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The View from the Lighted Schoolhouse: Conceptualizing Home-School Relations within a Class Size Reduction Reform

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In this essay we examine how educators work within a component of a class size reduction reform designed to strengthen the connections between families' home and school lives. We describe the accomplishments and struggles experienced by educators enacting this "lighted schoolhouse" based on our research in nine schools over three years. Specifically, we consider how educational resources are applied and experienced in schools and how opportunities to share knowledge between home and school are produced. We find educators' views of families' roles in schooling are shaped by how they are positioned by the context of the reform.

In poor communities, a lack of jobs, racism, and scarce resources undermine the network of adult support so necessary for the healthy development of children. In these communities, the school represents a focal point for building and maintaining a network of positive adult relationships around every child. School buildings can also serve as learning centers and recreational facilities for families as well as children. They can serve as a central location for community services designed to support families and help them deal with the stresses that often lead to violence and abuse. (Molnar and Zmrazek 1994, 5)

In 1996, the state of Wisconsin created a program designed to address many of the challenges to learning thought to be caused by urban poverty. The Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) brought together di-

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verse conceptions of change to take a systemic approach to reform. Melding the emerging popularity of class size reduction, calls for rigorous curriculum, attention to teacher evaluation and development, and family strengthening, SAGE started with a 30-school pilot program and was eventually rolled out to close to 500 schools statewide. Over time, SAGE came to be known as a “class size reduction” program. This is not only because class size was the simplest portion of the legislation to regulate but also because the program’s financing mechanism was limited enough that schools often had a hard time supporting staffing for smaller classes.

In this essay we explore the experiences of teachers working in the context of this multidimensional class size reduction reform. Specifically, we explore the component referred to by many as the “lighted schoolhouse.” Requiring schools to keep their doors open beyond the school day and to collaborate with community organizations, the “lighted schoolhouse” was designed to strengthen the connection between families and schools. Based on a program evaluation including three years of fieldwork in nine schools, we describe educators’ successes and challenges enacting this component of SAGE in multiple contexts. In this article we ask, How is a multidimensional class size reduction reform, designed to enhance the educational resources available to teachers, students, and families, implemented and experienced in schools? How does the reform create social opportunities to share knowledge between home and school?

Context

SAGE provides funding to limit class sizes to 15:1 in grades K–3 (kindergarten through third grade) in almost 500 Wisconsin schools. In addition to the class size component, the SAGE legislation includes three additional implementation pillars:

1. Education and human services: designed to strengthen the links between home and school through keeping the school building open for extended hours and connecting families with community resources (referred to as the lighted schoolhouse pillar)
2. Curriculum: created to encourage ongoing evaluation of school curricula (referred to as rigorous curriculum pillar), and

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3. Staff development and accountability: designed to enhance teacher professional development and evaluation (referred to as the professional development pillar).

SAGE was designed to substantively change educational resources by enhancing one-to-one interaction in the classroom by reducing the number of children assigned to a teacher. It was also designed to help schools develop networks by creating spaces for families to interact and to access social services. Initially targeted to high-poverty schools to address concerns about urban poverty, SAGE was opened to all Wisconsin schools as of the 2000–2001 school year. Currently, SAGE schools receive \$2,250 per low-income child in grades K–3 to offset costs of implementation.

Because SAGE was implemented in schools with norms already in place, educators applied different interpretations to the importance of the pillars. Intended to shift expectations and practices for our most vulnerable students, it was integrated into the culture of the school (Graue et al. 2007). Its effectiveness depended on what had happened in the school prior to the implementation of the reform. Two pillars in the reform—small class size and the lighted schoolhouse—both conceptualize school practice in terms of relationships. While some might frame the importance of class size reduction as only relevant within the classroom, with fewer students per classroom, it also provides opportunities for teachers to build relationships with families. The lighted schoolhouse program potentially supports relationship building through activities that bring families to the school and that extend learning activities into the home. The class size reduction and lighted schoolhouse pillars are linked because of their focus on relationships: between home and school, between teacher and family, and between family and social network. In this essay we explore how the lighted schoolhouse portion of a reform met the realities of teaching. We examine how families are positioned vis-à-vis the school and how knowledge and skills were seen as contributing to a vital partnership.

