

Family Involvement *in* Faith-Based Schools



A VOLUME IN
FAMILY-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Edited by
Diana B. Hiatt-Michael

Family Involvement in Faith-Based Schools

A volume in
Family–School–Community Partnership Issues
Diana Hiatt-Michael, *Series Editor*

Family–School–Community Partnership Issues

Diana Hiatt-Michael, *Series Editor*

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This volume is dedicated to:

*My family who have believed in my work through these many years—
My son Douglas P. Hiatt and my grandson Charles Douglas Hiatt*

My publisher and friend who called me to this long project—George Johnson

*And the hundreds of doctoral students, thousands of educators and students
who have walked with me and continue to walk with me during
my life's journey as an educator*

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FOREWORD

Family and Community Involvement in Faith-Based Schools will be my final volume in which I serve as editor of this Family–School–Community Partnership (FSCP) Series. The series began at the turn of the 21st Century and has become a record of the growing and diverse issues in the field of study related to family, school, and community connections. The series began when the Special Interest Group (SIG) members of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) came together at time of my chairmanship during the 2000 Annual Meeting of the SIG. I had organized a work session during our SIG meeting, using focus groups based on research interests, namely preschool, elementary levels, secondary, and special education. After leaders of the four focus groups shared the outcome of their groups' discussion, a senior member remarked "If collectively we know these to be the benefits of family involvement, we should be sharing these with every school district." And, as such stimulating sessions tend to end, we left musing about the next possible step but returning to our over-demanding tasks at home.

Within the month, I received a telephone call from young George Johnson, who introduced himself with his family lineage in academic publishing. He was beginning a new publishing company called Information Age Publishing. The purpose of his call was to assess the interest of our AERA SIG members in publishing a volume on promising practices. At that moment, I deeply felt as if a prayer had been answered. Of course, I accepted the offer and immediately contacted the other SIG leaders. The consensus was to prepare a volume that organized research findings according to Joyce Epstein's six typologies and to request that she prepare an overview

chapter of her typologies. I consider her contribution to that volume to be the best explanation of her six typologies to date. After her generous acceptance, I had no difficulty obtaining longtime SIG members as authors for each typology, except communication. In 2000, there were no SIG members connected to that area. Initially I tried to persuade selected members to write the chapter but without success. Eventually, I accepted my fate to write that chapter. At that time, I researched the area through more archaic ways including phone calls to experts, library books and journals, and personal knowledge of practices in schools. If you have time, note the research difference in my chapter in the 2001 volume versus the one prepared by me in 2010 at which time technology had altered research capabilities.

The first four volumes of the series went into operation almost simultaneously. I felt like an opera director choreographing four productions at the same moment. The work was so stimulating that I did not realize how involved I had become. When Mary Cornish and Lee Shumow accepted editorship of the next volumes, I grasped the intensity of my prior activity when I could step back and serve as a reviewer. Only those who have worked as an editor grasp the stress that comes with bringing a volume to fruition. A serious editor must support and encourage every author through several revisions; keep track of submissions, revisions and reviews; and edit-edit-edit. There is no good creative writing, only fine editing. But, my efforts succeeded, and the first three volumes received the highest recognition by AERA, recipient of the “Outstanding Contributions Relating Research to Practice Award: Interpretive Scholarship” in 2004. My stress to edit for “clear and concise writing” helped garner this elusive reward.

As a SIG, we felt that our field had achieved higher status in research as well as in practice. The fourth volume entitled *Promising Practices Across the Continents* led the U.S. Embassy to send me to Oman, a small but well-educated Middle Eastern country in 2006, to assist in their development of Parent Councils across their six regions. Also, through European Network About Parents in Education (ERNAPE), our books secured international authors and international recognition. This volume continues in this manner with a section of chapters contributed by authors from countries outside of America.

The series has been maintained by fine lead editorship of Holly Kreider for two volumes (2011; 2013) and three other editors assisted by me, namely Michael P. Evans (2016), Hsiu-Zu Ho (2012), and Lusa Lo (2015). Holly Kreider, Michael Evans, and I shall continue to serve as the Editorial Board for the series. Helen Westmoreland is diligently working as editor of the 2018 volume on family engagement and children’s engagement in Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM). Helen had served as a co-editor with Holly on the 2011 volume on parent involvement and out-of-school-time activities of their children.

