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## Christian University Teacher Education Graduates and Perceptions of Parent Collaboration: An Exploratory Study

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## Christian University Teacher Education Graduates and Perceptions of Parent Collaboration: An Exploratory Study

### Abstract

Effective collaboration between families and schools is an important factor when developing high quality education programs. When schools and families work together, children, families, schools, and communities all benefit. Using an online survey of students who completed teacher certification programs at two Christian universities, this study seeks to understand the way that completers from two teacher preparation programs, both at Christian universities, interact with parents and encourage collaboration and involvement. The research findings and implications for future research are discussed.

### Keywords

Christian education, family-school collaboration, teacher preparation

## Christian University Teacher Education Graduates and Perceptions of Parent Collaboration: An Exploratory

Marla J. Lohmann • Ruby L. Owiny

### Abstract

Effective collaboration between families and schools is an important factor when developing high quality education programs. When schools and families work together, children, families, schools, and communities all benefit. Using an online survey of students who graduated from teacher certification programs at two Christian universities, this study seeks to understand the way that graduates from two teacher preparation programs, both at Christian universities, interact with parents and encourage collaboration and involvement. The research findings and implications for future research are discussed.

perceptions of those who have completed a Christian university teacher preparation program regarding teaming with parents.

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### Introduction

A child's education, both academic and social, is significantly improved through effective collaborations between families and schools (Castro et al., 2015). Parental involvement in schools has short-term and long-term benefits for children, families, schools, and communities (Epstein, 2010). Schools and families must work together to support not only student academic skills, but also make certain that students' mental health needs are met and ensure school safety for all stakeholders. The concept of collaboration and working together for a common goal is a concept that is supported through biblical principles. Due to the benefits associated with home-school collaboration and the biblical support for working together, it is critical that teachers build relationships with parents. The present study presents the results of a study examining the

### Biblical Support for Family-School Collaboration

Christian teacher educators turn to the Bible for guidance in both our personal and professional

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endeavors and we aim to prepare our teacher candidates to do the same. Teachers' actions in the classroom should be strongly influenced and guided by Scripture, and the Bible provides us with multiple examples of collaboration. In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains that God created each person with a unique gift and purpose. Those gifts are meant to be used together to fulfill His mission. Specifically, Paul wrote,

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:4-8, NIV)

A child's education, both academic and social, is significantly improved through effective collaborations between families and schools (Castro et al., 2015). Parental involvement in schools has short-term and long-term benefits for children, families, schools, and communities (Epstein, 2010). Schools and families must work together to support not only student academic skills, but also make certain that students' mental health needs are met and ensure school safety for all stakeholders.

It is clearly God's expectation that we will collaborate, using our individual gifts, to corporately do the work He has assigned to us. The Bible also tells us the benefits that come from working together. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 states

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two

can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (NIV)

The need for teamwork is also supported in Nehemiah 4, where we find an example of people working together for a common purpose. Jesus also provides us with an example of effective teamwork with His 12 disciples. While He could have chosen to do all His work alone, Jesus instead formed a team that supported Him during His ministry and continued His work after the ascension. As these biblical examples demonstrate, God wants us to work together to do His work. He does not call us to work alone and, often, we are called to collaborate with others for a common purpose. In the school setting, He calls teachers to team with parents in the education of children. We, as teacher educators, aim to prepare our teacher candidates to fulfill this expectation.

### **Research Support for Family-School Collaboration**

Previous literature has indicated that there are numerous benefits to effective collaboration between schools and families. Benefits are evident in higher student achievement (Cooper et al., 2010; Epstein, 2008), decreased behavioral challenges (El Nokali et al., 2010; Fox et al., 2002), and increased student attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

Parental involvement in schools is correlated with student academic achievement (Afolabi, 2014; Benner et al., 2016; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Jeynes, 2003; Strayhorn, 2010; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014) and seems to have the biggest impact in the middle-school and high-school years (MacIver et al., 2015; Nunez et al., 2015). Specifically, previous studies have found when parents are directly involved with students' academic learning and course content, such as assisting their children with homework, students have higher academic achievement; but when parents are involved in the school in other ways, student achievement is not impacted (McNeal, 2014). The perceptions of teachers, parents, and students align with this, as stakeholders tend to believe that parental involvement with homework and other academic tasks is more important than general involvement in the school, such as chaperoning sports events (DePlanty et al., 2007).