Home-School Connections

It is a truism in education that parent involvement is desirable. Descriptive research asserts a linear relationship between parent-teacher interactions and student outcomes (Epstein 1995; Fan and Chen 2001; Henderson and Mapp 2002; Jeynes 2003). Beginning in preschool programs, parental involvement and education are seen to buffer risks connected to poverty and minority status (Barnard 2004; Brody et al. 2002; Reynolds 2000). Increasingly, the government seeks to promote involvement through legislation that (a) identifies parents as first teachers, which makes them part of school decision making (National Education Goals Panel 1997), or (b) frames parents as consumers in the

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educational marketplace (e.g., the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 [NCLB]).¹ From this research and policy perspective, families are conceptualized as decision makers who use data to maximize their child's education experience (Paige 2006). When parents choose not to make educational choices for their children, they are making a choice within the market of schooling and are responsible for the ensuing outcomes. In other words, they have only themselves to blame for educational shortcomings.

Complementing the descriptive research that suggests that parent involvement enhances children's achievement, some researchers have explored how and why parents engage in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997; Pomerantz et al. 2007). This work recognizes that parents have varied capacity and motivation to be involved in schooling and extends the parent-focused interpretation by analyzing the styles, rather than types, of involvement and the interaction of style with child needs. In both the parent-focused perspectives of involvement, the explanatory power for student outcomes is primarily an input-output model. Much policy is built on these two genres, as they explain the outcomes for students in terms of family practices.

In contrast to descriptive readings of families, critical perspectives explore the unintended consequences of parent involvement, asserting that opportunities and resources for families are unequally distributed (Auerbach 2007; Brantlinger 2003; Graue and Oen 2009; Horvat et al. 2003; Lareau 1989, 2003; Reay 1999; Vincent 2000). These critiques focus on how power shapes the potential for home-school interaction and how the normative market-based policies like NCLB ignore how the uneven distribution of knowledge and resources privileges the middle class (Crozier 1998; Reay 1999). Pérez Carreón and colleagues (2005) point out that much of the parent-focused work in policy making and practice is rooted in a deficit model that asserts that children suffer academically when their parents do not participate in school-defined ways. Critical researchers have shown that because they share status and practices with schools, middle-class families not only support the school script but advantage their own children in a variety of ways, increasing the resource gap between groups (Lareau 1989, 2003; Reay 1999). We take a critical perspective in this essay, working to link practices in families, classrooms, and schools to broader social and cultural issues. An example of that perspective is how we interpret the theory of action on which the literature on class size reduction has been understood.

Theorizing a Mechanism

Class size reduction programs have been oriented by a theory of action that focuses on two mechanisms: (1) increasing opportunities for richer teacher-

student interactions (Blatchford 2003) and (2) more carefully developing engaged student dispositions (Finn et al. 2003). Grissmer (1999) suggests a third option—a theory of classroom and home behavior of teachers, parents, and students. He suggests that interventions like class size reduction can change developmental trajectories, including influencing peer and family environments. With smaller classes teachers are potentially more able to reach out to families, and these interactions provide information that is mutually beneficial for both the home and school. This third option guides our reading of the SAGE program, which we see as being focused on changing the resources available for education both within classrooms and in the community. We wondered whether a systemic approach to reform that includes both class size reduction and family-strengthening elements could address any of the problems the critical literature has identified.

Theoretical Framework

To facilitate our reading of the program, we rely on theoretical tools developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986, 1998, 2000), a French social philosopher. His work has illustrated that class is a transactional process (Jones 2007) that involves three interrelated entities: field, habitus, and capital. Bourdieu's analytical tools were designed to be used together, and as we looked carefully at our data, we found that this interconnectedness allows us to read the data in a fresh and useful way. Moreover, Bourdieu was a scholar who saw his tools as robust enough to be creatively useful in contexts beyond his own research settings (see Grenfell 2008).