This volume is an outgrowth of the deep commitment of our publisher and his family to faith-based education and my 43 years of service as a professor at a faith-based university, namely Pepperdine University. We have shared our values across the years. In 2010, Bill Jeynes asked me to prepare a chapter on parent engagement in Protestant schools for his tome *International Handbook of Protestant Education*, 2012. During the research and writing of that piece, I learned how little has been published on parents and faith-based schools, yet these schools have significantly more parent engagement than public schools. At the time, I mused about this volume. However, when my elder son—a pastor, suddenly passed away just before AERA's Annual Meeting in 2014, I was open to begin this volume to fruition. During a supportive lunch in Philadelphia, I accepted George's suggestion that the next FASCP series volume be on family engagement in faith-based schools. My son had often expressed how Pepperdine University had affected his values and choice of vocation.

The production of this volume has been slow moving compared to those first volumes. The initial editor faded away, a co-editor accepted a new leadership position, and other possible co-editors declined because of too many conflicting demands in their lives. I empathized. I also knew that a limited number of possible FSCP SIG members are connected to the Religion and Education SIG that I co-founded in the 1980s. But, a call for papers or an editor to that SIG yielded no eager volunteers. However, young excited and dedicated faculty, administrators, and faith-based persons in AERA and school practice were submitting chapters to me for inclusion in this promised book. The mentor in me and faith-based values I hold could not ignore their deep support of faith-based education.

This volume is a tribute to the undying commitment of the chapter authors. Across the chapters, readers will note the themes of school choice, parental values, and the importance of the immersion of faith in children's upbringing and education. Albert Cheng, an enthusiastic young scholar, was a first responder to our SIG's Call for Papers. He and his mentor Patrick Wolf co-authored the chapter on branding and school choice of a faith-based school. Their chapter argues that, in a rising national interest in school choice, faith-based schools should focus on the qualities of their "brand." I resonated with their work as I recall a WASC member advising Pepperdine to pinpoint on the website and elsewhere that this university supported Christian values to distinguish this university from others. Another early responder was Gertien Bertram-Troost from The Netherlands. Gertien and her mentor Siebren Miedema describe and support branding or "school identity" for parents making school choice in the Netherlands. Dutch parents may select a faith-based school as part of a no-fee school choice for all families in their country. The Netherlands has had free school choice since 1806.

Contributing to the first section of this volume, Allison Blosser was my surprise find at 2016 AERA. I chaired the session for Division K in which she presented her dissertation. Her chapter features her dissertation but expands on diversity issues that face every faith-based school, from administrators to families.

The second section focuses on research and practice from four different faith groups—Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim. My personal gratitude extends to Jacqueline Davis for her research on Catholic education and parent engagement as well as her personal research on Roman Catholic schools in California. Longtime outstanding school administrators of faith-based schools, Bill Walner and Dan Ahlstrom share their research and best practices in Protestant and Jewish day schools. They note deep insights into what works and how important family engagement is to school life, endowment, and leadership of the school. Yolanda Dawson reviewed extent research on the challenges of immigrant Muslim families, their children, and educational choices in America. Readers will note her counseling outlook as she shares the tensions and challenges of Islamic families.

The final section addresses authors that offered insights to their research in the Philippines, the Netherlands—already mentioned, and Israel. Filipino American administrators, Jeremy Villa and El Buquiran, were educated in Filipino Catholic schools and share their insights to that country and its culture of education. Bruria Schaadel is an Israeli professor who researches parent involvement issues in Israel. At her request, I spoke in Akka, Israel, March 2014, and asked my pastor son to join me to visit Israel. Days later, her deep, personal care for me when my son so unexpectedly died in Jerusalem exemplifies the deep intensity of care by women of the Jewish faith and culture.

Thus, my deep appreciation to each of these authors for their passion and commitment to parent involvement in faith-based education. Kudos to publisher George Johnson and his staff, especially Frank. Most importantly, I am grateful to my dissertation student and graduate assistant Lorelei Greene Lewis for her frankness in discussions with me and meticulous editing.

Her time, care, and dedication to every chapter made this publication possible.

—Diana B. Hiatt-Michael