The literature also indicates that the quality of parental involvement with student homework and other academic work is more important than the quantity of that involvement; in some cases, less can be more (Moroni et al., 2015; Strayhorn, 2010). Student academic achievement is also positively influenced when parents have high expectations for their student's academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Wilder, 2014). It should be noted, though, that studies have found a correlation between higher levels of parental involvement in the school and lower student achievement levels (Niia et al., 2015) or no correlation between the two (El Nokali et al., 2010).

Some research indicates family-school collaboration may lead to a reduction in challenging student behaviors (Darch et al., 2004; Dunlap & Fox, 2007; Epstein, 2005; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Minke & Anderson, 2005). El Nokali et al. (2010) found that parental involvement was correlated with both a 0.08 standard deviation reduction in challenging behaviors for students and a 0.12 standard deviation increase in positive social skills. Nweze (1993) found a 49% reduction in discipline referrals and a 28% reduction in suspensions following the implementation of a comprehensive parent involvement program.

Finally, the literature indicates that parental involvement in the school can lead to increased student attendance (McConnell & Kubina, 2014). Nweze (1993) found a 62% reduction in student absences as a result of a parent involvement program. Epstein & Sheldon (2002) reported similar results when parent involvement strategies were implemented at the elementary-school level. It has been noted, though, that schools may be more effective at involving parents to increase student attendance when the school receives specific training and coaching to do so (Sheldon, 2007).

### **Research Related to Teacher Perceptions of Home-School Collaboration**

Previous research has examined teachers' perceptions of parental involvement. Barnyak & McNelly (2009) found that teachers report parent

handbooks, orientation nights, parent-teacher conferences, and notes home to be the most common forms of interaction between school and home. They also found that teachers believe that newsletters, emails to parents, homework calendars, and teacher webpages lead to increased parental involvement, but teachers may not engage with parents using these methods. Research has found that teachers perceive encouraging parental involvement to be extra work in an already busy job, so they often do little to foster parental involvement in their schools and classrooms (Pena, 2000). In addition, the current literature indicates a disconnect between teachers' preferred forms of parent engagement and how many lower-income and minority families prefer to team with schools (Wassell et al., 2015). This home-school dissonance leads many minority families to feel uninvited in the school setting (Henderson et al., 2020). Minority families often experience a lack of resources, such as time and energy, which teachers do not often consider, and parents in minority families often have less flexible jobs that do not allow them to leave work to attend school meetings or events (Williams & Sánchez, 2011).

A qualitative study in which both teachers and parents were interviewed about barriers to parental involvement at school identified four areas in which schools should consider creative methods for aligning school expectations with the realities of families in poverty (Williams & Sánchez, 2011). These four areas include: (a) time poverty (activities outside of school that require parents' time); (b) lack of access (both structural accessibility needs and scheduling of school events which conflict with parents' work or other appointments), (c) lack of financial resources (many parents may not have the ability to pay for transportation to get to the school or feel embarrassed that they cannot pay fees for their child to be involved in school activities), and (d) lack of awareness (e.g., parents not knowing about school events, news, and policies; Williams & Sánchez, 2011).

### **Methodology**

Using an online survey of students who completed their teacher certification through regionally-accredited teacher preparation programs at

Christian universities, this study sought to understand how graduates of teacher preparation programs at Christian universities interact with parents and how they perceive home-school collaboration. The survey included eight questions that asked about parent involvement in each respondent's school, along with respondents' personal perceptions of how their faith impacts family-school relationships.