To exercise his tools well, we must be very clear for our readers, particularly those who are not yet deeply acquainted with his work. We lay out our understanding of these fundamental concepts to set the foundation for our reading of the cases. Bourdieu was keenly aware of the way that language represented and shaped thinking and practice. He urged us to think critically about language because it carries history, motivations, meanings, and power within it. Bourdieu's theory of practice promotes a relational perspective on lived experience, linking the patterns of socialization, resources connected to social class, and agency that shapes individual action. Three interrelated constructs are key to this theory. The first, habitus, is dispositions that shape action. In terms of home-school relations, the temperaments and orientations parents and teachers have toward each other would be part of their habitus. Habitus positions groups and individuals to play the "game" of schooling (in which there are clear winners and losers) more and less easily (Bourdieu 1990). The second construct, field, is a social context such as the home or the school. The field includes in it the parameters, roles, and goals of interaction; it comprises implicit

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definitions of how teachers should engage families and what counts as success. Bourdieu noted that habitus and field are related in that the field structures habitus through conditioning. At the same time, habitus structures the field through knowledge construction (Bourdieu, in Wacquant 1989). The final element in this model is capital, defined within a market metaphor of power:

Within a field, agents are relationally defined and hierarchically positioned, distinguished by unequal amounts and distinctive combinations of the kinds of power, otherwise called “capital,” that are operative within a field. Within field, “markets” operate in which agents engage in unusually latent, although sometimes overt and organized, struggles to accumulate and monopolize existing capital and to determine what will count as capital, or, in Bourdieu’s terms, to determine the prices capital demands. (Olneck 2000, 319)

Those who make and enforce rules have the most power as they determine what actions are likely to be successful. Parent involvement in education is typically framed from the school’s point of view and designed to facilitate the school’s agenda and to privilege those who act in accord with educators’ goals. Here capital includes the knowledge of potentially lucrative actions, which translate into further accumulation of capital.

Cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) has been used by those who study home-school relations to explore the asymmetrical nature of school-based resources available to families (e.g., Lareau 1989, 2003; Reay 1999).² This work has resulted in the recognition that cultural similarities between middle-class teachers and middle-class parents set up an economic trading ground that limits the options available to lower- and working-class families. Because this literature has primarily focused on parents’ capital, it has led to a normative understanding of practice, implying that power lies with the middle class. The implication of this research is that working- and lower-class families need to develop capital that will align with the resources available to educators and middle-class families. In other words, according to this interpretation, poor families have capital in the “wrong” currency (Ball and Vincent 1998).

Although equalizing parental resources for home-school interaction is one approach (and likely a fruitful one, at that), we wondered how Bourdieu’s theories might be used to examine the role of capital available to schools. In this case we purposefully chose not to view the middle-class practice as the norm. We do so for several reasons. Bourdieu’s reliance on an economic model frames practices of families living in poverty from a deficit perspective because the power of any form of capital inheres in its perceived value in a given field. Bourdieu (e.g., 1990) used an economic metaphor involving capital that can

be traded, accumulated, and invested. Very few researchers in this tradition have viewed the particular resources available to low-income families as valuable in the school marketplace. We wanted to examine systems where there is potential to view all families as resourceful and having assets valuable to schools. This seems particularly salient in light of recent work in which we found families in SAGE schools, often seen to be the most at risk for disaffiliation and in need of school-based support, passionately wanting better relationships with schools. Their desires for connection were limited by practices and beliefs based on the notion that low-income families have little to offer (Graue and Oen 2009). How did this dynamic play out according to teachers and administrators?

