, 1997). More efforts need to target realistic interpersonal and communication techniques

to equip preservice teachers with the skills to positively approach collaboration with parents

(Lynn, 1997).

Tichenor (1997) reported that teacher candidates indicated they were not equipped to

implement family engagement practices in their classrooms. The author recognized that teacher

candidates must be challenged to move beyond thinking of parents as volunteers to recognizing

them as an integral part of their child's education. He found that when preservice candidates

were asked to examine their personal beliefs and practices regarding family engagement early in

their preservice training, it benefited them by allowing them more time to learn and correct

misconceptions about families and family engagement. These results were also supported by

Baum and Schwarz-McMurray (2004) who argued that ample time must be allowed for

preservice candidates to identify their beliefs about family engagement. They believed this

would best be accomplished by incorporating family involvement throughout an entire

preservice curriculum, as opposed to a standalone class. McBride (1991) emphasized the

importance of preservice preparation in family engagement by noting that teachers who are not

trained to work with parents felt discouraged and developed negative attitudes toward parents. In

addition, he found that a common approach to prepare teachers in family involvement was to

offer a single class on family engagement. While this method may seem sufficient, beginning

teachers who had only one course on family engagement frequently reported feeling fearful when they discussed the types of relationships they might develop with parents (McBride, 1991).

From interviews with preservice teachers, Baum and Schwarz-McMurray (2004) revealed that most preservice candidates seemed to expect their relationships with families to be adversarial. Attitudes of the preservice students seemed to be of the "us versus them" mentality. Baum and Schwarz-McMurray (2004) concluded that preservice teachers could better understand the parent's perspective if they were given more opportunities to learn about the struggles in parenting and the hardships families face.

Hiatt-Michael (2001) surveyed 96 teacher education programs and reported that one of the missing elements in teacher education programs was interacting with families. The results of this study raised questions about the number and types of courses offered from teacher preparation programs that participated in the survey. Of the 96 programs that responded to the survey, seven indicated that parent involvement issues were not included in any course. Twenty-two programs indicated that they offered a class on family involvement but it was not focused at the K-12 level but rather the early childhood level. Ninety-three percent of the program directors said that parent involvement already existed in classes for special education, reading methods, and early childhood. This study revealed a gaping hole in training for K-12 preservice teachers in family engagement. It is significant that most K-12 programs could not readily identify content or courses in their teacher education programs that addressed the preparation of preservice students to interact with families.

With proper attention, teachers can learn how to successfully work with students' parents and families (Hunzicker, 2004; Katz & Bauch, 1999). Katz and Bauch (1999) reported that teacher education courses that focus on parent involvement make a difference in classroom

practice. An assessment of teacher education graduates revealed that new teachers felt more prepared and engaged if they had received parent involvement content in their courses. They found that the infusion of parent involvement practices into all teacher preparation courses seemed to be the ideal, but all professors had to be equally committed to this approach in order for this to happen. A one-semester course (in special education) showed gains in teachers' understanding of family engagement (Bingham & Abernathy, 2007). However, the primary focus of these teachers remained on law and legal obligations. Flanigan (2007) notes that further research is needed to determine the attitudes, understandings and abilities of teachers in collaborating with parents and families. If more research were available on the benefits of including family engagement into teacher education, the case for its integration into courses would be strengthened and preservice students would graduate as teachers that are equipped and experienced in building family-school partnerships.

Administrator Preparation Programs

The Importance of Administrator Preparation in Family Engagement

Education leadership has never been more important. Hiatt-Michael (2006) believes the teacher establishes the climate for family engagement in the individual classroom, but the principal establishes the tone for family and community engagement for the entire school. Cunningham (2002) states that principals are essential to connecting the school to the community. He also reports that the National Association of Elementary School Principals prioritizes parent involvement and emphasizes that principals should encourage teachers to also prioritize parent involvement. The tone for family engagement established by the principal provides a foundation for the development of family-school partnerships. Principals have the

opportunity to listen to the concerns of parents, invite them to be part of the decision making

process and include them in the school community.

The Need for Administrator Preparation in Family Engagement

Over the past decade, educational leadership has come to the forefront as research has

taught us that school leaders are crucial to improving instruction and raising student achievement

(Purkey & Smith, 1985). Purkey and Smith (1985) found in their research of effective schools

that principal leadership was an essential component. Fullan (2001) states that principals have

always been and still are critical to the success or failure of any school reform. Leithwood,

Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2004) report that direct and indirect school leadership

accounts for approximately one-fourth of the total school effects on student learning. Their

research shows that education leaders have the greatest impact by goal setting and providing a

sense of purpose which strengthens the entire staff. It is no longer questioned whether leadership

really matters but rather the conversation has shifted to how to train and support quality district

and building level leaders (The Wallace Foundation, 2007). The limited research on leadership

and engaging families shows that while some administrators "talk the talk" of engaging parents

as partners in education, the engagement usually takes the standard form of engagement around

the school's agenda (Auerbach, 2007; Cooper & Christie, 2005).

The State Role in Supplying High-Quality Principals and Superintendents

While districts are the entity that have the hiring authority of principals and superintendents,

state departments of education control the entry point to becoming an administrator. State

departments are responsible for approving administrator preparation programs which determines the

quality of the program and trains future administrators. (Briggs, Rhines-Cheny, Davis, & Moll,

2012). State departments have the power to set program requirements, including specific

coursework, field experiences and faculty qualifications. Every state oversees its administrator preparation programs and determines if programs meet the requirements for approval and re-approval (Briggs, Rhines-Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2012). This provides an opportunity for states to collect outcome data on the graduates of these programs to determine the effectiveness of the programs. This would help states know which preparation programs are producing effective leaders and which ones are not. Unfortunately, most state departments do not collect this data (Briggs, Rhines-Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2012).

State departments also oversee the licensure of principals and superintendents. The licensure process certifies that the leaders are qualified to be employed. According to Briggs, Rhines-Cheney, Davis and Moll (2012) many states are not taking advantage of their position to oversee administrator preparation programs, licensure, and the ability to collect data to equip new administrators for their new jobs. Most state departments determine administrator re-licensure based on previous years of teaching experience and/or levels of education which do not demonstrate that the leader is successful on the job.

In a study by Radcliffe, Malone, & Nathan (1994), it was reported that only seven states required administrators to study parent involvement or show proficiency in engaging families in their schools. There were no states that required demonstrating proficiency in family engagement for a renewal of a license. By not including family engagement as part of the renewal process, administrators are less likely to seek professional learning or practice skills on this topic.

Administrator Preparation Program Standards

 Despite requests for increased training of administrators to work with students' families, most colleges and universities need to do more to prepare teachers and administrators to understand and collaborate with families (Epstein, 2001; Garcia, 2004; Katz & Bauch, 1999).

This responsibility rests with state accrediting agencies that have the power to set the requirements, including specific coursework, practical experiences and faculty qualifications for administrator preparation programs (Briggs et al., 2012).

Standards for administrator preparation programs can contribute to the guidance of the functions and responsibilities of building and district leaders and how schools of education can effectively convey that knowledge. Principal effectiveness standards describe the skills, knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors of successful school leaders. States can use these standards to increase the effectiveness of new leaders (Briggs, Cheney, Davis & Moll, 2012). Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen (2007) found that the best administrator preparation programs are aligned to state and professional standards, such as ISLLC, which puts and emphasis on instructional leadership. Standards and other frameworks have been shown to be valuable tools in developing effective administrator preparation programs. A system of clear standards can establish expectations for a strong leadership program (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). From their research, Briggs, Rhines-Cheney, Davis and Moll (2012) found that the approaches to program development in many states lack rigor and use antiquated criteria.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: ISLLC 2008

The ISLLC 2008 standards were designed by the Council of Chief State School Officers to serve as a broad set of national guidelines that states can use to build their own standards for education leaders. The ISLLC standards are composed of six standards with corresponding functions. There are two standards that address families:

Standard 4: *An education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and*

mobilizing community resources. Functions: C. *Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers.*

Standard 6: *An education leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.* Functions: A. *Advocate for children, families, and caregivers* (ISLLC, pg. 15.)

These two ISLLC standards have functions that focus on building positive relationships with families and becoming an advocate for children and families. These are worthwhile functions to promote family engagement and school-family partnerships but as with all standards, they are only as good as their implementation. While most states have adopted the ISLLC standards for their leadership programs, only 20% of education college deans surveyed considered their administrative graduates well prepared to work with families (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). Literature on parent involvement and administrative responsibilities call for administrators to set policy, manage resources and model actions to promote family engagement (Constantino, 2003; Letihwood & Reihl, 2003; Sanders & Harvey 2002) but there are few studies of how this interaction should occur between administrators and parents.

Kansas Building and District Leadership Programs

The Kansas Building (principal) and District (superintendent) Leadership Standards, PreK-12, are based on the ISLLC standards and are currently under revision (Coleman Interview, October, 2012). Revisions will align with the 2008 version of the ISLLC standards. The Kansas Building and District Leadership Standards provide colleges and universities guidance for establishing their administrator preparation programs by providing standards and objectives from which to design their program. As with the Kansas Professional Education Standards, the Kansas

Building and District Leadership Standards accompany administrator licensure regulations (Coleman, Interview October, 2012).

Building (Principal) Leadership Standards

There are six Building Leadership Standards and Standard 4 states: *The building level administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community needs and interests, and mobilizing community resources.* (Kansas State Department of Education, 2011-2012, pg. 187). Accompanying each Building Leadership standard are Knowledge and Performance objectives. For this particular standard, there are no objectives that include the word families even though it is mentioned in the standard.

District (Superintendent) Leadership Standards

There are also six District Leadership standards and Standard 4 states: *The district level administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community needs and interests, and mobilizing community resources.* (Kansas State Department of Education, 2011-2012, pg. 189). There is no Knowledge or Performance objective that addresses this collaboration with families to provide specific guidance for this standard. The word "community" is used often in the objectives or "community leaders" but families are not addressed.

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Efforts to Incorporate Family Engagement into

Administrator Preparation Programs

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As mentioned previously, there is limited research on the incorporation of family engagement content or practices in administrator preparation programs. Change over the last few decades in the preparation of educators to understand and work with families to support their

children's education has been slow. The lack of attention in administrator preparation programs given to incorporating family engagement content into courses is concerning since major school improvement initiatives include family engagement as a principle of school reform (No Child Left Behind, 2001). In a study by Chavkin & Williams (1988) surveyed teachers and administrators acknowledged there was a gap in their education in family engagement. They believed better preparation was needed in order for all educators to be prepared to engage families. The majority of these educators (70%) believed there should be a required course on family engagement in undergraduate education so that all educators would have training in this topic (Chavkin & Williams, 1988).

Since beliefs and professional experiences shape teaching practice (Graue & Brown, 2003) preparation programs must inform and prepare administrators to engage families. Parent involvement coursework or field experiences for educator and family collaboration are scarce (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Young & Hite, 1994). When courses are offered, they most commonly refer to the most basic of parent involvement practices, parent-teacher conferences, for discussions on family engagement. Decisions must be made about infusing parent involvement into all courses or if it should be a standalone course in a preparation program (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Administrator preparation programs must reform their courses to incorporate field experiences and increased content on family engagement to enhance preservice teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills regarding family engagement (Graue & Brown, 2003).

Ryan (2007) reported that the most effective leaders share a common characteristic – strong interpersonal skills. Fostering school-family partnerships, creating welcoming school climates, and fostering diversity are actions that require strong interpersonal skills. Jackson &

Kelly (2002) believe that traditional administrator preparation programs do not promote communication practices nor equip administrators to deal with difficult situations with families, teachers or students. In order to bring about behavior change in school leaders, encouraging awareness is not enough. School leaders need professional learning and practice in engaging with parents, offering instructional support to teachers, and engaging students in learning. Browne-Ferrigno & Muth (2004) examined the literature and discovered that practice through simulations provided real practice and helped school leaders develop their communication skills.

While change has been slow there has been some progress. Actions have been taken by individual professors at various colleges and universities, who designed their own courses on parent involvement and school, family and community partnerships. Some also added readings to their existing education courses and added practical experiences with families to student teaching (Ammon, 1990). Morris and colleagues studied the effects on students of a full-semester course on family-school partnerships (Morris & Taylor, 1998). They found that students who took the course improved their attitudes about partnership, increased self-efficacy in parent involvement, and saw the need for educators to engage families in their children's learning. Other professors have emphasized content in undergraduate and graduate programs on partnerships as an essential component of school and classroom organization and as a major influence on student learning. (deAcosta, 1996; Graue & Brown, 2003; Katz & Bauch, 1999; Shartarand et al., 1997).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive study was to explore the preparation of school administrators (principals and superintendents) to engage families in their children's education in Kansas institutions of higher education (IHEs) preparation programs. In Kansas, these administrator preparation programs are called building and district leadership programs

(BDLPs). The results and interpretations of this study add to the small body of research on the inclusion of family engagement topics in effective administrator preparation programs in five ways: (a) the study explores the course topics on family engagement that are currently included in BDLPs in Kansas, (b) the study explores the resources on family engagement currently used in BDLPs, (c) the study explores the types of practical experiences or opportunities to work with families offered in BDLPs, (d) the study investigates the personal perceptions of faculty concerning the preparation of their students, and finally (e) the study investigates the barriers and most helpful strategies to the inclusion of family engagement in preparation programs by faculty.

On a statewide level, as the Director of the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC), much of my job duties include the training of preservice students, teachers and administrators in Kansas in family engagement research, mandates and strategies. My frequent interactions with Kansas educators spurred my desire to explore the family engagement topics, resources and field experiences offered to students in Kansas IHE administrator preparation programs. Also, the increased inclusion of family engagement in state level efforts, such as the new accreditation system, will require more knowledge and understanding of family engagement for educators.

On a national level, a recent report by Briggs, Rhines Cheny, Davis and Moll (2012) found that forty-seven states reported that their state used some kind of standards as a framework to inform the establishment of their state's administrator preparation programs. Thirty-two states reported that these standards were the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards or a modified version of these standards. The ISLLC standards are the foundation for the Kansas Building and District Leadership Program Standards (BDLP's) which include

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standards for family engagement. It may be possible that other states using the ISLLC standards or similar modified standards will find this research may inform the inclusion of family engagement in their state's administrator preparation programs or create a curiosity to explore their state's administrator preparation programs in the area of family engagement.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to describe how building and district leadership programs (BDLPs) in Kansas institutions of higher education (IHEs) prepare future K-12 administrators to engage families in their children's education.