### Participants

Education graduates at two universities were surveyed for this study. The participants from the first university completed a fully online Alternative Licensure Program from a Christian university in the Midwest during the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 school years. Respondents from the second university graduated from a traditional undergraduate program or a Master's of Education program at a Midwestern Christian university during the 2017-2018 school year. Sixty-eight former students, who all graduated from their programs, received an email invitation to complete the survey. Thirty-three completed it, which constituted a response rate of 48.5%. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before completion of the survey and study participants could leave the survey at any time. Of the survey respondents, 26 taught in traditional public schools, two taught in charter schools, one taught in a secular private school, and four were teachers in Christian private schools.

### Survey Instrument

The study instrument (Table 1) was an author-created survey based on the previous literature regarding family-school collaboration and included a total of eight questions. The survey was field-tested and reviewed by experts in the field of education before being sent to potential participants. The first two questions asked specific information about the program from which the respondent graduated, as well as their current teaching position. The following six questions included both Likert scale options as well as space for comments. These questions were designed to gauge Christian teachers' views of parental involvement in their schools, as well as how they encourage parental involvement.

**Table 1**

#### *Survey Sent to Study Participants*

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. From which university program did you graduate?</li><li>2. In what setting are you currently teaching?<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Public school</li><li>b. Charter school</li><li>c. Private school, not Christian</li><li>d. Christian private school</li></ol></li><li>3. To what extent do you perceive parents to be involved in your school?<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Not involved</li><li>b. Moderately involved</li><li>c. Very involved</li></ol></li><li>4. List the 3 primary ways that parents are involved in your school?</li><li>5. What do you perceive to be the 3 most useful types of parental involvement in your school?</li><li>6. List the ways that you encourage parental involvement in your school/classroom.</li><li>7. What do you perceive to be the 3 biggest challenges to partnering with parents in the school setting?</li><li>8. How does Christ, and your relationship with Him, impact the way you partner with parents?</li></ol> |
|--|

### Data Analysis

After collecting responses, survey results were hand-coded to look for themes. The authors took a deductive approach to the coding of the data and began the process of data analysis using the pre-determined categories of school involvement and community involvement for the questions related to types of parental involvement. Throughout the coding process, the authors updated and changed the categories to reflect the data collected from the survey; the updated categories removed the concept of community involvement and added the category of classroom involvement to indicate that the data shows distinct differences between the ways parents can support the school as a whole and support individual classrooms. For the questions related to teachers' desired forms of parental involvement, the pre-determined categories were learning at home and volunteering; based on the survey responses, the category of communication with teachers was added. This deductive approach to analyzing qualitative data has proven to be effective in previous research (Burnard et al., 2008).

**Results**

The majority of study participants reported primarily moderate parental involvement in their schools, while one participant reported no involvement from parents. No participants reported that parents are very involved. Several types of parental involvement were noted by the

study participants and were categorized according to two themes: (a) involvement in the school as a whole and (b) classroom involvement. The specific parent involvement that aligns with each of these themes can be viewed in Table 2. It should also be noted that one participant reported no parents were involved at their school and was unable to list any examples of parent involvement.

**Table 2**

*Types of Parental Involvement*

| School Involvement   | Classroom Involvement  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching/coaching extracurricular activities in the school</li> <li>Being members of the Parent-Teacher Association</li> <li>Serving on school-wide committees</li> <li>Volunteering at school-wide events</li> <li>Attending school-community event nights</li> <li>Attending school assemblies</li> <li>Making financial donations to the school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating on a regular basis with the teacher</li> <li>Serving as a room parent</li> <li>Volunteering with classroom parties and events</li> <li>Coordinating special classroom projects</li> <li>Attending parent-teacher conferences</li> <li>Assisting in the classroom for lessons and daily activities</li> <li>Providing snacks and classroom materials</li> <li>Chaperoning on field trips</li> <li>Helping children with homework</li> <li>Attending Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings</li> </ul> |

The specific parental involvement activities reported by the study respondents align with parental reports of school involvement in the research. According to McQuiggan & Megra (2017), 89% of parents reported attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or other school meetings and 79% of parents reported attending a school-wide or classroom event in a given school year. Almost 80% of parents also reported attending at least one parent-teacher conference

per year and 94% of parents reported doing homework with their children on a regular basis.