We link SAGE and Bourdieuan theory because SAGE has four elements of capital redistribution embedded within it. First, economic resources are invested to reduce class size to build the social capital by enhancing teacher-student interaction. These enriched interactions are seen to come about through opportunities for instructional assessment and targeted feedback, fewer disciplinary problems, and more positive relationship building. Second, some have argued that class size reduction changes the dispositions of children at risk more easily than other models. By enriching opportunities to develop appropriate behavior and engagement, students are more apt to become habituated into the cultural logic of the school (Finn et al. 2003). This description is much like Bourdieu's notion of habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992)—a way of seeing, thinking, and acting—a sense for the feel for the “game” of social class relations. In this case, the game is played in the field (or social world) of schooling. Third, the reduction in the number of students in a classroom provides teachers with more time to engage families in their children's education. This reconstitutes the field by making the boundaries more permeable between home and school. Finally, SAGE's lighted schoolhouse pillar is designed to build social capital by facilitating the development of social networks within the broader community. The lighted schoolhouse is intended to open the school building for community use and connect individuals to social services. These social networks, so prominent in communities with more economic resources, are thought to be vital for families isolated by poverty.

In this essay, we examine how SAGE's potential social opportunity was limited by the logics of practice that constrain educator attention and resources to the classroom. We use ideas of capital, field, and habitus to read the dispositions brought by educators, their understanding of the parameters of education, and the resources perceived as applicable within the school and community.

Method

Our research team studied SAGE's implementation in a sample of nine schools in southcentral Wisconsin from 2004–8. After 2 years in the field we recognized that SAGE was not an easily described reform; it reflected the values and needs in both a setting and in the law. We viewed SAGE as a resource that was activated in local settings (Cohen et al. 2003). While the project was broadly conceived to examine the implementation of all SAGE pillars, in this essay we focus specifically on how teachers conceptualized the roles of families in SAGE schools through the implementation of the lighted schoolhouse and teacher outreach to families.

We designed the sample to represent characteristics relevant to the SAGE program, with urban, rural, and semiurban settings; a range of student achievement; and a variety of class size reduction configurations. See table 1 for a demographic description of the sample.

Data Collection

Based on a multiyear, multimethod evaluation of the SAGE program, we analyze data generated in the third year of instrumental case studies of practice. As background, we begin by charting the data collection across all three years of the study to give a sense of the richness of our data set. Table 2 provides a longitudinal summary.

In year 1, 2004–5, we sampled nine SAGE schools that represented different levels of student achievement in urban, rural, and semiurban contexts. Within each school we sampled a kindergarten, first grade, and either second or third grade, completing eight half-day observations of practice in each classroom and multiple semistructured interviews with each teacher/team and the principal of the school. In year 2 we returned to each school for follow-up interviews with school staff and also conducted focus group interviews with families.

For year 3, 2006–7, we explored “best practice” through the work of three schools chosen to represent high levels of implementation of pillars and higher levels of students' achievement. Based on state test score data, we identified Calloway (urban), Earhart (semiurban), and Montford (rural) as having rapidly improving achievement and school-level reforms that were changing the school culture.³ Building on previous relationships with staff, we collected data in three classrooms in each school. Whenever possible, we returned to the same classrooms we had studied in prior years. In each school, we collected the following data: (a) seven half-day observations of instructional practice in three classrooms per school, including one visit to videotape typical lessons; (b) observations of professional development; (c) observations of activities that