Five research questions guided the study:

1. What types of course topics on family engagement, if any, do Kansas BDLPs provide? (e.g. benefits of family engagement, barriers to family engagement, parent teacher conferences, etc.);

2. What types of family engagement resources, if any, are used in Kansas BDLPs to prepare administrators to engage families (e.g., textbooks, websites, articles, webinars, research, etc.);

3. What types of experiences, if any, to engage families, are provided in Kansas BDLPs (e.g., homework assignments, family interviews, etc.);

4. What are the reflections of faculty and instructors on their own preparation in family engagement and the perceptions of faculty and instructors on how well prepared their own students are to engage families in their children's education.

5. What do faculty members and instructors perceive as barriers to including family engagement content into courses in BDLPs and what do they consider as most helpful to preparing their students to engage and work collaboratively with families?

A descriptive research design was used for this study because it allowed the researcher to explore the "what" question. "What" are the characteristics of the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation programs? "What" questions are most commonly used

in descriptive studies to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. This study does not answer the how/when/why questions regarding family engagement in administrator preparation programs, but rather describes the situation in terms of categories, such as, topics used, resources used, and field experiences utilized in programs. Descriptive studies are often done before an experimental study to know what specific things to manipulate.

An online survey, two follow-up interviews and extant data from the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) provided the data to describe the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation programs for this research study. In summary, a descriptive research design for this study allowed for the exploration of the inclusion of family engagement in administrator preparation in Kansas programs as it currently exists.

This chapter describes the (a) participants, (b) instrument development (c) data collection procedures (d) data analysis, and (e) reliability and validity.

<div style="text-align:center">Participants</div>

This study included participation from 93 faculty members (tenured and non-tenured) in 21 BDLPs at IHEs in the state of Kansas. Twelve IHEs have building leadership programs: Baker University, Benedictine College, Fort Hays State University (FHSU), Newman University, Pittsburg State University (PSU), Kansas University (KU), Wichita State University (WSU), Emporia State University (ESU), Kansas State University (KSU), Ottawa University, Southwestern College, and Washburn University (See Table 1).

Nine IHE's have district leadership programs: Baker University, Fort Hays State University (FHSU), Pittsburg State University (PSU), Kansas University (KU), Wichita State University (WSU), Emporia State University (ESU), Kansas State University (KSU), Southwestern College, and Washburn University (See Table 1).

Table 1

Building and District Leadership Programs in Kansas

Kansas IHEs	Building Program	District Program
Baker	x	x
Benedictine	x	
ESU	x	x
FHSU	x	x
KU	x	x
KSU	x	x
Newman	x	
Ottawa	x	
PSU	x	x
Southwestern	x	x
Washburn	x	x
WSU	x	x

Note. Based on 2013 KSDE report.

There are a total of 21 BDLPs across the state of Kansas with nine universities offering training in both programs. The current teaching field/specialization identified by the 53 respondents was: 50 in Administration, 9 in General Teacher Education, 3 in Special Education, 0 in Early Childhood, 0 in Related Services (OT, School Psychologist, etc.), and 6 in Other (Education Policy, Quantitative Analysis, Humanities, Measurement and Research Skills, Field Supervisor, and Reading Endorsement). Of the 53 respondents, 68 fields/specializations were identified because some of the respondents selected more than one option.

Respondents identified themselves as either a faculty member or instructor of a course in their IHE's BDLP. Additionally, an item on the online survey asked respondents if they would agree to be interviewed. Because the researcher wanted to explore public IHEs in this study, two

individuals were chosen from two different public IHEs that offer both the building and district leadership programs (See Table 2). In order to provide anonymity, each IHE is referred to with alpha designations throughout this chapter. Interviewee 1 was identified as a faculty member from a large IHE (over 15,000 students). Interviewee 2 was a faculty member from a smaller IHE (under 15,000 students). These interviews helped provide in depth perspectives of two faculty members teaching in BDLPs. The two interviews also allowed the researcher to gain more specific information on how topics, resources and experiences related to family engagement were aligned with the ISLLC standards.

Table 2

Kansas IHEs Classified as Public or Private and Large (> 15,000) or Small (< 15,000)

Kansas IHEs	Public/Private	Large/Small
A	Private	Small
B	Private	Small
C	Public	Small
D	Public	Small
E	Public	Large
*F	Public	Large
G	Private	Small
H	Private	Small
*I	Public	Small
J	Private	Small
K	Public	Small
L	Public	Large

Note. Based on Fall 2012 Kansas Board of Regents Report.

Instrument Development

The survey for this study was modeled after a survey distributed to institutions of higher education by the Colorado State Department of Education (Sullivan, Miller & Lines, 2012). The survey for the Colorado teacher preparation study targeted certain topics that were also applicable to administrator preparation.

After examining the Colorado survey, the researcher discarded verbiage from that survey that did not apply to administrator preparation programs and added verbiage that would provide feedback to the research questions. The demographic section was changed to include Kansas IHEs and specific questions about the faculty members experience in BDLPs. The instrument was developed by the researcher in four sections to determine: (a) the current content on family engagement provided in existing administrator preparation programs (two questions), (b) the current resources on family engagement used in existing administrator preparation programs (two questions), (c) the current experiences in family engagement used in existing administrator preparation programs (two questions), and (d) the perceptions and reflections of the faculty members and instructors on topics of family engagement (four questions). The researcher's advisor and 2 research assistants reviewed the survey after drafting.

Using a 10 point Likert-type scale with different anchors (e.g., Not Prepared to Very Prepared or Not familiar to Very Familiar) and short answer format, the participants were asked to rate their beliefs and perceptions about the inclusion of family engagement content, resources, and experiences in their building and district leadership programs.

The survey for this study was made available online through the Survey Monkey website www.surveymonkey.com. This online survey development, dissemination, and analysis tool is

designed to be intuitive for those taking the survey and it meets the federal accessibility guidelines. Additionally, all data collected is secure, ensuring the confidentiality of responses.

Data Collection Procedures

To begin this descriptive study, the researcher and the Director of Teacher Education and Licensure (TEAL) from KSDE met to provide the researcher with an understanding of the BDLPs in Kansas, as well as, to obtain e-mails of Deans of the School of Education in each of the 21 programs.

Next, each Dean was sent an e-mail requesting a list of the names and e-mail addresses of the faculty members or instructors of their BDLPs to request participation in the survey. Eight of the twelve IHEs responded within 2 weeks by sending the email addresses of faculty members. After 2 weeks from when the initial email was sent, a follow-up phone call was placed to each of the 4 remaining IHEs to again request the email addresses of faculty members. Three more IHEs responded immediately with email addresses either over the phone or sent through an email. One university required multiple follow-up phone calls and emails requesting the email addresses of their faculty. This IHE responded with the faculty email addresses 3 months after the initial email was sent. All 12 IHEs reported email addresses of their faculty or instructors that taught in the 21 administrator preparation programs.

Pilot Test

The survey was pilot tested with three employees of the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center and the Center for Research and Learning at Kansas University. The feedback informed the researcher of several procedural issues with the delivery of the survey and several questions that needed to be rewritten for clarity of understanding. No other data indicative of the survey's psychometric properties were collected.

After the pilot test, the survey was sent out to all 97 email addresses through Survey Monkey. A timeframe of 1 week was given to complete the survey and then a follow-up email was sent as a reminder to those who had not completed the survey. After the second reminder, participants had another 5 days to complete the survey. A third and final reminder was sent to participants with another 5 days to complete the survey. The survey was then closed.

Interviews

Two 40-minute interviews were completed with 2 survey respondents approximately 2 weeks after the completion of the surveys. A total of 25 participants volunteered to be interviewed on the online survey representing 27% of total survey respondents. Because the researcher wanted to explore public universities for this study, the researcher chose one interviewee from a large public university with over 15,000 students and the second interviewee from a public university with under 15,000 students to compare responses for this study.

Each interview consisted of 10 questions. The interview questions were intended to provide the researcher with more detail and potential insight regarding specific survey questions they had answered previously in the online survey. The interview questions also provided an examination of systems level planning for the inclusion of family engagement into administrator preparation programs. The formats of the questions for the two interviews were similar but not exactly the same because the questions were formed according to responses they had made on the online survey. Qualitative data from these interviews are included in each of the objectives of this research study. The interview questions are included in Appendix B.

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Data Analysis

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This study examined three sources of data: The Likert-type responses, short answer responses, and interview responses for selected respondents. The Likert-type scale questions

were tabulated through Survey Monkey to find descriptive results including averages and percentages. The interview questions were formed after the survey results were tabulated as a way to delve further into possible differences in responses. The interview questions were organized according to each question by creating descriptive displays of answers to interpret any patterns, themes and outlying responses. Patterns and themes were organized by grouping all data by similarities derived through a process of constant comparison. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The qualitative information gained from the interviews both confirmed and differed with the online survey data.

The results per university were analyzed separately and a report created for each IHE. The descriptive findings per IHE were compared to other IHE responses to draw conclusions and formulate implications and recommendations for research and practice.

Reliability and Validity

Survey reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha resulting in a .933 coefficient of internal consistency. Internal consistency refers to the relationship among all survey items such that conclusions might be drawn as to consistent measurement of an underlying construct, e.g. degree to which family engagement is part of leadership preparation.

For the qualitative analysis, validity refers to the credibility and accuracy of descriptions, conclusions, and interpretations of the data (Maxwell, 1996). Strategies that were used to strengthen the reliability and internal validity of the findings were: (a) identifying possible researcher bias, (b) audio-taping and transcribing interviews, (c) providing detailed descriptions, (d) comparing university data, and (e) searching for outlying evidence.

To limit possible researcher bias, the researcher created an interview guide and asked for feedback from the researcher's advisor and two research assistants as to the appropriateness of

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the questions to decrease the likelihood of asking leading questions. The audio taping and transcription of the interviews provided more detailed examples of leadership programs and insured accuracy of survey information. Detailed descriptions of the researcher's role and the participants' roles provide a clear and accurate portrayal of the study. The results include direct quotes from the participants interviewed and institutional characteristics only to the degree that an individual can still maintain anonymity. Comparing interview data with survey data highlights variance in the data and reveals any outlying or disconfirming information (Maxwell, 1996). Comparing data from each university provides an analysis of similarities or differences in leadership programs across Kansas. Finally, triangulating the survey interview and interview data strengthened the internal credibility of the data reported.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This descriptive study examined the inclusion of family engagement topics, resources, and field experiences in the twenty-one building (principal) and district (superintendent) leadership programs in Kansas. In this section, results are organized as respondent and IHE demographics followed by key findings for each of the research objectives.

1. Determine family engagement topics, if any, Kansas building an district leadership programs (BDLPs) provide in their administrator preparation courses,

2. Determine what types of family engagement resources are used to prepare administrators to engage families,

3. Determine what types of experiences are used to prepare administrators to engage families (i.e. homework, assignments, family interviews, field experiences, etc), and

4. Investigate personal perception and reflections of IHE faculty and instructors on topics related to family engagement.

5. Investigate what faculty members and instructors perceive as barriers to including family engagement content into courses in BDLPs and what do they consider as most helpful to preparing their students to engage and work collaboratively with families?

Respondent and IHE Demographics

Response to Survey

In order to collect the email addresses of all tenured and non-tenured faculty and instructors in the 21 building and district leadership licensure programs offered by Kansas IHEs, individual emails were sent by the researcher to the IHEs school or college of education. Follow-up phone calls were made to 4 IHEs that did not respond to the email. Each of the twelve IHEs

contacted responded by sending the researcher a list of names with email addresses or by giving the email addresses over the telephone. A total of 97 names and addresses comprised the initial group of potential respondents. Ninety seven emails containing a link to an online survey were sent to the tenured and non-tenured faculty and instructors who taught courses in the twelve IHE building and district leadership programs in Kansas. Three of these participants chose not to participate in the survey by selecting the "Opt Out" link at the bottom of the survey. Four additional potential participant's emails were returned as non-deliverable reducing the total of potential participants to 90. Thus, 90 surveys were sent to presumably willing respondents with valid email addresses. Seventy-nine surveys were returned which provided an 87% initial return rate. Return rates per IHE varied from 71% to 100%.

Of the 79 completed surveys, 26 respondents reported they did not teach courses in the building or district leadership programs at their IHE and therefore were not included in the data analysis. These 26 participants stated that they served in administrative capacities such as deans or chairs of their department. Fifty-three respondents reported teaching at least one course in the building or district leadership program at their IHE and completed both the quantitative and qualitative questions on the survey. The 53 completed surveys resulted in a 67% response rate.

The number of respondents representing individual IHEs varied from two to ten. The average years of teaching experience of the respondents ranged from 2.5 - 9 years in the building leadership program; and 0 – 7 years in the district leadership program. Ninety-two courses were represented in the survey results. The number of courses reported per IHE ranged from 2 – 13. (See Table 3)

Of the 53 respondents who reported teaching courses, 60.9% taught courses in the building leadership programs, 29.3% taught courses in the district leadership programs, 7.6% taught courses

Table 3

Respondent Characteristics per IHE

IHE	Number of Respondents	Average years of experience teaching		Number of Courses Reported
		Building Leadership Program	District Leadership Program	
A	9	7.13	3.78	13
B	6	3.25	N/A	7
C	2	8.50	4.33	6
D	3	5.75	3.00	6
E	3	5.20	4.25	7
F	3	7.25	N/A	11
G	4	4.00	N/A	5
H	5	7.40	7.00	12
I	5	6.25	4.17	6
J	4	5.00	7.33	8
K	2	2.50	0.00	2
L	7	9.00	3.13	9
Total	53			92
Average	4.41	5.94	4.11	7.67

in both the building and district leadership programs and 2.2% indicated they taught in other programs, such as, (a) Education Policy, (b) Quantitative Analysis, (c) Humanities, (d) Measurement and Research Skills, (e) Field Supervisor, and (f) Reading Endorsement. (See Figure 1).