The study participants reported desiring more parental involvement in three main areas: (a) communicating with teachers, (b) volunteering, and being involved, with school activities, and (c) supporting their children’s education at home. Table 3 provides an overview of the specific ways in which respondents would like parents to be involved in the school.

**Table 3**

*Teachers’ Desired Parental Involvement & Percentage of Respondents Listing Each Type*

| Communicating with Teachers  | Volunteering & School Involvement   | Supporting Children’s Education at Home  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attending parent-teacher conferences (57%)</li> <li>Using school website and apps such as Remind to access information from school/teacher (14%)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteering with school events, field trips, afterschool clubs, and in the classroom (71%)</li> <li>Participating in PTA/PTO (43%)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping with homework (86%)</li> <li>Encouraging children to participate in extracurricular activities at school (14%)</li> <li>Attending IEP meetings (28%)</li> </ul> |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping lines of communication open (43%)</li> <li>• Communicating with all teachers (43%)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending community event nights/school assemblies (43%)</li> <li>• Networking with other parents (14%)</li> <li>• Fundraising (28%)</li> <li>• Donating classroom supplies (14%)</li> </ul> |  |
|--|---|--|

These results indicate that this group of Christian teachers sought more parental involvement with the school itself, but not necessarily with student academic learning or by helping students with their homework. Based on the previous literature, this type of parental involvement in the school may benefit the school or classroom as whole, but will have little impact on student academic achievement (McNeal, 2014).

Study participants were asked to list the ways in which they encourage parental involvement in their schools. The following themes were evident in responses to that question: (a) asking parents to use teaching strategies at home that are also used at school, (b) direct contact with parents on a regular basis through individual phone calls, emails, or personal conversations at pick-up/drop-off, (c) teacher availability for meetings and conferences, (d) invitations to school events, (e) classroom newsletters, teacher websites, and communication logs, (f) sharing student grades with parents, and (g) asking parents to assist in the classroom or donate materials for classroom use.

Previous research (McDowall & Schaughency, 2017) has identified the use of parent-involvement strategies that are similar to what was mentioned by study participants, with a specific emphasis on designing homework that requires parental participation and specifically inviting parents into the classroom to assist with activities. Fishman and Nickerson (2015) suggest that parental involvement may be further increased when children request their parents' presence in the classroom and school, indicating that teachers may benefit from recruiting the assistance of students in increasing levels of parental involvement.

Study participants were also asked to report the biggest challenges they see in collaboration with

parents. They reported challenges including (a) differing opinions between parents and schools regarding the best approaches to meet academic and behavioral needs, (b) parents seemingly unwilling to be involved in their child's education, (c) logistical issues such as transportation and access to phone or internet, (d) parents having other obligations, (e) parent work schedules, (f) limitations on teacher's time, (g) collaboration requires additional work for the teacher, (h) challenges in contacting parents and not getting parental responses to phone calls and emails, (i) parental denial of concerns regarding student, (j) language barriers, (k) frequent volunteers expecting their children to receive special privileges, and (l) parents with unrealistic expectations of a teacher's role. One study participant also reported that it can be challenging to find "parents willing to serve the school and not just their student." Several of the challenges reported by study participants align with the current literature which has found that family-school collaboration may be inhibited by parent work schedules and other responsibilities (Hossain & Anziano, 2008; Yamauchi et al., 2008) and logistical issues, such as transportation and limited access to phone (Yamauchi et al., 2008).

Finally, study participants were asked to describe how their faith impacts the way they collaborate with parents. The responses to this question were coded into four categories: (a) respect for parents, (b) respect for students, (c) an attitude of teacher learning and acceptance of differences, and (d) no connection between faith and career. Specific information about these categories and participant responses will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Sixteen (48.5%) of the study participants responded with statements indicating that their Christian faith leads them to respect the parents of



all students and engage in interactions that demonstrate this respect. One participant stated, "Because of my relationship with Christ I am more welcoming and inviting to my parents. I am more open to start conversations and I tend to greet my parents with a smile setting a welcoming environment." Another participant stated,

I have frequently told parents that I'm not here to judge their parenting, but rather I want to partner with them. It's not easy at all, but I try to be an extension of God's love to them. I offer support, encouragement and as much positivity as I can every time I make contact.