TABLE 1

2006–7 SAGE School Sample Characteristics

Geography District	Farmington		Bethany		Calloway		Earhart		Gallows		McMahon		Montford		Wellstone Blvd.		West Canton	
	Rural	Urban	Urban	Semiurban	Urban	Semiurban	Urban	Semiurban	Urban	Semiurban	Urban	Semiurban	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Enrollment	442	487	300	242	599	233	500	337	306	337	337	337	337	337	337	337	337	337
% black	.9	80.3	13.3	31.0	64.9	31.8	3.8	78.6	1.3	78.6	3.8	3.8	78.6	1.3	78.6	3.8	3.8	78.6
% Hispanic	5.9	1.8	44.0	14.0	19.0	21.9	2.2	6.8	1.6	6.8	2.2	2.2	6.8	1.6	6.8	2.2	2.2	6.8
% white	91.0	11.1	35.0	33.5	15.0	43.8	83.2	6.5	96.4	6.5	83.2	83.2	6.5	96.4	6.5	83.2	83.2	6.5
% Asian	.5	6.4	5.0	20.2	.8	2.1	8.8	6.5	.7	6.5	2.1	8.8	6.5	.7	6.5	2.1	8.8	6.5
% ELL	.2	1.4	1.9	33.9	1.2	13.7	8.4	12.5	NA	12.5	13.7	8.4	12.5	NA	12.5	13.7	8.4	12.5
% disabilities	20.4	16.0	13.0	8.7	39.6	25.8	16.2	13.1	13.7	13.1	25.8	16.2	13.1	13.7	13.1	25.8	16.2	13.1
% FRPL	58.4	84.0	78.7	66.1	88.8	68.2	64.4	95.3	37.6	95.3	68.2	64.4	95.3	37.6	95.3	68.2	64.4	95.3
Reading (mean)*	83	82	85	82	53	79	75	66	95	66	79	75	66	95	66	79	75	66
Math (mean)†	72	59	67	64	39	46	77	40	82	40	46	77	40	82	40	46	77	40
Performance relative to expectations‡	1.24	3.15	5.93	3.46	-5.24	4.82	-1.04	-8.65	1.62	-8.65	4.82	-1.04	-8.65	1.62	-8.65	4.82	-1.04	-8.65

NOTE.—SAGE = Student Achievement Guarantee in Education; ELL = English language learners; FRPL = free and reduced-price lunch; NA = not available. All names are pseudonyms.

* Wisconsin Fourth Grade Knowledge and Concepts Test 2006; Percent Proficient and Advanced Reading.

† Wisconsin Fourth Grade Knowledge and Concepts Test 2006; Percent Proficient and Advanced Math.

‡ This school performance estimate combines three years of data for each school to provide a more stable and reliable estimate of the expected percent of students proficient or above in grade 3 reading, controlling for student characteristics and average teacher experience and training. Schools with a performance estimate of around zero are performing at expectations, given the population of students who took the tests and the teacher characteristics. Schools with negative performance estimates are doing less well than expected, and schools with positive estimates better than expected.

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TABLE 2

Summary of Data Collection for Years 1–3

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	
			Focal Schools	Follow-Up Nonfocal Schools
Number of schools	9	9	3	6
Number of participants:				
Principals	9	9	3	6
Classrooms	27	27	9	18
Teachers	36	35	11	23
Number of observations:				
Observations per classroom	8	0	7	0
Observations with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System per classroom	0	0	1	1
Number of interviews:				
Semistructured interviews/principal	3	1	2	1
Semistructured interviews/teacher	2	1	3	1
Family focus group interviews	0	9	0	0

NOTE.—Grades = kindergarten, 1, and 2 or 3.

connect home and school; *(d)* two interviews of building principals with questions which included, “What do you see as the role of families in the work of the school?” and “What is the role of the school in the work of families?”; and *(e)* three interviews with each of the nine teachers/teaching teams posing questions such as “What do families need to support their child and your teaching?” and “What do you need to support families so they can support their child?”

For the focal schools and for the remaining schools from the nine-school sample, we collected *(a)* documents related to SAGE pillars; *(b)* standardized observations to detail instructional practice and time allocation, using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS); *(c)* a teacher survey for all SAGE teachers in each building;⁴ *(d)* the SAGE End of Year Report (EoY), completed by a representative of each SAGE school across Wisconsin;⁵ and *(e)* Wisconsin’s Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS),⁶ which provided school-level test score data and demographic information (provided in table 1). For the follow-up sample we also interviewed teachers and principals with protocols that included the questions about relations between home and school.

Analyzing Diverse Data

We transcribed the interviews conducted with the 36 individual/team participants and analyzed them along with field notes, focusing on themes derived from our readings of the data, supported by the theory of action of the program. We brought together observations and interviews to explore how educators conceptualized relationships with families within SAGE's lighted schoolhouse element and their classroom work. From the start we used a critical-interpretivist approach to analysis. As we moved between readings of the critical literature and the data, it became clear that Bourdieu's theoretical tools were useful for understanding how some viewed families as resourceful and willing participants and others framed parent involvement passively.