Classification of Courses Taught in Building and/or District Leadership Programs
(n= 92 courses)

District Leadership Program, 27, 29%

Building Leadership Program, 56, 61%

Both, 7, 8%

Other, 2, 2%
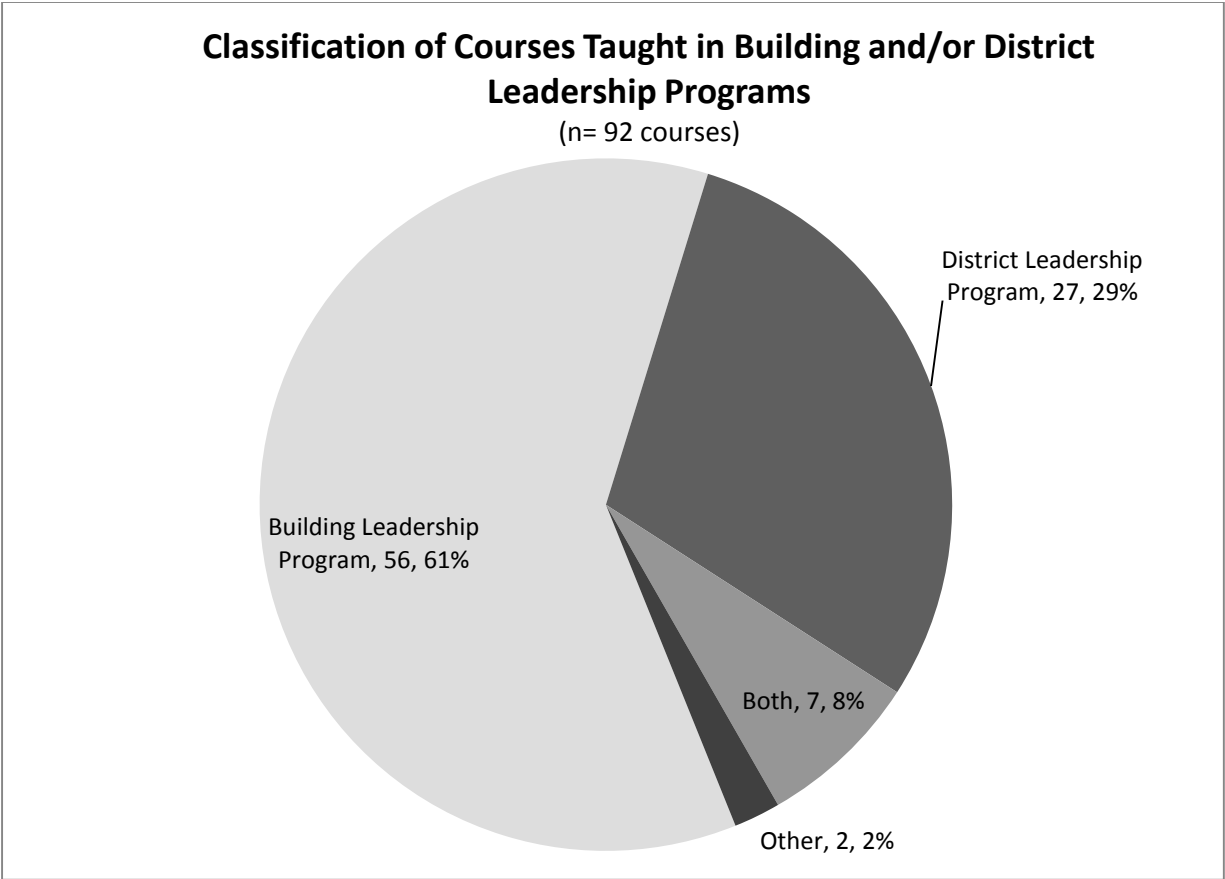
Figure 1. Status of courses taught in building and/or district leadership programs

Kansas IHE Building and District Leadership Programs

The Kansas State Department of Education tracks annually the number of initial licenses granted to Building and District Level Leadership personnel. The number of licenses granted in the last five years is described in Table 4. In the last two years the number of individuals granted Building Leadership (principal) licenses from Kansas programs grew from 222 to 249 but the number of District Level Leadership (superintendent) licenses from Kansas programs decreased from 56 to 43. Out of state Building (principal) licenses granted in the last two years grew most dramatically from 27 to 41 licenses. Out of state District (superintendent) licenses granted in the last two years stayed the same.

Table 4

Number of Initial District and Building Leadership Licenses Issued by KSDE for Each of the Last Five Years

Year issued (7/1 – 6/30)	District Leadership		Building Leadership	
	KS program	Out of State	KS program	Out of State
2013	43	3	249	41
2012	56	3	222	27
2011	51	1	239	23
2010	78	5	216	25
2009	47	1	212	24

*Data is # of licenses issued. It does <u>NOT </u>indicate number of program completers.
*The out of state data does <u>NOT</u> include any individuals who came in at the professional license level (experienced administrators).
*Data reported from KSDE in November of 2013.

Family Engagement Topics

It can be seen in Figure 2 that 3.8% of the respondents indicated their IHE had a stand-alone course on family engagement. This represents only two IHEs, each of which offered a single course. One IHE was a large university with over 15,000 students and the other was a smaller university with under 15,000 students. In both cases the course was offered in the building leadership program.

58.5% of respondents reported that their courses have infused family engagement topics within existing courses and another 26.4% of respondents did not know if their IHE offered a stand-alone course on family engagement. 11.3% indicated that their IHE's had no courses offered or infused with topics on family engagement.
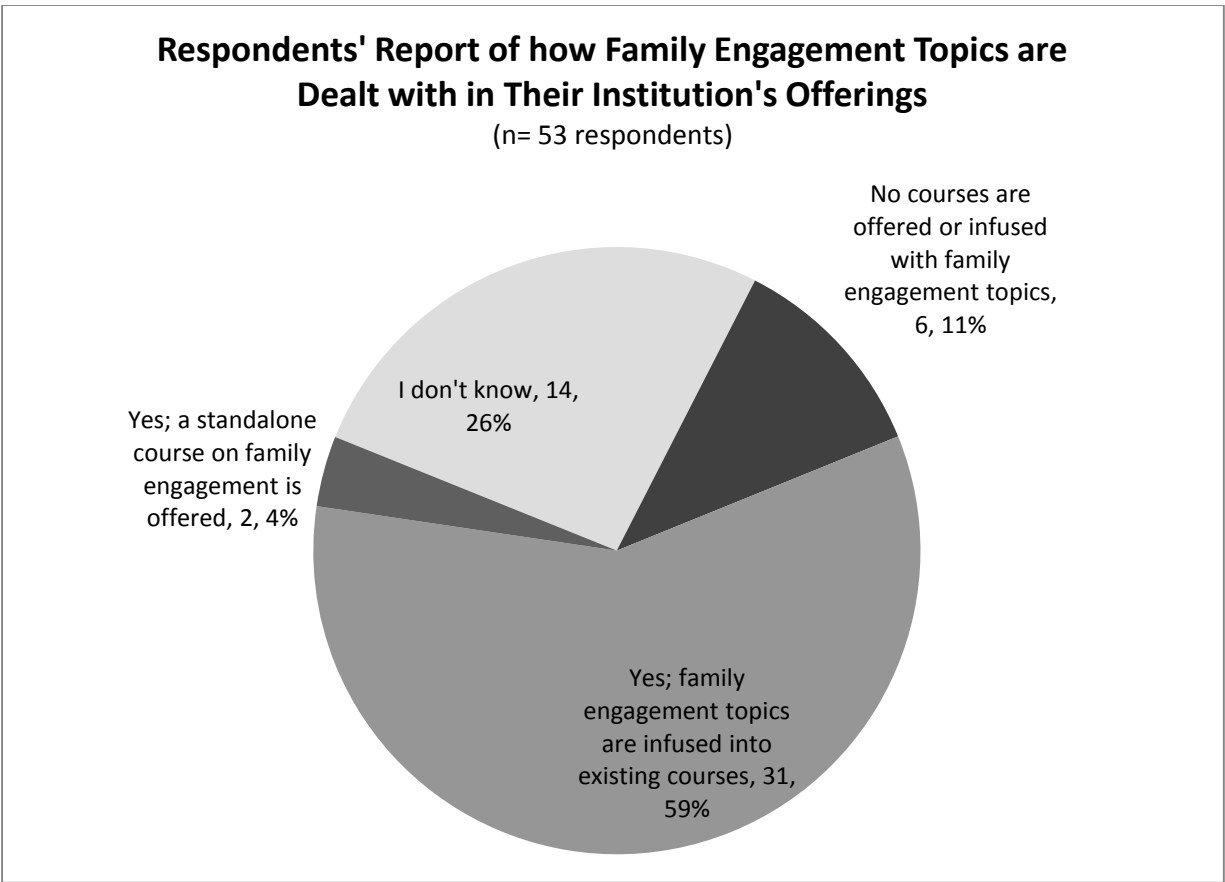
Respondents' Report of how Family Engagement Topics are Dealt with in Their Institution's Offerings

(n= 53 respondents)

No courses are offered or infused with family engagement topics, 6, 11%

I don't know, 14, 26%

Yes; a standalone course on family engagement is offered, 2, 4%

Yes; family engagement topics are infused into existing courses, 31, 59%

Figure 2. Respondents' report of how family engagement topics are dealt with in their institution's offerings

Respondent Interviews

The intent of the follow-up interviews was to provide the researcher with more detail and potential insight regarding specific survey questions respondents had answered previously. From the respondents that volunteered to be interviewed, the researcher selected 2 individuals that taught in both building and district level leadership programs; one from a large public university and one from a small public university. Interview 1 was with a tenured faculty member from a public university with under 15,000 students. He was chosen because he had taught in both the building and district leadership programs. He mentioned the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards often in the open ended questions and the researcher felt this

interviewee may be able to provide insight into systems-level planning because of his knowledge of the ISLLC standards. Interview 2 was a tenured faculty member at a public university with over 15,000 students. She was chosen because of her many years (12) of experience in teaching in both the building and district Leadership programs at her university.

R.O.1: Family Engagement Topics Included in Administrator Preparation Courses

Research objective 1 was to determine what family engagement topics, if any, Kansas building and district leadership programs provide in their administrator preparation courses. On a Likert scale of 1 to 10, the mean score for each topic addressed in the building and district leadership courses in Kansas IHE's is presented in Figure 3. The three most common course topics were: (a) Working with culturally and linguistically diverse families (7.08), (b) Building relationships with families (6.89), and, (c) The benefits of engaging families (6.72). The three topics addressed least often in courses were: (a) The PTA Standards for National Family School Partnerships (2.84), (b) Effective homework and home-school support strategies (3.94), and, (c) home-school behavior strategies (4.55).

Interview results. For Interview 1, the respondent stated that he personally managed to include family engagement topics into his building and district leadership course content by beginning with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards and using a backward design. He stated, "we definitely do not want our aspiring administrators to not have this exposure. We want to coordinate this work with the outcomes of what our students should know and be able to do." Interviewee 2 said "the ISLLC Standards have a major effect on what is taught in courses. If we were building a new course we would look at the ISLLC function and performance indicators and build toward that target." Interviewee 2 also
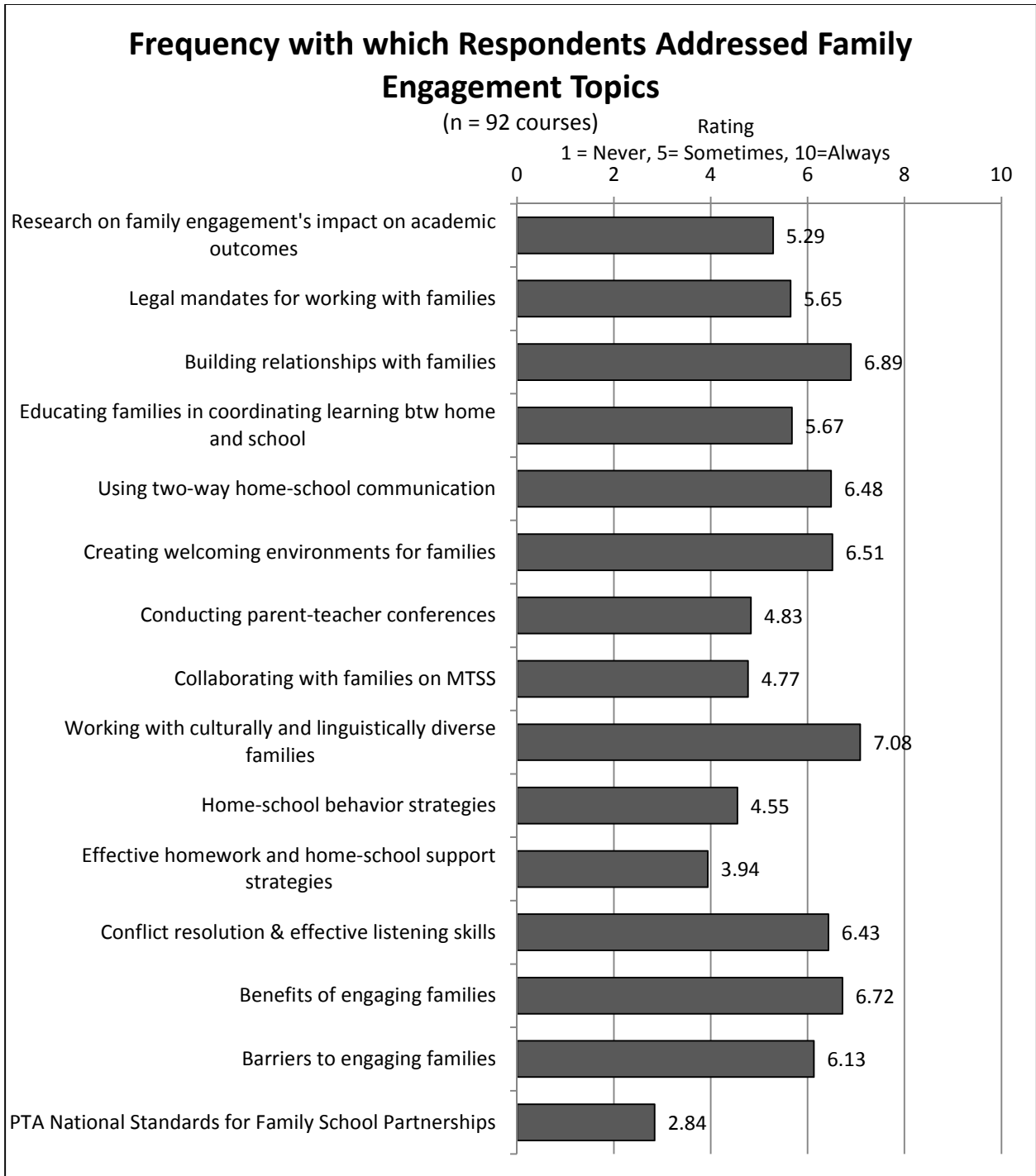
Frequency with which Respondents Addressed Family Engagement Topics

(n = 92 courses)

Rating
1 = Never, 5= Sometimes, 10=Always

Topic	Rating
Research on family engagement's impact on academic outcomes	5.29
Legal mandates for working with families	5.65
Building relationships with families	6.89
Educating families in coordinating learning btw home and school	5.67
Using two-way home-school communication	6.48
Creating welcoming environments for families	6.51
Conducting parent-teacher conferences	4.83
Collaborating with families on MTSS	4.77
Working with culturally and linguistically diverse families	7.08
Home-school behavior strategies	4.55
Effective homework and home-school support strategies	3.94
Conflict resolution & effective listening skills	6.43
Benefits of engaging families	6.72
Barriers to engaging families	6.13
PTA National Standards for Family School Partnerships	2.84

Figure 3. Frequency with which respondents addressed family engagement topics

stated that, "Everything in our program is connected to the six areas of leadership in the ISLLC Standards. We start with the ISLLC Standards." When she was asked if she was aware what other topics faculty members taught concerning family engagement in their courses she said she did not know. Similarly, Interviewee 1 stated that the topics for each class are the choice of each individual instructor and that he did not know what other instructors were teaching "as much as he should."