Several participants noted that their faith leads them to view each parent as an image bearer of God and this view leads them to treat parents with respect. This idea demonstrates the implications of Genesis 1:27 (So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them) on personal interactions between teachers and parents.

The second theme that arose from this question was demonstrating respect for the student in all interactions with parents, with ten respondents (30%) indicating that their Christian faith impacts how they talk about their students. One participant noted, "I want the best for the kids and my love for them shines through when I speak to the parents. When parents know you care for their kids, they are more willing to support you and your endeavors." Other participants expressed a similar approach to discussing students. In addition, other teachers had responses that, while only stated by a few participants, are worth noting and further investigating in future research. Four teachers (12%) mentioned that they view each student as uniquely created by God and three teachers (9%) noted that they regularly pray about their interactions with students and parents. Because the research question asked about how faith impacts collaboration and did not specifically ask how faith impacts the way they think and talk about students, the results from this theme cannot be used to suggest that faith does not impact student interactions or teacher perceptions of students for most Christian teachers.

The third theme, which was only noted by a few participants, was the concept of teachers being accepting of differences between themselves and parents, as well as participants making a conscious effort to understand families' situations. Three participants (9%) mentioned this need to be accepting with one participant mentioning that it is important to "be open-minded and remember that not everyone's situation is the same." This idea of loving others and being accepting aligns with the words of 1 Peter 3:8 (Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble), where we are reminded to show compassion and love for those around us. In addition, this theme reflects Jesus' mandate in Matthew 7:1 (Do not judge, or you too will be judged) for us to not judge others, but instead to leave judgment to God.

The final theme came from two participants (6%) who reported that their Christian faith does not impact their work as a teacher. While only two participants mentioned this, as Christian teacher educators, we believe this is an important response to note and consider for our own practices in training teachers. One participant said "I keep those things entirely separate" while the other noted that "I usually do not think about this when I am at work just because there is such a separation for me." As Christian teacher educators, this theme is of concern. In 1 Corinthians 10:31 (So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God) we are reminded that our work should be a form of worship and we should approach our work, as everything in our lives, with an attitude of working for His glory. This idea is further discussed in Colossians 3:23 (Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters), where we are told that our work is for Him and to view God as our boss. When Christians view God as their boss, a Christian worldview should have a significant impact on the way they approach their career.

## Discussion

The results of this study found that the survey participants have similar perceptions of collaboration with parents and use parent

engagement strategies similar to those of their colleagues. Teachers reported that they regularly invite parents to be involved in both the school and with the educational achievement of the children. Previous research has found that direct invitations from teachers are an effective way to increase parental involvement (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Erdener, 2016; Fishman & Nickerson, 2015; Park & Holloway, 2013) and that teachers who report encouraging parental involvement in their classrooms have a more positive attitude towards parents (Epstein, 1990). Study participants did report frustration at the lack of parent involvement in their schools. This corresponds with Erdener's work (2016), finding that teachers' attitudes about parents impact the level of parent involvement in a school; it is reasonable to assume that the teacher frustration may impact future parent involvement. In addition, study participants reported wanting parents to be involved in the classroom by helping with the workload, including by making copies and preparing activities. These responses align with previous literature findings that teachers prefer for parents to help with the labor tasks of teaching (Christianakis, 2011). Finally, study participants reported using homework as a means of communicating with parents and involving parents in the school community. Epstein & VanVoorhis (2001) have suggested that teachers can intentionally design homework that enhances parental involvement in children's education and provides parents with information about their child's academic learning.

As teachers consider increasing parental involvement levels, it is also critical to consider what parents say makes them want to be more involved. According to Rodriguez et al. (2014), parents report wanting to be more involved in the classroom when teachers (a) have open lines of communication that utilize a variety of communication methods, (b) are accessible for parent meetings and conversations, and (c) seek out, and are receptive to, parental input and concerns.