Analysis began with the examination of patterns in administrative and teacher practice, educator beliefs, and school achievement. This was the third year of collaboration with the sample schools, so we had a rich foundation of understandings and relationships. We looked at strategies to connect with families located in individual classrooms and those undertaken at the school level. As our work progressed, the team of three researchers met formally for several hours each month to share observations, interviews, and emerging ideas of issues in the field. Subsequent fieldwork reflected these discussions. We shared memos (Graue and Walsh 1998) that detailed second-order analysis linking coded data with cross-cutting themes. We noted recurring examples of schools that seemed to have more developed networks of support (e.g., capacity building through strong administrative structure, well-organized professional development) and have much more discussion about home-school relations. When we looked at the remaining schools, we noted that parent involvement was framed primarily in terms of constraints—how individual teachers' hands were tied, how opportunities were shrinking, and how parents should meet schools' expectations.

We looked for confirming and disconfirming evidence for the identified patterns, working between depth and breadth of knowledge across the team to triangulate the assertions made at each step. We constructed contrasts of practice with particular attention to the resources and constraints that made programming possible. These themes took us back to reread applications of Bourdieuan theory in the home-school relations literature (e.g., Auerbach 2007; Bodovski 2010; Dumais 2005; Grenfell and James 1998; Lareau 1989, 2003). With these studies in mind, we went back to our data. Our context variably fit earlier interpretations of theory: notably, school people positioned the responsibility for educational practice among parents' and schools' habitus, capital, and fields in many ways. For example, not all school personnel saw

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poor and working-class family capital as deficient. The data we present below reflect this recognition of the vitality of poor and working-class families' capital.

Limitations

This in-depth study of nine SAGE schools examines practice in a variety of settings, highlighting the challenges of implementation in local contexts. The EoY report, teacher survey, and interviews are self-report tools that have all the limitations and strengths of those types of data-generation strategies. Given the focus of the study, it does not have traditional statistical generalizability.

Instead of statistical generalization, readers can engage in what Stake (1985) calls naturalistic generalizability, a process by which individuals generalize from one experience to another. This kind of inference requires knowledge of context so that individuals can assess how the assertions made in the research are similar/different from their own experience. Using multiple sources of data, we created a set of assertions that connect context and practice. We worked to portray the lived experience of SAGE in nine school communities carefully selected to represent a range of locations and resources. We urge readers to make relevant connections to their knowledge of schooling in drawing conclusions.

The Lighted Schoolhouse

The lighted schoolhouse was included in the SAGE law to broaden available resources by coordinating services and making the school a focal point of the community. According to the EoY Report, the median number of hours schools were open was about 45 minutes before school and about 3 hours after school. Schools were open for 3 weeks in the summer and a small number of hours on the weekend. The majority of students' time spent in before- and after-school programs was focused on academic and recreational activities (each with more than 150 hours per year), while a much smaller amount of time was allocated to family and community activities, such as school governance, family and community nights, and community recreation.

Fieldwork echoed these patterns in the EoY Report. Participants described school-based and classroom-based approaches to connect families with the school. While these two are separate, they also relate to one another in the theory of action that motivates the activities, the information the approaches provide, and the social meanings they enact. This illuminates how fields structure what is possible in terms of social class-informed relations between home and school within this multidimensional class size reform. School-based ac-

tivities were most closely related to the lighted schoolhouse pillar of SAGE, with the field conceptualized at the level of the institution of the school. Classroom-based activities were more clearly related to the class size reduction component of SAGE, defining a field between an individual teacher and her students' families. Our discussion will focus on these two types of activities, plus a third piece that shaped possibilities in our sample's SAGE schools, the resources required to implement home-school connections.