Interviewee 1 believed that the Kansas Board of Regents sets high standards for his IHE by requiring it to address the ISLLC Standards. He also stated that while teaching in another state at an IHE, he had become familiar with a family advocacy organization that he had collaborated with and from whom he learned much about family engagement. He often called upon this organization for resources and presentations in his administrator preparation courses before coming to Kansas. He stated he "wished that Kansas had a similar organization that he could access for supports." When asked if the building leadership program contained more family engagement content than the district leadership program, or vice versa, at his IHE, he stated that he believed coverage of this content was equivalent across both programs.

Interviewee 2 stated that the nature of her courses is to prepare leaders, so she looks at her courses with a leadership perspective. She stated that the ISLLC Standards are the framework for the master's program at her IHE and that everything in the building and district leadership programs is connected to the ISLLC Standards. When the Interview two respondent was asked if she knew what family engagement topics were taught in other courses by other faculty members she said that she did not know what other faculty members taught concerning family engagement. But, she added that when her IHE arranges field experiences or practicums for their students to gain experience in school districts, each IHE instructor has a role and

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courses that we consider "*our*" special area regarding the ISLLC standards to provide oversight.

She stated that she focused on Standards 4 and 6 of the ISLLC standards which contain family

engagement.

Interviewee 2 believed the building level leadership program at her IHE probably

contained more family engagement content than the district level program because of a specific

stand-alone School-Community course that is offered in the building leadership program. She

also stated that this course provided information on relationships, communication and creating

welcoming environments for families. Although Interviewee 2 stated that her IHE offered a

stand-alone family engagement course in the building leadership program, she did not submit

this data into the online survey.

R.O. 2: Resources Related to Family Engagement in Administrator Preparation Courses

Objective 2 of the study was to determine what types of family engagement resources are

used in courses to prepare administrators. Results are reported as percentages of respondents who

indicated that they used the resource in their courses. These data are summarized in Figure 4.

The top three most common resources used in courses were: (a) articles (64.1), (b) discussions

(63.0), and (c) books (51.1). The three least common resources used in courses were (a) no

resources at all (7.6), (b) webinars (7.6), and (c) others (10.9), which were listed as, (a) "case

studies," (b) "scenarios" and (c) "the Kansas Special Education Process Handbook."

Interview results. Interviewee 1 said that it was up to each faculty member at his IHE to

choose the family engagement resources for their courses. He stated that in deciding what family

engagement resources he would use in his courses, "I am almost ashamed to admit it but in this

day and age we "Google" a topic to find resources." Interviewees 1 and 2 both identified the

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the National Staff
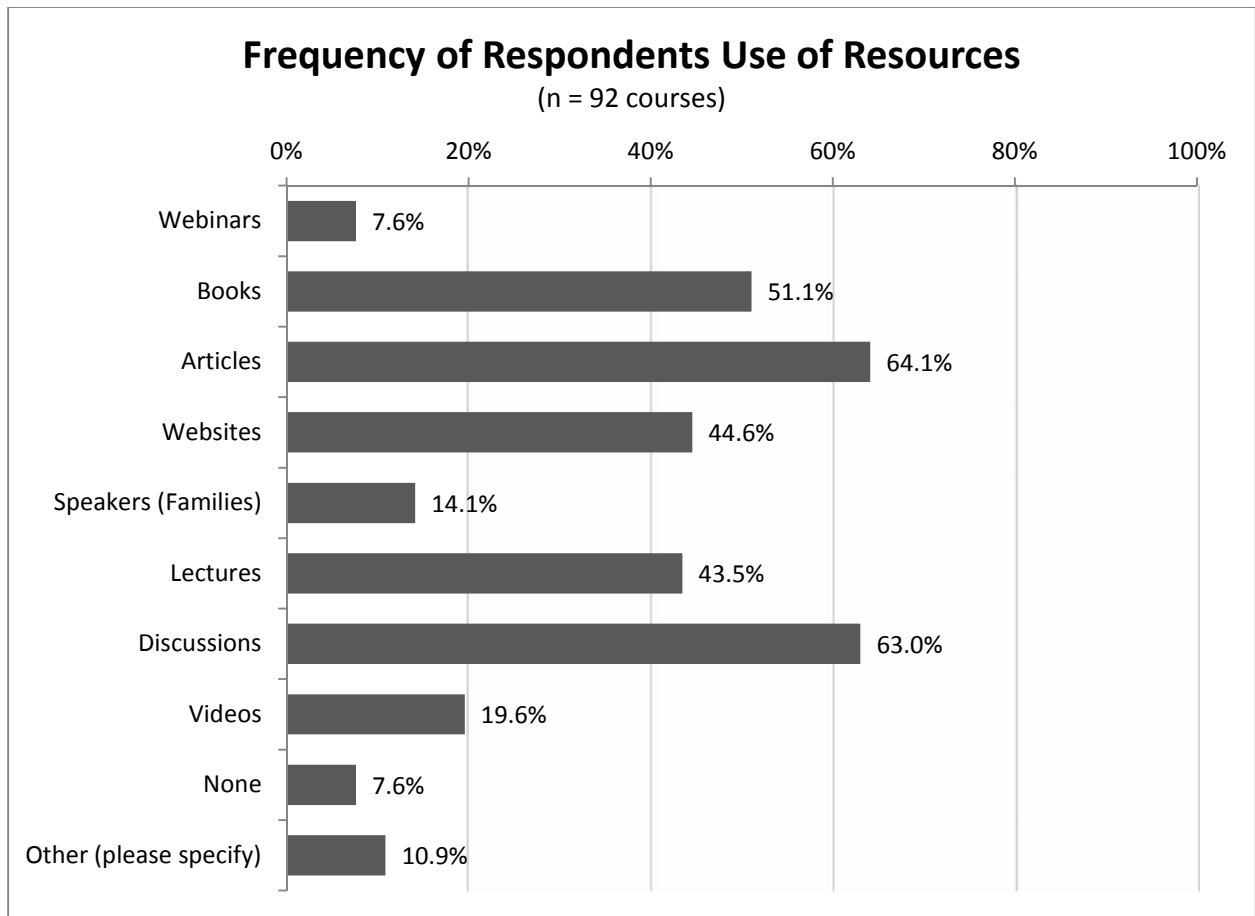
Frequency of Respondents Use of Resources
(n = 92 courses)

Resource	Percentage
Webinars	7.6%
Books	51.1%
Articles	64.1%
Websites	44.6%
Speakers (Families)	14.1%
Lectures	43.5%
Discussions	63.0%
Videos	19.6%
None	7.6%
Other (please specify)	10.9%

Figure 4. Frequency of Respondents Use of Resources

Development Council (NSDC) journals as providing a means of keeping the students up to date on family engagement topics.

When both interviewees were asked what family engagement resources they would find helpful in teaching their courses, Interviewee 1 said,

I didn't realize the connection with MTSS and the parenting partnership piece. I think all educators will tell you, we struggle in getting all parents actively engaged in their children's education. The parents that we really don't need their attention, they come to the parent teacher conferences, they come to the outreach. What we need assistance with is trying to find the silver bullet for those parents who aren't as comfortable in school

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and maybe weren't comfortable in school themselves. It is easier to edit than create. If we could get some white papers, we could customize them to support superintendents and administrators in family engagement. A cookie cutter approach doesn't work for every district." Interviewee two said that she would "like to add new resources as they become available and that in her standalone class on Family School Relations a standard textbook is used for that course. (Interviewee one).

When he was asked if there were any specific books or articles that he used for his course content on family engagement, he stated "not specifically" and that he used the information provided with the ISLLC standards. He also referred to the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) as a resource for positive school image and climate. He worked to engage his students in the NSPRA information. When asked what family engagement resources he might find helpful in teaching his courses, he stated, "It is a struggle to get all parents actively engaged. We need to find the silver bullet for those parents who aren't comfortable. I would like resources to support superintendents and administrators in family engagement. A cookie cutter approach doesn't work for every district."

Interviewee 2 also stated that she and other faculty were free to choose the family engagement resources used in their courses. She stated that one resource she liked to use was by the author Linda Lambert on bringing parent involvement into the school setting. She also used the ISLLC Standards for teacher leadership as a resource. She stated that she would find it helpful to learn of new resources on family engagement as they become available.

R.O.3: Experiences Related to Family Engagement in Administrator Preparation Courses

Objective 3 was to determine the types of experiences to engage families that are provided in administrator preparation programs (i.e. homework assignments, family interviews,

field experiences, etc). Results are reported in Figure 5 as percentages of courses respondents reported that require family engagement field experiences per institution, as well as, an average across all universities. Instructors from four IHE's reported that in their courses, no field experiences were required. The highest percentage reported was 50% of classes requiring field experiences. An average of 20.7% of the instructors' courses required field experiences.
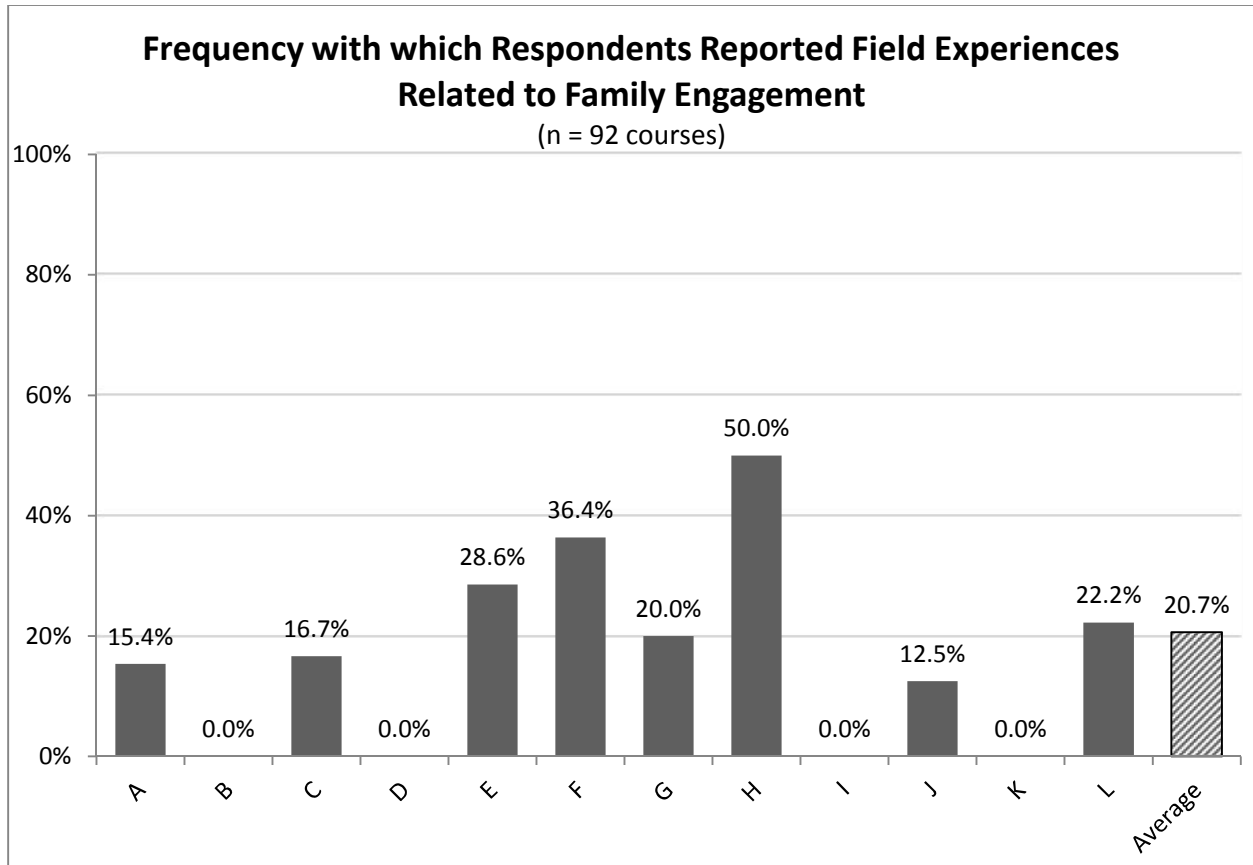

Figure 5. Frequency with which Respondents Reported Field Experiences Related to Family Engagement

To determine the number, if any, of projects or homework assignments on the topic of family engagement, results are reported in Figure 6. These reflect percentages of courses that require specific assignments or projects on family engagement per institution, as well as, an average score. Instructors from two IHEs reported that in their courses, no family engagement
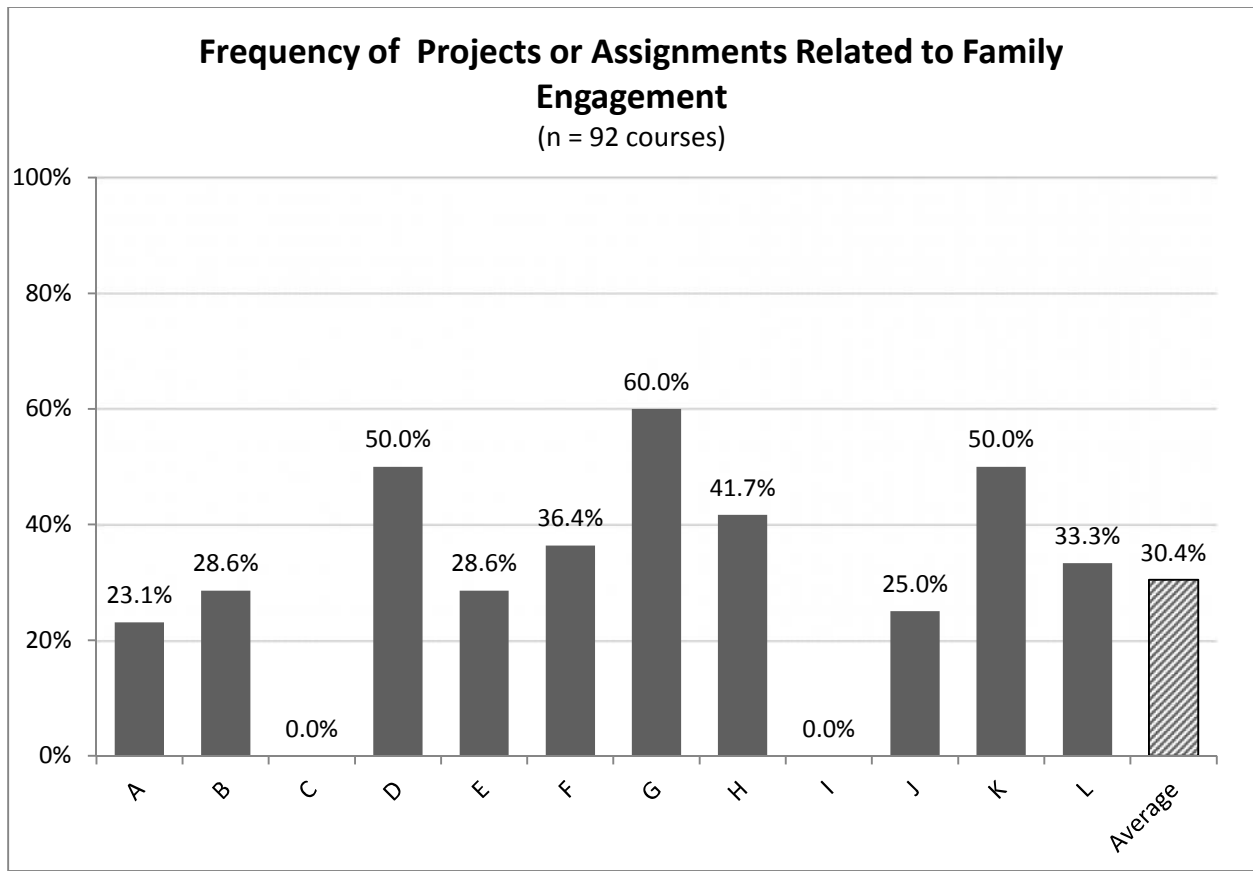
Frequency of Projects or Assignments Related to Family Engagement
(n = 92 courses)

Figure 6. Frequency of Projects or Assignments Related to Family Engagement

projects or assignments were required. One institution's instructors reported that 60% of their

courses require assignments or projects on family engagement. Overall, an average of 30.4% of

the instructors courses required family engagement assignments or projects.