### **Implications for Teacher Preparation**

In some cases, participants in this study expressed judgment regarding parental involvement and interest in their children's education. As noted by

Latunde (2019), judgment does not promote collaboration as families do not feel welcome nor psychologically safe in the school. To address this, teacher candidates must learn how to create a welcoming environment in their classrooms. Latunde (2019) suggests that Christian hospitality be the basis of this practice and that schools identify the preferences and needs of families and then create (a) physical, (b) spiritual, (c) emotional, and (d) intellectual spaces that address these preferences and needs. As Christian teacher educators, we must prepare teacher candidates to do this through (a) modeling this creation of a safe space in our own classrooms, (b) directly instructing teacher candidates about the concept of Christian hospitality, and (c) providing opportunities to practice these skills with explicit feedback.

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*As Christian teacher educators, we must prepare teacher candidates to do this through (a) modeling this creation of a safe space in our own classrooms, (b) directly instructing teacher candidates about the concept of Christian hospitality, and (c) providing opportunities to practice these skills with explicit feedback.*

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Teacher education programs in Christian institutions of higher education should prepare candidates to encourage faith development. Previous research (Blandin, 2017) indicates that family-school collaboration and student outcomes may both be enhanced when parents support children's religious instruction and faith development. While Christian teachers in public schools may not be able to encourage religious participation, teachers can use interactions with parents to empower them and encourage them to actively support the moral and character development of their children (Blandin, 2017). In addition, given the response of two respondents of separating their faith from their practice, Christian teacher preparation programs may want to other consider ways to impress faith integration in one's

occupation. While this was a viewpoint represented by a small number of participants, it suggests some graduates from Christian universities who call themselves Christian teachers also believe in the separation of their faith from their teaching practice. Scripture tells believers to be salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Christian teacher preparation programs may want to consider how their programs instill this particular principle in their teacher candidates to allow a broader Christian impact in schools.

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*While Christian teachers in public schools may not be able to encourage religious participation, teachers can use interactions with parents to empower them and encourage them to actively support the moral and character development of their children (Blandin, 2017).*

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### **Limitations**

This study included limitations that may have impacted the results. First, a convenience sample may reduce the generalizability of the study as the results may only apply to the population specifically examined in the study (Jager et al., 2017). A second limitation is that this research study relies on self-reported data on a topic where the respondents may believe that the researchers want them to respond in a certain way, leading to social desirability bias (Krumpal, 2013). It is possible that some survey respondents did not share their true beliefs about collaboration due to a fear of being anonymously judged. Thirdly, the sample size was small; with only thirty-three respondents, this sample size is likely not representative of the majority Christian university graduates. In addition, the survey did not ask for specific demographic information regarding each teacher's school setting. Previous research has found that this can impact parental involvement, with parents of younger students being more involved in the school (Oswald et al., 2018) and parents being more involved in schools in higher

income neighborhoods (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study points to future research in the area of faith-based collaboration in the school setting. Specifically, the authors recommend examining how Christian faith impacts: (a) teachers' teaming with parents in Christian schools, (b) teachers' collaboration styles with other professionals in both public and Christian schools, (c) teachers' attitudes towards collaboration, and (d) principals' expectations of teacher and parent collaboration. In addition, the authors recommend replicating the study with a larger sample of teachers that includes those teaching in both public and private, Christian schools.

### **Recommendations for Teacher Educators**

This study brought to light some important themes for Christian teacher educators. As suggested by previous research (Tichenor, 1997; Tichenor, 1998; Willemse et al., 2018), pre-service teachers need field experiences and direct instruction related to parental involvement during their teacher preparation programs. Christian teacher preparation programs should take care to help candidates view parents and other adults in a manner as created in the image of God as noted in Genesis 1:27. Pre-service and in-service teachers would also benefit from direct instruction regarding parental involvement and the importance of their attitudes towards parents (Herman & Reinke, 2017). It should be noted, however, that previous research (Lee & Bowen, 2006) has indicated that culture may impact the effectiveness of certain parental involvement strategies, particularly those used in the home setting. Therefore, it is important that teacher education programs present the concepts of parent involvement within the context of cultural differences.

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