Interview results. When asked about the types of experiences to engage families his

students participated in, Interviewee 1 said that at the building level students must lead a parent-

student-teacher conference for academic issues or participate in a meeting with families on

another topic such as tardy or discipline issues. He encouraged his students to find out facts from

parents by listening to them and students. He believed every family situation is different and that

multiple opportunities of family exposure are important but that only one conference is required

in the field experience. He believed that interacting with families needed to become a larger part

of the field experience. At his particular IHE, 150 hours of field experience are required in both the building and district level programs and there were no specific number of hours devoted to family engagement activities.

Interviewee 2 reported that the education department at her IHE is focused on the six ISLLC standards and a course may or may not include family engagement but the intent is to cover all six standards in their program. She also stated that there is no family engagement project or assignment in courses in the building or district leadership courses at her IHE but that her IHE does offer a stand-alone course on School Community Relations in the building leadership program which does include some family engagement field applications and projects. When Interviewee two was asked if she was aware of other courses in the building or district level leadership program that provide projects, homework or field experiences in family engagement, she replied that they are all related to the field experience and not included in other courses. She also stated that she believed students gained experience in the field experience in working with diverse populations and the engagement of those diverse families.

R.O.4: Faculty Perceptions and Reflections

Objective 4 of this study was to investigate personal perceptions and reflections of IHE faculty and instructors on topics related to family engagement. Results are presented in Figure 7 as average scores, on a scale of 1-10, of the perception of faculty and instructors on how well prepared their students are to engage families in education. Respondents from two of the twelve universities responded with an 8 or higher that their students were prepared to engage families. An average score of 7.14 was reported for all IHEs regarding perceptions of how prepared their students were to engage families in education.
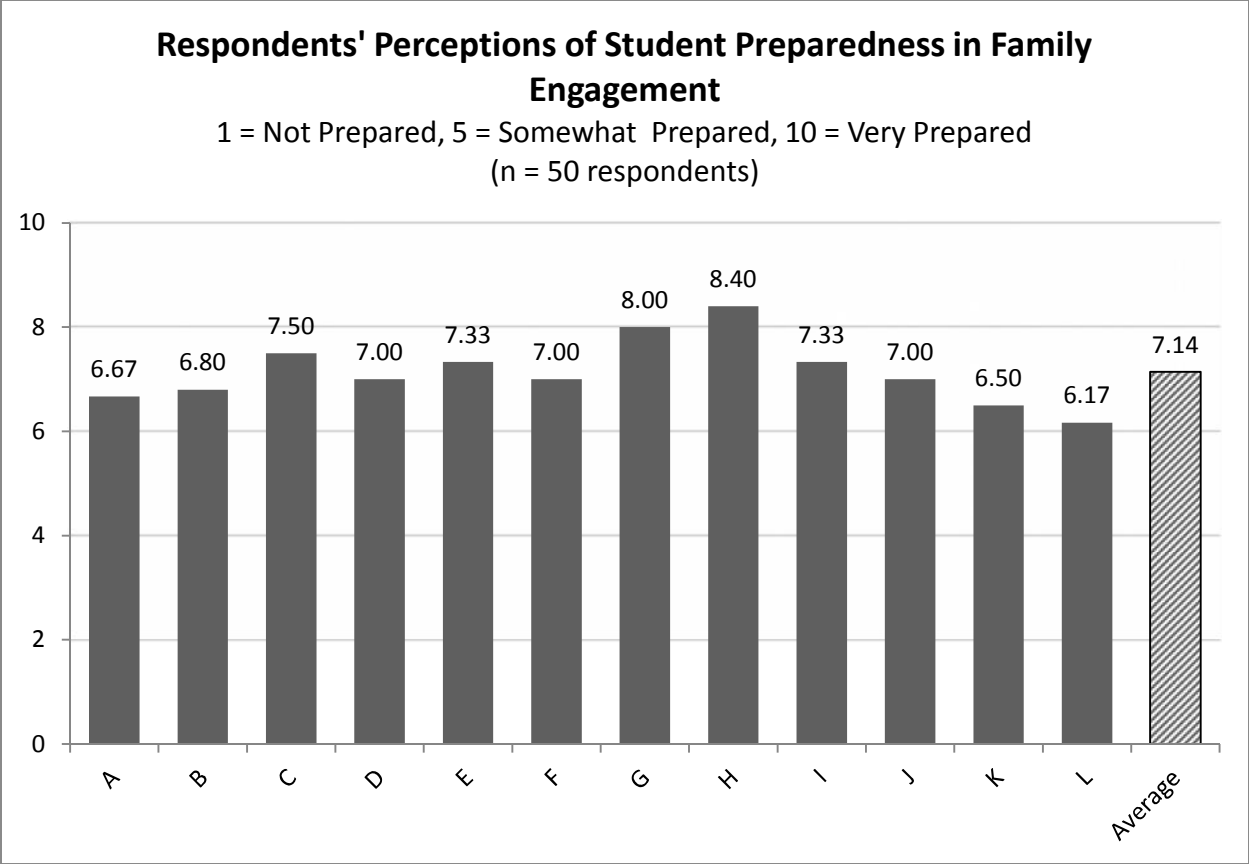
Figure 7. Respondents' perceptions of student preparedness in family engagement

Results are presented in Figure 8 as averages, on a scale of 1-10, of the reflections of faculty and instructors on how much training they received during their graduate work on the topic of engaging families in their children's education. Instructors from seven of the twelve universities responded with a 4 or below. An average score of 4.02 was reported for all IHE faculty and instructors and their perceptions of how much training they received during their graduate work in the area of engaging families in their children's education.
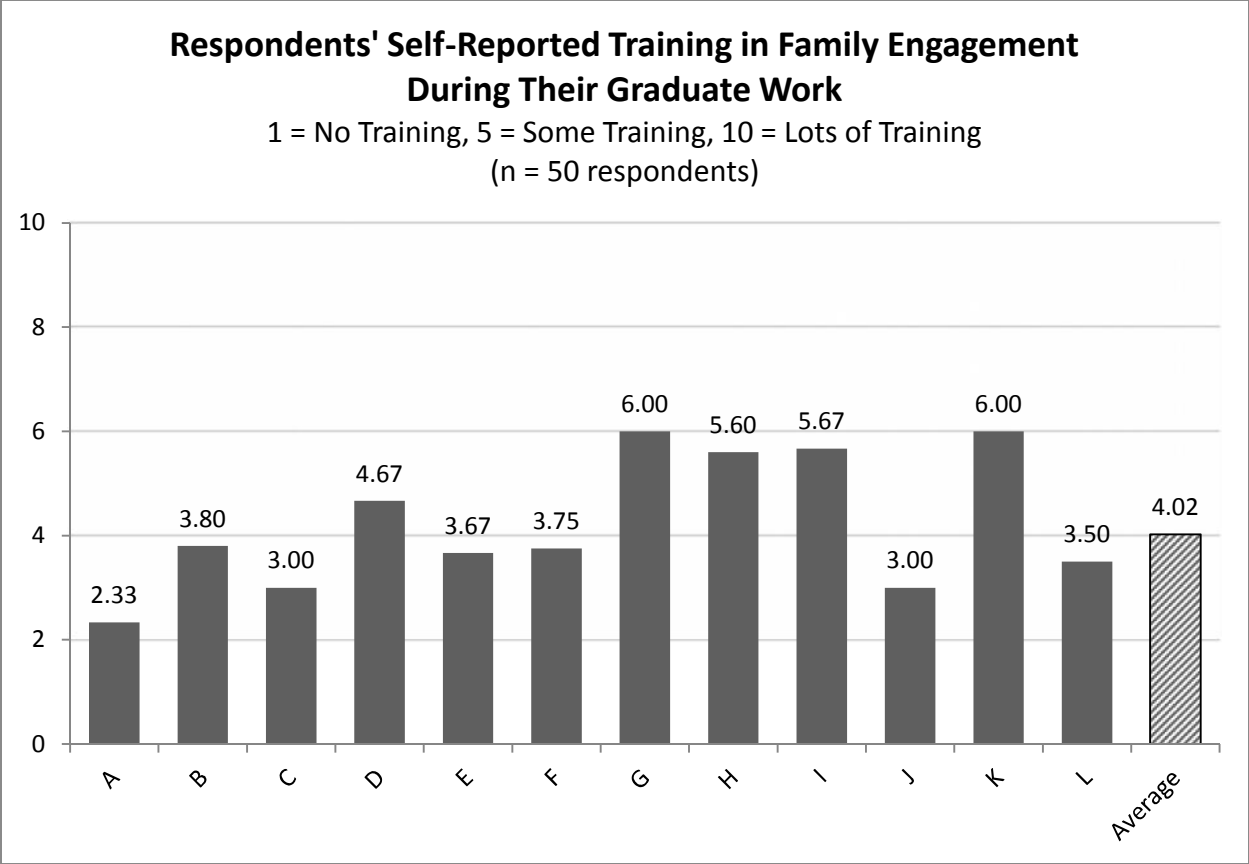
Respondents' Self-Reported Training in Family Engagement During Their Graduate Work

1 = No Training, 5 = Some Training, 10 = Lots of Training
(n = 50 respondents)

Category	Value
A	2.33
B	3.80
C	3.00
D	4.67
E	3.67
F	3.75
G	6.00
H	5.60
I	5.67
J	3.00
K	6.00
L	3.50
Average	4.02

Figure 8. Respondents' self-reported training in family engagement during their graduate work

On average 10.9% of respondents believed it was important to have a stand-alone course on family engagement in their building and district leadership program (Figure 9). For 4 IHEs, none of the respondents who were surveyed believed it was necessary to have a stand-alone course on family engagement. Five other universities had less than 20% of respondents indicate it was important to have a stand-alone course on family engagement in their preparation programs.
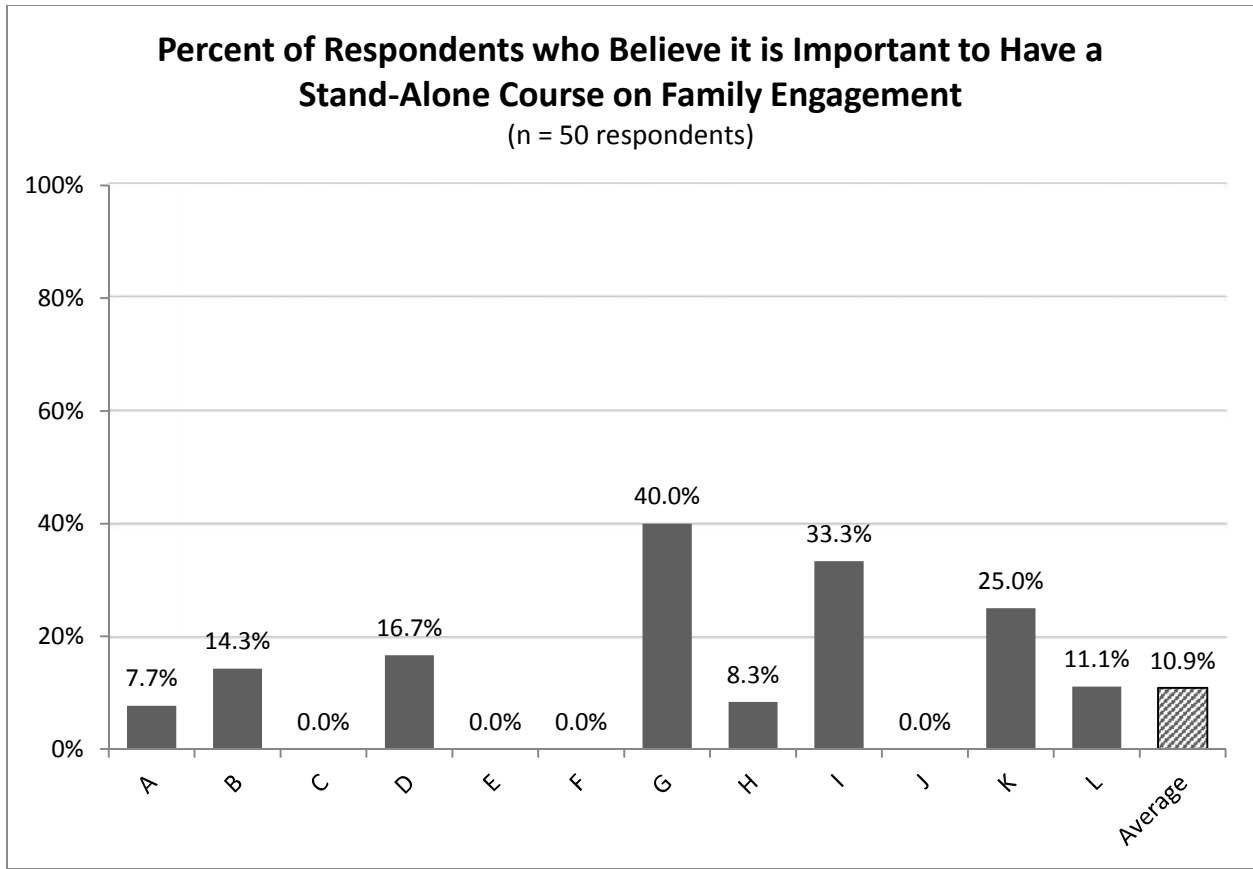
Percent of Respondents who Believe it is Important to Have a Stand-Alone Course on Family Engagement
(n = 50 respondents)

Figure 9. Percent of respondents who believe it is important to have a stand-alone course on family engagement

Interview Results. Interviewee 1 responded that he believed his students were more than somewhat prepared to engage families in education based on their practicum experience. During the practicum experience, they are required to report facts they have learned about working with families. They are also required to reflect on the exposure and interaction with the families after their field experience. Interviewee one wants his students to "assume a leadership role in their practicum experience" and sit in on IEPs for elementary and middle schools students in order to have exposure to engaging families in a variety of settings. He also stated that the Educational Leadership I and Educational Leadership II courses offered at his IHE, were not focused on family engagement.

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When Interviewee 2 was asked about her response on the survey in which she believed her students were more than somewhat prepared to engage families in education, she stated that she believed this because her students were in a two year cohort group and this was a benefit for the students. She also believed that family engagement was part of their program. When asked what prepared her students most to engage families, Interviewee two stated "connection with real practice. We talk about it and use it."

R.O.5: Barriers and Helpful Strategies to the Inclusion of Family Engagement in Preparation Programs

The online survey included an open ended question that asked what the respondent felt were the biggest barriers or challenges to preparing administrator preparation students to engage or work collaboratively with families (n=31). The most common barrier mentioned was "time." One respondent elaborated by saying, "Time required for all course requirements to be met and time spent in the field by candidates. These are limited within the timeframe of coursework." Another respondent stated, "Time to include everything needed in preparation programs." A third respondent said, "There is so much for a new building leader to learn, time is the barrier to going deeply into this topic."

The next theme that emerged as a barrier for administrator preparation was the need for more opportunities for real experiences with families. One respondent related, "Access to parents" as a barrier. Another respondent stated, "Not enough real and varied experiences," while another said," Lack of time for authentic experiences." A final respondent asserted that there was a "lack of diverse opportunities to engage families."

The third theme from the open-ended responses on barriers was the lack of opportunity for students to work with families during field experiences. One respondent stated, "Different

school districts provide each administrative intern student with different experiences based on the support or lack of support for students as they communicate with students and their families." Another respondent said a barrier was, "Gaining the support of a mentor principal who fully allows the candidates to engage with families during their practica experiences." A final respondent related there was a "Lack of support from current administrators and lack of understanding or unable to "buck the system" or change what is being done presently."

The final question asked of respondents was what they believed helped students feel most prepared to engage and work collaboratively with families. The respondents (n=34) repeatedly said, "field experiences" or "practicum activities" would help students feel most prepared to engage families. One respondent stated, "Both the theory and the practice. Being able to put what they learn into practice helps with the comfort and confidence levels."

The second theme that emerged as something that would help students feel more prepared to engage families was the opportunity to share real life experiences through discussions. "Sharing real-life experiences and group discussions" was stated as important by one respondent and another said," Sharing experiences and learning about best practice and research on family engagement." Lastly, a respondent said, "Being able to talk about potential issues and barriers helps them to anticipate solutions and become proactive in planning how to engage families in the educational process."

The final theme that was repeated as helpful in preparing students to engage families was the necessity of understanding theories of family engagement. One respondent stated, "Understanding theories of family and parental capacity, capability, and efficacy in educational involvement, as well as theories of social stratification and bureaucracy" was important to prepare students to engage families. Another respondent said it was important for students to

"Understand that strong partnerships with families build strong foundations for student achievement." Lastly, a respondent said it was important to, "Understand the importance of, and strategies necessary for involving and engaging parents".

Interview results. On the survey, Interviewee 1 indicated that the biggest barrier to preparing students to engage with families is the limited experiences intern students receive from districts (the IHE partners with districts to provide field experiences to its students). When asked to explain further during the interview, he stated that, "the experience is only as good as what the (district) administration is going to provide you. Some members provide and some observe. Some don't provide exposure. What happens most often is 60% of district administrators get involved in feedback and go out into the field and interact with administrator prep students. Contact does help provide guidance." He said the district administration is asked to read student reflections three times during the 150 field hour experience.

In the survey, Interviewee two stated that the biggest barrier to preparing students to engage with families was the lack of resources and the need for more emphasis on working with families. When asked to elaborate on this survey comment in the interview she stated, "We need to find resources and get past barriers." When asked for any final recommendations for federal or state government or universities, Interviewee two stated, "We can best prepare administrators by keeping open and frequent conversation between preparers and practitioners. We must bring together practice and theory. We need to have open conversations and need to see the connection between practice and theory." She stated that as a university, they have collaborated often with the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and make required reports to KSDE and the federal and state levels. She believes that government is a "rigid bureaucracy" in relation to what is required of IHE education programs.

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When Interviewee 1 was asked what the federal or state government could provide for guidance to the IHEs on the topic of family engagement in administrator preparation programs, he stated "IHEs need guidance from the federal government on family engagement in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)". He stated that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) did provide guidelines for family engagement and the IEP process. He wished there was something like a "clearinghouse for resources, and if KSDE could provide parent engagement resources, that would be valuable". In closing, Interviewee one stated that he seeks positive outcomes for children and believes engaging families is important so they can support their children. He also believed it was important to encourage parents to "take ownership of their children's education."

Summary

The research question for this study was: How do building and district leadership programs (BDLPs) in Kansas institutions of higher education (IHEs) prepare future K-12 administrators to engage families in their children's education? To answer this question the following specific courses of inquiry guided the research:

1. What types of course topics on family engagement, if any, do Kansas BDLPs provide? (e.g. benefits of family engagement, barriers to family engagement, parent teacher conferences, etc.);

2. What types of family engagement resources, if any, are used in Kansas BDLPs to prepare administrators to engage families (e.g., textbooks, websites, articles, webinars, research, etc.);

3. What types of experiences, if any, to engage families, are provided in Kansas BDLPs (e.g., homework assignments, family interviews, etc.);

4. What are the reflections of faculty and instructors on their own preparation in family engagement and the perceptions of faculty and instructors on how well prepared their own students are to engage families in their children's education.

5. What do faculty members and instructors perceive as barriers to including family engagement content into courses in BDLPs and what do they consider as most helpful to preparing their students to engage and work collaboratively with families?

The data were collected and analyzed on these five objectives in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the degree to which administrators are trained to engage families in their children's education. Data revealed themes for each objective.

Objective one data from both the online survey responses and the follow-up interviews may suggest that while the ISLLC standards is the common system to align building and district leadership courses in Kansas, respondents did not have a systematic approach for including family engagement topics in courses. The inclusion of topics on family engagement appears to be autonomous and at the discretion of each individual instructor. Reported data might indicate that instructors are unaware of family engagement topics that other colleagues, teaching at the same IHE, include in their courses. This could possibly allow for repeated coverage of certain topics and gaps in learning on other family engagement topics. Survey data from this research suggests that the most common topics in leadership courses are working with culturally and linguistically diverse families, building relationships with families, and the benefits of engaging families. The three topics addressed least often in courses were the PTA Standards for National Family School Partnerships, effective homework and home-school support strategies, and home school behavior strategies.

Objective two data from both the online survey and the two follow-up interviews suggests that the respondents of building and district leadership programs courses appear to be free to choose the family engagement resources used in their courses. While discussions, articles and books on family engagement were shown to be used most often from the survey data, interviewees appeared to have limited or no knowledge of articles or books on this topic. Both interviewees expressed an admitted lack of awareness of current family engagement resources and a desire for knowledge and access to these resources.

Data for Objective three suggests that 20.6% of respondents related that their courses require a family engagement field experience and one interviewee mentioned that the experience may be as limited as attending one parent-student-teacher conference or another meeting on tardy or discipline issues. Both follow-up interviewees reported that field experiences with more exposure to families are important and should become a larger part of leadership programs. Survey data also suggests that respondents reported that 30.4% of their courses required an assignments or project on family engagement topics and these are generally related to the field experience.

Survey perception data for objective four suggests that the respondent's students were more than somewhat prepared to engage families in education. The data also suggests that as instructors reflected on their own training in family engagement, they reported they had less than "some" training on the topic. Both follow-up interviews suggested that "students will only receive a quality field experience as good as the district administrator provides" and that the quality and range of field experience is dictated at the district level by those in oversight. Interviewee data reported the need for open and frequent conversations between leadership program instructors and practitioners and a closer connection between practice and theory.

Finally, for objective 5, respondents perceived the biggest barrier to including family engagement in courses was the issue of the lack of time to address family engagement within courses. Access to parents and real world experiences were also mentioned as barriers along with authentic experiences with families during field experiences. Respondents stated that understanding the importance and theories of family engagement would benefit their student's ability to engage families, as well as, more practical and authentic field experiences with families.

The next chapter considers both the findings of this study and provides recommendations for administrator preparation programs and the licensure process of these programs. Administrator licensure policies and practices at the state department of education level are also discussed.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Limitations

Several limitations should be noted when discussing the implications of this study. First, only two follow-up interviews were conducted in order to gain insight into approaches used to incorporate family engagement in leadership programs in Kansas. While offering indepth information, the perspectives of the two faculty who were interviewed may not sufficiently represent all faculty involved in building or district leadership programs (BDLPs). These two faculty were selected because of their open-ended responses in the survey and were not purposively sampled for distinct perspectives. The small number of interviews may lead to vulnerability when comparing with other universities. However, it is important to note that 100% of IHEs with building or district leadership programs were represented in the online survey.

Second, quantitative and qualitative data was collected using a self-report survey. The accuracy of self-reported data has been examined for many years in higher education research (Cole and Gonyea, 2010). Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002) report that researchers identify two primary reasons for concern about self-reporting methods: (a) self-reporting provides opportunity for response bias; and (b) establishing causal or correlational relationships may be exaggerated. They also report that research participants generally want to appear as good as possible in self-reporting. Respondents may over-report what may seem as an appropriate response and under-report responses that seem less appropriate. Spector (1994) believes there is much to be learned about using questionnaire methods and that self-reports should not be dismissed as being inferior methodology. He believes there are good reasons to be careful in the use of self-report methods, but reasons for caution are just as important for other methodologies.

Howard (1994) reports that when self-reports are used with a sensible design, they represent an important and valid methodology, as experienced in this study.

A third limitation is that individual faculty responded to the survey specifically related to their own course content. While multiple faculty from a single program may have responded to the survey, their views did not reflect a program-wide perspective. Therefore, the results of the study should be considered as representing faculty-specific perspectives. A comparison of survey responses from respondent (faculty) and students who are currently enrolled in or graduated from the preparation programs would provide insight into the perceptions of students about their preparation in family engagement and any discrepancies between the two groups.

Finally, a limitation of the study was the lack of validity or reliability of the scale. Given that surveys tend to be weak on validity and strong on reliability, Fowler (1995) advised that survey questions are difficult to evaluate because of the kind of questions asked or the generalizations of the conclusions that are reached. DeVellis (2003) stated that in some cases developing a measurement instrument is the only option. This approach has two concerns: (a) overreliance on an existing instrument, and (b) assumptions that a newly developed instrument will measure a construct adequately. For this research study, careful wording, pilot testing, explanations of the constructs to be measured and discussions with researchers of the creation of the Likert-type scale and survey were intended to increase validity and reliability of the instrument.

Findings and Interpretations

The overarching research question of this study was: How do building and district leadership programs (BDLPs) in Kansas Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) prepare K-12

administrators to engage families in their children's education? Five investigatory objectives

were identified:

1. Determine topics related family engagement covered in leadership courses.

2. Identify resources related to family engagement used in leadership courses.

3.   Determine the nature of field experiences and projects included in leadership

    courses.

4.   Examine faculty perceptions related to coverage and emphasis of family engagement

    topics and learning experiences.

5. Investigate faculty considerations of barriers to the inclusion of family engagement

    content into courses in BDLPs and what is most helpful to prepare their students to

    engage families.

In the following sections, general findings and their interpretations through examination

of the data obtained from respondents will be discussed. Findings and interpretations are

discussed according to each of the four objectives. Finally, recommendations for policy and

practice are made for each objective.

Objective One: Course Topics

The first objective was to determine what types of topics on family engagement, if any,

Kansas building and district leadership programs provide in their administrator preparation

courses. The results of the survey suggest that the respondents most often provided family

engagement topics associated with working with culturally and linguistically diverse families,

building relationships with families, and the benefits of engaging families. As minority

populations grow in Kansas, administrators as well as all school personnel will be required to

work with more culturally and linguistically diverse families. This research suggests that

respondents are addressing diversity in administrator preparation programs. Results of this survey support the research that partnering with minority parents can reinforce the necessity of family engagement in the school and home (Epstein, et al., 2002; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davis, 2007). It is important for schools to understand the home culture and ethnic community of minorities (Grant & Ray, 2010).

From the survey results, it also appears that building relationships with families is the second most frequent topic discussed in IHE leadership courses in Kansas. The research of Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davis, (2007) reinforce the importance of working to build relationships with families by treating families as partners in their children's education whereby parents will be more likely to become engaged and stay engaged. The third most frequent family engagement topic addressed was the benefit of engaging families. A report by Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that students with engaged parents, no matter their income or background level, were more likely to: (a) earn higher grades, (b) be promoted, (c) attend school, (d) have better social skills and (e) graduate and go on to post secondary education. It is important that future administrators understand the benefits of engaging families as it links to results for students. While this study did not identify if specific benefits were discussed in the IHE determine courses, it did appear that general benefits of family engagement were recognized and discussed.

The survey results also suggest that the respondents least often provide topics related to the PTA National Family School Partnership Standards endorsed by the Kansas State Board of Education in 2008; or effective homework and home-school behavior strategies. The lack of information shared about the PTA Standards suggests a lack of knowledge among faculty of current actions by the Kansas State Board of Education to promote family engagement in

districts and schools in Kansas. Knowledge of the PTA Standards could offer administrators a comprehensive framework for supporting systemic approaches to family engagement. The supports and resources that accompany the PTA Standards could provide information to administrators enabling them to more confidently and knowledgeably engage with families in their children's education.

Effective homework and home-school behavior strategies were identified by respondents on the survey as the least likely to be addressed topic. Both effective homework and home-school behavior strategies deal with school to home interactions. Since homework is a primary point of interface between school and home, the apparent lack of attention given to these topics in administrator preparation courses is somewhat concerning. Redding, (2006) argued that the connection between the school and the home is important to school improvement. Engaging parents in their children's learning is a key function of the school and should not be an afterthought. Building relationships between school and home should be purposeful and planned. Weis and Stephens (2009) report that programs that train parents to appropriately engage in their children's homework have shown positive effects on parent engagement, increasing the time children spend on homework, higher homework accuracy and higher grades. The results of this research could suggest that by not addressing the topics of effective homework and home-school supports an important opportunity is lost in preparing future administrators to engage families in their children's learning.

From the two follow-up interviews, both respondents stated that they used the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards as a framework to content related to family engagement. This is interesting to note given that Kansas has specific Building and District Leadership Standards to guide administrator preparation programs, yet the two

interviewees placed more emphasis on the ISLLC standards. This may suggest that respondents refer to ISLLC standards for guidance more often than the Kansas Building and District Leadership Standards.

This discussion of the ISLLC standards supports the research that finds that successful leadership preparation programs are assembled around clear goals. Darling-Hammond (2007) found that excellent preservice programs for principals have common components which include a curriculum aligned to state and professional standards, in particular the ISLLC standards. According to The Wallace Foundation (2006), the most important element that determines a quality school leadership program is standards that spell out clear expectations about what leaders need to know and do to improve instruction which then hold them accountable for results. The two follow-up interviews seem to suggest that leadership programs in Kansas use the ISLLC Standards for structure and as a framework for their leadership programs.

The follow-up interviews also suggest that faculty, at least in the two institutions represented, are given leeway to address standards, with little if any collaboration among other instructors, or clear adherence to specific programmatic frameworks or standards. This approach seems to allow respondents to independently choose family engagement topics for their courses, without a plan for implementation or coordination with other instructors, or accountability for addressing the standards. If this practice is common across all leadership programs, it could possibly result in gaps or redundancy of information on family engagement among courses. A clear connection between state standards and course topics was not evident, but it is difficult to ascertain if this is due to the limited perspectives of survey respondents or is a programmatic inadequacy. Further research is needed to sufficiently understand how course content is aligned at the program level.

Objective Two: Course Resources

The second objective examined in this study was to determine the types of family engagement resources that are used in Kansas building and district leadership programs to prepare administrators. (e.g., textbooks, websites, articles, webinars, and research). The survey data suggested the three most often used resources were articles, class discussions and books. Respondents also had the opportunity to write in other resources they found useful in their courses. Some of the resources mentioned were scenarios from their own experiences, the Kansas Special Education Handbook, case studies, Joyce Epstein's work on building partnerships, Annette Lareau's book, *Unequal Childhoods*, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) brochures, Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC) and various YouTube video clips.

There appeared to be a disconnect between the resources identified on the survey as used most often (i.e., books, articles and discussions) and the limited responses to the open-ended survey items. In fact, the interviews supported the perspective that faculty did not have sufficient resources on family engagement. The Interviewees were eager to learn about current family engagement resources and expressed a desire to have access to them. The interview data suggests that resources for administrator preparation courses are at the discretion of the instructor or faculty member teaching the course. If instructors are not aware of new and current resources on family engagement, this topic may not be adequately addressed within courses.

Planned discussions on family engagement for course content were not mentioned in either interview even though discussions on family engagement was the second most used resource according to the survey data. Discussions about family engagement were only mentioned in the interviews in reference to field experiences and the required attendance at one

student-parent-teacher conference. From this research, it appears that discussions about family engagement may not be planned but are opportunities that may occur randomly within a course.

The two interviewees both stated that individual instructors have the liberty to choose the family engagement resources for their courses. Interviewee one said that there were not any specific books or articles that he had used for a family engagement resource, but that he used the ISLLC standards. He said that he also encouraged his students to use the National School Public Relation Association (NSPRA) materials "to help promote positive school image/climate." He stated that in deciding what family engagement resources he would use in his courses, "I am almost ashamed to admit it but in this day and age we 'Google' a topic to find resources." Interviewee two stated that she also used the ISLLC Standards for leadership as a resource for her courses. Both identified the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) journals as a means of keeping the students up to date on family engagement topics.

When both interviewees were asked what family engagement resources they would find helpful in teaching their courses, Interviewee one said,

I didn't realize the connection with MTSS and the parenting partnership piece. I think all educators will tell you, we struggle in getting all parents actively engaged in their children's education. The parents that we really don't need their attention, they come to the parent teacher conferences, they come to the outreach. What we need assistance with is trying to find the silver bullet for those parents who aren't as comfortable in school and maybe weren't comfortable in school themselves. It is easier to edit than create. If we could get some white papers, we could customize them to support superintendents and

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administrators in family engagement. A cookie cutter approach doesn't work for every

district. (Interviewee one).

Interviewee two said that she would "like to add new resources as they become available

and that in her standalone class on Family School Relations a standard textbook is used for that

course." These comments are consistent with Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett (2003) in which two-

thirds of principals reported their leadership programs in graduate education were not current

with what was needed to perform their job effectively.

Through the interview process, it became apparent that the respondents may be in need of

current resources on family engagement and were eager to learn of them. At one point,

Interviewee one asked the interviewer if she was aware of any resources they could utilize.

Familiarity with websites on family engagement was not mentioned by the interviewees or

survey respondents but rather the first step mentioned was to "Google" the topic.

One omission from the follow-up interviews about resources was current research on

family engagement and its effect on student learning. Neither of the interviewees explicitly

mentioned research or best practices for family engagement, although both interviewees said

they would refer students to journals for information. On the online survey, just over one-half of

respondents reported that research on the impact of family engagement on academic outcomes

was a topic addressed in their courses. These data may imply that faculty were aware of research

on family engagement, however, a clear understanding of this critical issue is needed. Because

the present educational climate promotes research or evidenced-based practices at both the

federal and state level, it is notable that in the area of family engagement, research was not

explicitly discussed. This is consistent with the research of Briggs, Cheney, Davis and Moll

(2012) that states principal preparation programs reflect outdated ideas of the principal's role and do not know or align the latest research findings into their program designs.

It appeared that when the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) was mentioned by both interviewees as a resource for administrators for family engagement to "promote a positive school image/climate" the approach to family engagement was more about how a school appears to families, rather than how engagement with families can lead to actual student learning. Promoting a positive school image to families is not a sufficiently robust family engagement strategy. It would be more impactful if NSPRA was used as a resource to collaborate with families to create a positive school climate and incorporated evidence-based engagement strategies.

Objective Three: Field Experiences and Projects or Assignments Included in Courses

The third objective was to determine what types of field experiences, if any, to engage families are provided in Kansas building and district leadership programs (e.g., homework assignments, family interviews). Unfortunately, results from the survey suggest that overall, only 20.7% of the respondents stated their courses required a field experience in family engagement. Four IHE respondents reported that none of their courses required a field experience in family engagement. Respondents from IHE's (11 out of 12) reported that only about one-third or fewer of their courses required a family engagement field experience. This finding is consistent with the research of Briggs, Cheney, Davis and Moll (2012) who found that only five states report requiring principal preparation programs to include all key programmatic components that research shows are critical for effective programs which includes clinical practice or field experiences.

Since, the survey and follow up interviews suggest limited clinical experiences related to family engagement this might suggest a need for a reexamination of field experiences. Ericsson, Charness, Hoffman, and Feltovich, (2006) indicate that the importance of extensive and targeted practice develops expertise in professional education. Moreover, Grossman (2010) states that an approach to field experiences is necessary for the development of clinical skills and multiple opportunities to practice and get feedback. Grossman suggests such practice could be in designed or simulated settings. She reinforced the notion that novices need structured opportunities to gain experience in authentic settings.

The survey also suggested that only one-third of the IHE respondents required any assignment or project on family engagement. Two of the IHE's reported that none of their courses required a family engagement project or assignment. For the majority of the IHEs, 50% or less of the faculty reported requiring an assignment or project targeting family engagement. Interviewee two shared that while no particular assignment or project is required in her IHEs courses, students may choose family engagement as a topic for a project. While this option is laudable, if family engagement is not a topic that is regularly incorporated into leadership courses and resources are not provided the chance that a student may choose to do a project on family engagement would seem rare. If it is not a topic that receives emphasis or is addressed systematically in courses, students may believe this topic is not important.

While most IHEs require a certain number of hours for a field or practicum experience, Interviewee one stated that he believed interacting with families "needed to become a larger part of the field experience." (Interviewee one). He reflected on past field experiences and stated that:

Field experiences are only as good as what your (district) administration is going to

provide you. Some mentors provide and some observe. Some don't provide exposure.

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What happens most often is sixty percent of administrators get involved in feedback and

go out into the field with the student. (Interviewee one).

This percentage, although an estimate, is disconcerting. More structure and requirements

during this critical time period may ensure that more students received quality field experiences

in general, and related to family engagement in particular. It is important to reiterate that this

research was not able to collect program level data, and relied on instructor self-report. A further

analysis of program-specific documents and interviews with program coordinators is

recommended.

The interview data aligns with results reported by Peterson (2002) that described a

traditional approach to principal preparation consisting of limited school-based learning

opportunities and a heavy emphasis on theory without an opportunity to practice and apply skills

in real-life situations. Interviewee one also stated his students were required to lead only one

parent, student and teacher conference as an administrator in order for his students to "garner

support for changes in academic, performance, attendance issues, tardy issues or discipline

issues. We want the field experience to be an experience in fact finding meaning that the student

finds out the hidden reason for these types of behaviors." Although participation in a single

parent, student and teacher conference is required, such limited amount of interaction with

parents is not sufficient to prepare leaders for the myriad of educational situations they will face.

The approach to the parent teacher conference experience seems to be problem-centered

(i.e. attendance and tardy issues) rather than focused on a partnership with parents to increase

student learning. As this faculty member acknowledged, interacting with families needed to

become a larger part of the field experience. A positive emphasis on family engagement during

the field experience would also shape the attitudes of new administrators. McBride (1991)

emphasized the importance of preservice preparation in family engagement by noting that teachers who are not trained to work with parents felt discouraged and developed negative attitudes toward parents.

Interviewee one mentioned that at his institution, both undergraduate Educational Leadership courses had little if any emphasis on family engagement and that this was a significant omission in content toward preparing future educational leaders. The absence of the topic from these courses might send the message that engaging families is not an expectation for educational leaders. Interviewee two said that while there may not be a project required of students focused on family engagement in the courses she teaches, there are required open-topic projects and that a student could choose a project on family engagement. She also stated that, depending on the course, one course might have more or less of an emphasis on family engagement. For example, a quantitative research course would have less emphasis on family engagement than a leadership course. She believed that family engagement was part of the building and district leadership program at her university since the ISLLC Standards guide the outcomes, and two of those standards address family engagement. While this may be true, without a systemic plan, collaboration, or implementation approach to address family engagement with other faculty members, it may be that a random approach to family engagement would be addressed at best.

Objective Four: Respondents Reflections and Perceptions

The fourth objective of this research study sought to determine the reflections of respondents of not only their own preparation in family engagement, but how well prepared their students were to engage families in their children's education. Survey participants rated their students with a mean score of 7.14 on a scale of 1-10 (not prepared to very prepared) as to how

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prepared they believed their students were to engage families in education. When Interviewee two was asked about this rating, she said that she believed her students were offered a "connection with real practice, the fact that we talk about it (issues in family engagement) and then the students get to go use it." Interviewee one believed that his students were most prepared to engage families due to their field experiences. He indicated that students were required to reflect on their exposure and interactions, and that they had valuable experiences. His students were required to reflect three times during a 150 hour practicum. If in the reflections a student reports they are observing and not participating, the faculty member will "try to coach the student to work more closely with their principal to participate." The survey and the interviews revealed a confidence that the respondents believed their students were mostly prepared to engage families in education.

However, the research literature contradicts this perception. Becker and Epstein (1982) found that few elementary school teachers in the state of Maryland attribute their family engagement practices to knowledge gained in education preparation. Moreover, Chavkin and Williams (1988) reported that teachers and administrators recognized a gap in their education in order to better understand work with families.

In contrast with the belief in the preparation of their students, IHE respondents believed that the training they themselves received in their preservice education on engaging families was on average, 4.02 on a 1-10 scale. Over half of the respondents rated their experiences in family engagement as four or below, with only five indicating some training. These findings suggest limited preparation in family engagement for these respondents. Although this research suggests that family engagement topics, resources, and field experiences in BDLP courses in Kansas seem to be limited, the survey data suggests that the respondents believe they are offering their

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students a better experience in family engagement than they received in their preservice program. These data seem to be contradictory since the respondents reported that their training in family engagement topics, resources and field experiences was limited, and yet they believe their students are more than adequately prepared. This suggests the possibility that the respondents could be overestimating the preparation of their students and raises questions as to how the respondents became prepared to teach family engagement to their students. A further analysis of faculty preparation to teach family engagement would be recommended.

Objective Five: Barriers and Helpful Strategies to the Inclusion of Family Engagement in Preparation Programs

The barrier most commonly mentioned from the survey and interview data to including family engagement in preparation programs was "time." This was further explained as the "lack of time to include everything needed in preparation programs." Nearly 60% percent of the respondents reported that family engagement topics were already being infused into their preparation programs and only two programs said they had a standalone course on family engagement. This data reports that some programs are already infusing information on family engagement into courses and it may suggest that if specific family engagement content were systematically identified for courses and spread throughout the program, it may not substantially take more time.

Other barriers reported in the data were the lack of access to parents and "not enough real and varied experiences" with families in the field experience. Another respondent said, "Gaining the support of a mentor principal who fully allows the candidates to engage with families during their practica experiences" was a barrier. From these data, the opportunity for students to interact with families during their preparation program is seen as a challenge. The data reveals that one

challenge may be the lack of experiences offered to the students by the mentor principals to interact with families. The expectations of IHEs in regards to family engagement field experiences and the opportunities provided by the mentor principals must be more clearly discussed and identified to increase opportunities for students to interact with families.

When asked on the survey what the respondents believed was most helpful in the preparation of students to engage with families, the respondents believed that "field experiences" and "practicum activities" helped students feel most prepared. There may be a contradiction between what respondents believed was most helpful to students (field experiences) and what is currently available to students. Further analysis of program-specific family engagement opportunities in field experiences and practicums with program coordinators is recommended.

Summary. This study sought to build or add to the limited body of knowledge in the field of family engagement in administrator preparation programs. More research is needed specifically into the implementation process of incorporating family engagement topics into administrator preparation courses. This research suggests that building and district leadership programs in Kansas are designed to align their programs with each of the ISLLC standards but gaps may exist between the standards and actual implementation. Further research on the breadth and depth of family engagement topics, resources and experiences in these and other programs is needed.

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Future Research Implications

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This research provides the perspectives of respondent's in a self-report format on family engagement topics, resources and field experiences in their administrator preparation programs. To collect a more comprehensive examination of the implementation of family engagement topics, resources, and field experiences at the program level, further research could be conducted

by studying individual preparation programs. By doing so, a thorough understanding of the depth of family engagement in the individual programs and the specific topics, resources and field experiences would be further realized.

Respondents rated their students a 7 on a scale of 0-10 (more than somewhat prepared) to engage families in their children's learning. In addition to researching individual preparation programs, data should be collected from students that are either currently enrolled in the program or graduated from the program. This data would provide a comparison of faculty and student perspectives and more accurately identify strengths and challenges of programs in relation to family engagement.

The interview data collected from this study suggests a strong reliance on the ISLLC standards for structuring administrator preparation programs. Respondents placed great emphasis on the importance of the ISLLC standards even though Kansas has its own Building and District Leadership standards (BDLPs). An additional research study would be an exploration of administrator preparation programs that adhere to the ISLLC standards and how they systemically address the standards as well as why IHEs placed greater emphasis on the ISLLC standards than the KS BDLP standards. Finally, additional research might include a comparison of this research with administrator preparation programs in other states to see if the findings are consistent.

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Implications for Policy and Practice

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This research suggests that field experiences in administrator preparation programs were found to provide limited opportunities for interactions with families, as well as, a minimal amount of topics, resources or field experiences in leadership courses. This research also suggests that the quality of field experiences for students was dependent on the supervisor in the

district in which the field experience was taking place. As reported in the two follow-up interviews, while there is collaboration between the district supervisors and IHE instructors before the field experience, the quality of the experience rests largely with the district supervisor.

Specific content on family engagement appears to be sporadic and inconsistent across BDLPs in Kansas. Given such inconsistencies, policies and practices within administrator preparation programs should be examined to determine the quality of family engagement topics, resources, and field experiences addressed in administrator preparation programs and if these policies and practices need to be amended. One vehicle to provide this type of examination would be to convene a workgroup of higher education faculty to discuss a systematic approach to address family engagement topics in alignment with the ISLLC and Kansas Building and District Leadership standards. This workgroup could collaborate to link educator and administrator higher education programs with research on family engagement particularly as it relates to home-school supports and the connection of empowering families to support their children's learning. The workgroup could share and collaborate on the topic of how to increase access to families and experiences with families in the field or practicum experiences. Finally, creating a webinar for higher education faculty on family-school partnership topics and resources for higher education would support higher education faculty in their inclusion of family engagement into administrator preparation courses.

It is important to note that from the two-follow up interviews, IHE respondents expressed limited knowledge of current resources available to them on the topic of family engagement. Respondents were very open about their desire to have more awareness of resources to support their instruction on this topic. Recommendations concerning the availability of valid resources on family engagement for use in administrator preparation programs include working with

multiple organizations associated with family engagement as well as administrator personnel preparation. For example, the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC) could create a website for higher education information/resources/research on family-school partnerships.

Finally, as part of an IHE workgroup, it would be beneficial for IHE faculty to self reflect on their own preparation to engage families and discuss the current preparation of their students to engage families in their children's learning. It would also be beneficial for IHE faculty to discuss the barriers or challenges to the incorporation of family engagement into administrator preparation programs and possible ways to address those barriers.

Since states have tremendous authority when it comes to preparing administrators (Briggs, Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2012) the research from this study can be used to guide future planning for building and district leadership programs concerning the incorporation or infusing of family engagement content into courses to become an integral component in the preparation of future administrators. The significance of these results is strengthened by the fact responses were obtained from all twelve building and district leadership programs in Kansas currently preparing future administrators.

This research also informs other major Kansas school reform initiatives currently underway that include the engagement of families in their children's education, specifically the implementation of a Multi Tier System of Supports (MTSS), the ESEA flexibility waiver, the Kansas Educator Evaluation Protocol (KEEP), the State Personnel Development Grant and the new Kansas accreditation system currently being piloted in the 2013-2014 school year. Further attention to preservice training in family engagement for building and district leadership programs becomes more critical with each new statewide initiative that requires the implementation of evidenced-based practices in family engagement.

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APPENDIX A

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY FOR

BUILDING AND DISTRICT LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Kansas IHE Administrator Programs

The following survey is being sent to you as a component of the Kansas State Department of Education's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) from the U.S. Department of Education and also as research for a dissertation project on administrator preparation programs.

In this survey, you will be asked about your current course offerings, personal perceptions and reflections, and ideas for future practice in regards to preparing future Building (principal) and District (superintendent) Leaders to work with families. You have been identified by your institution as a faculty member or instructor who teaches a course or courses in the Building or District Leadership Program at your college or university. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.

All survey responses will be kept confidential and names will not be used in any reporting of the data.

For purposes of this survey, the term parent involvement and family engagement are used interchangeably.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT DEFINITION: The participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including ensuring that parents (Title IX General provisions, Part A Sec 9101)
(A) play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
(B) are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school
(C) are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child
(D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those in Title I, Sec 1118.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey, please feel free to contact me.

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Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
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Kansas IHE Administrator Programs

Demographics

Directions for completing the survey:

Please respond to the following questions by marking with a checkmark, filling in a blank, or circling the number that best describes your experience or opinion about your college or university's Building or District Leadership Program.

Part 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

Name:

<div style="border:1px solid black; width:400px; height:40px;"></div>

***Current Institution:**

◯ Baker University

◯ Benedictine College

◯ Emporia State University

◯ Fort Hays State University

◯ University of Kansas

◯ Kansas State University

◯ Newman College

◯ Ottawa University

◯ Pittsburg State University

◯ Southwestern College

◯ Washburn University

◯ Wichita State University

*Type of course(s) you have taught in Kansas Building or District Leadership Programs:

◯ Building Leadership Course(s)

◯ District Leadership Course(s)

◯ Both

◯ Neither

Kansas IHE Administrator Programs

Years of experience teaching in a Building Leadership Program

> [   ]

Years of experience teaching in a District Leadership Program

> [   ]

Current teaching field/specialization:

☐ Administration

☐ General Teacher Education

☐ Special Education

☐ Early Childhood

☐ Related Services (OT/PT, school psychologist, etc.)

Other (please specify)

> [   ]

*On average, how many students (administrators) does your program graduate per academic year?

◯ Less than 5

◯ 6-20

◯ 20-50

◯ More than 50

◯ Don't know

*Does your Building or District Leadership Program currently offer a standalone course on family engagement or does it infuse family engagement topics into existing courses?

◯ I don't know

◯ No courses are offered or infused with family engagement topics

◯ Yes; family engagement topics are infused topics into existing courses

◯ Yes; a standalone course on family engagement is offered

Standalone course title (if offered)

☐

Kansas IHE Administrator Programs

Course 1

The questions on this page ask you to reflect on a single course. If you teach multiple courses in the Building or District Leadership Program, on the following pages you will be given the opportunity to respond to these questions regarding each of your courses.

*Title of one course that you teach in the Building or District Leadership Programs:

[   ]

*This course is required within the:

◯ Building Leadership Program

◯ District Leadership Program

◯ Both

◯ Other

Other (please specify)

[   ]

*Please indicate which family engagement topics are addressed in this course. Please choose all that apply.

	Never Provides	2	3	4	Sometimes Provides	6	7	8	9	Often Provides
Research supporting the impact of family engagement on academic outcomes	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Legal mandates for working with families	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Building relationships with families	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Educating families in coordinating learning between home and school	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using two-way home-school communication	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Creating welcoming environments for families	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Conducting parent-teacher conferences	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Collaborating with families on MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working with culturally and linguistically diverse families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Home-school behavior strategies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective homework and home-school support strategies	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Conflict resolution and effective listening skills for working with families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Benefits of engaging families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Barriers to engaging families	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
PTA National Standards for Family School Partnerships	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[ ]

Kansas IHE Administrator Programs

Please check the resources you use to provide information on family engagement in this course:

☐ Webinars

☐ Books

☐ Articles

☐ Websites

☐ Speakers (Families)

☐ Lectures

☐ Discussions

☐ Videos

☐ None

Other (please specify)

Please share any resources you have found helpful in training future administrators to engage families:

*In this course, are specific family engagement field experiences required?

◯ No

◯ Yes

Please describe (if yes):

*In this course, are there specific homework or projects required on family engagement topics?

◯ No

◯ Yes

Please describe (if yes):

*Do you teach another course in the Building or District Leadership Program?

◯ No

◯ Yes

Questions will be repeated for each course when "yes" is selected in the question above.

Kansas IHE Administrator Programs

***Personal Perceptions**

	Not Prepared	2	3	4	Somewhat Prepared	6	7	8	9	Very Prepared
How prepared do you think your students (administrator preparation students) feel they are to engage families in education?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Student Preparation**

	Not Familiar	2	3	4	Somewhat Familiar	6	7	8	9	Very Familiar
How prepared do you think your students (administrator preparation students) feel they are to engage families in education?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

***Do you think it is important to your Building and District Leadership Program to have a standalone course on family engagement?**

○ No

○ Yes

Comments:

[   ]

***Reflection**

	No Training	2	3	4	Some Training	6	7	8	9	Lots of Training
In your own graduate work, how much training did you receive on the topic of engaging families in their children's education?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

What do you think helps your students (administrator preparation students) feel most prepared to engage and work collaboratively with families?

[   ]

What are the biggest barriers or challenges you see in preparing your students (administrator preparation students) to engage or work collaboratively with families?

[   ]

Would you be willing to participate in a brief interview to provide further information about your Building or District Leadership Program?

◯ No

◯ Yes

If yes, please provide your email and phone number:

[   ]

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions #1

How do Building and District Leadership Programs in Kansas institutions of higher education (IHEs) prepare future K-12 administrators to engage families in their children's education?

1. What types of topics on family engagement, if any, do Kansas Building and District Leadership Programs provide in their administrator preparation courses (e.g. benefits of family engagement, barriers to family engagement, etc.);

> *a) How do you determine which topics if any of family engagement should be included in your administrator preparation courses? (For example, parent teacher conferences, creating a welcoming environment, benefits of family engagement, etc)*

> *b) How do the ISLLC standards affect your choice of topics on family engagement for the courses you teach? If so, how? If not, why not?*

> *c) Do you work collaboratively with other faculty in planning your family engagement course content?*

> *d) Do you know which topics of family engagement other faculty members teach in their courses? If so, how do you know this?*

> *e) How did you personally manage to include family engagement in your course content?*

> *f) Does one program (Building or District) contain more family engagement content than the other? If so, how is this determined?*

2. What types of family engagement resources, if any, are used in Kansas Building and District Leadership Programs to prepare administrators to engage families (e.g., textbooks, websites, articles, webinars, research);

a) Are there books or articles that you use for course content on family engagement in

your courses? If so, do you have any favorites?

b) Do you choose the family engagement resources for your course(s)? If so, how do you

choose a book or article for a discussion on family engagement?

c) What family engagement resources, would you find helpful to teaching your course(s)?

3. What types of experiences to engage families, if any, are provided in Kansas Building and

District Leadership Programs (e.g., homework assignments, family interviews)?

a) *In the survey, you indicated your course(s) offers homework or a project focused on*

family engagement, could you tell me more about this homework or project?

b) In the survey, you indicated that you include a family engagement field experiences in

your course, could you tell me more about this experience?

(c)Were there requirements for you to include this family engagement experience? If so,

could you please describe the requirement?

Personal Reflections

a) *In the survey, on a scale of 1-10, you indicated that you believed your students were more*

than somewhat prepared (7) to engage families in education. Could you tell me more

about how you decided on this rating or what a level 7 preparation level encompasses?

b) *In the survey, you indicated that you felt that your students were most prepared to engage*

families by their field experiences. What type of experiences do the students receive?

Would you like to see students receive more field experiences in other courses other than

the Field Experience course?

(c) In the survey, you indicated that the biggest barrier to preparing students to engage with families is the different experiences intern students get from districts. Could you tell me more about these experiences or lack thereof?

Recommendations

(a) What final recommendations at the federal, state, or university level do you have to better prepare principals and superintendents to engage families in their children's learning?

Interview Questions #2

How do Building and District Leadership Programs in Kansas institutions of higher education (IHEs) prepare future K-12 administrators to engage families in their children's education?

1. What types of topics on family engagement, if any, do Kansas Building and District Leadership Programs provide in their administrator preparation courses (e.g. benefits of family engagement, barriers to family engagement, etc.);

> *a) How do you determine which topics if any of family engagement should be included in your administrator preparation courses? For example, parent teacher conferences, creating a welcoming environment, benefits of family engagement, etc?*

> *b) How or do the ISLLC standards affect your choice of topics on family engagement for the courses you teach? If so, how? If not, why not?*

> *c) Do you work collaboratively with other faculty in planning your family engagement course content?*

> *d) Do you know which topics of family engagement other faculty members teach in their courses? If so, how do you know this?*

> *e) How did you personally manage to include family engagement in your course content?*

> *f) Does one program (Building or District) contain more family engagement content than the other? If so, how is this determined?*

> *g) Specifically, the topics that you checked as providing less often or never were linking home-school behavior or homework strategies as well as MTSS, can you tell me more about this?*

h) In the survey, you stated that you often provide information on relationships, communication and creating welcoming environments for families in your courses, how is it that these topics are addressed?

2. What types of family engagement resources, if any, are used in Kansas Building and District Leadership Programs to prepare administrators to engage families (e.g., textbooks, websites, articles, webinars, research);

a) Are there books or articles that you use for course content on family engagement in your courses? If so, do you have any favorites?

b) Do you choose the family engagement resources for your course(s)? If so, how do you choose a book or article for a discussion on family engagement?

c) What family engagement resources, if any, would you find helpful to teaching your course(s)?

3. What types of experiences to engage families, if any, are provided in Kansas Building and District Leadership Programs (e.g., homework assignments, family interviews)?

a) *In the survey, you indicated your course(s) do not offer a field experience or homework/ project focused on family engagement. Can you elaborate on when you believe it would be appropriate to include a field experience or homework project on family engagement in your courses.*

b) Are you aware of other courses in the Building or District Leadership programs that provide for a field experience or homework project on family engagement?

c) Who or what determines if a field experience or homework project on family engagement is included in course content?

Personal Reflections

   (a) In the survey, on a scale of 1-10, you indicated that you believed your students were

   more than somewhat prepared (9) to engage families in education. Could you tell me

   more about how you decided on this rating or what a level 9 preparation level

   encompasses?

   (b) What do you believe has prepared your students most to engage families in children's

   learning?

   (c) In the survey, you indicated that the biggest barrier to preparing students to engage

   with families is the lack of resources and the need for more emphasis on working with

   families. Can you elaborate on these barriers?

Recommendations

   a) What final recommendations at the federal, state, or university level do you have to

   better prepare principals and superintendents to engage families in their children's

   learning?