Schoolwide Activities

School-based activities were offered in all nine schools and ranged from general activities that invited families to the school for celebrations to targeted activities designed to meet the needs of particular, rather than generic, families. All of these activities were based on the idea that education must be a partnership that should be shared between home and school. The predominant orientation to partnership was that the families should support the school, but more importantly, the school dictates the goals and activities for their interaction. This orientation to developing parental habitus can be seen in the comments of Marsha Delton, a third-grade teacher at Calloway Elementary:

We want to see parents and teachers as partners. We signed a contract in the beginning of the year just going over [the idea that] this is what Calloway School expects of your child and your family. This is what I as a teacher expect; this is what we expect from the child; this is what we expect from a family. It's an overview to say "We're all in this together, we need each other, I can't do this without your help. You were your child's first teacher. Now hand-in-hand we have to work together." I don't know that we have control over what goes on at home. We don't. So it's very difficult. I'm finding, as I'm teaching longer, [that] there's a lot of needs out there, and I think that parents are overwhelmed. Or they don't have, some parents don't have, the wherewithal to even go over the homework.

Mrs. Delton described a field defined by the school. Although framed as partners, it might be more aptly portrayed as an employer-employee or supervisee-trainee relationship in which the school solicits compliance through documents legitimating its own capital valuation above that of the families'. Though the contract contained symbolic elements indicating that there would be a dialogic relationship between school and home, the terms of the "partnership" were set by the school and in response to families seen as lacking the resources, or capital, to effectively negotiate their designated role.

Setting expectations.—Setting expectations for families was a key theme in our

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discussions. This translated into traditional forms of home-school work. In this form of habituation, the schools give parents information that will help them understand what is happening at school and socialize them into typical school practices. These types of activities included open houses, conferences, seasonal performances, and invitations to volunteer on behalf of the school. The activities reflected long histories of what constituted normal relations between schools and families, with female elementary school teachers drawing in families and sharing official school knowledge. All nine schools engaged in these types of home-school connections. Two schools used external grant funding to provide what they called lighted schoolhouse activities, weekly open houses where families received a meal and access to the computer lab, gym, and library. Farmington and Montford, both rural schools, provided these services in areas where families were often unable to access these activities in town during the day.

An additional form that was very popular was the content-oriented family night, where families were invited to school for activities that taught them about literacy, math, or science. Through these activities, educators hoped to develop habitus congruent with test-driven school expectations by building capital in the form of particular content knowledge. While equating increased performance with more opportunities for students from all social class and racial groups in the future, SAGE's lighted schoolhouse family nights shaped distinctive dispositions in families in somewhat contradictory ways, depending on their implementation.

Family math night.—The following vignette, developed from field notes at rural Montford Elementary, illustrates the kinds of activities and efforts required to support families and their learning.⁷

In preparation for the 4th annual Montford Family Math Night, teacher Noreen Hoover organizes materials so families can take home five books and a special canvas bag if they sign a contract that spells out home-school expectations.

At 5:00 a line is forming for the event. Many families start out in the “Cooking with Math” room, staffed by Boys and Girls Club staff. Standing by the “symmetrical sandwiches” table, a mother seems uncertain of what is expected, then she reads the directions posted on the table. The teacher facilitating the activity tells the family that they should decorate only half of the slice of bread and then have a friend do the other half exactly the same—“a mirror image.”

By 5:15 there are 9 children of varying ages making sandwiches. The other activities in the room include:

- β Making “refreshing proportional punch”
- β Trail mix
- β Candy patterns

The trail-mix table is mobbed with families measuring goldfish, M&M's, pretzels, and peanuts, and putting them all into Ziploc bags. A grandmother mentions the peanut butter recall, and the other mothers at the table ask for more information. Outside of this room a mother complains to the principal that even the smell of peanuts can be bad for a child with a peanut allergy and that they shouldn't include them in any school activity. Principal Mrs. Durst listens thoughtfully.

In the gym there is a "Dance Dance Revolution" game where participants match foot movements to directions on a screen. Sensors in dance mats score the level of accuracy. There are also several other "Moving with Math" activities:

- β Basketball Madness (mix and match the two drills to accumulate as many points as possible for three minutes)
- β Hula Hoop Addition (each person gets three opportunities to get as many revolutions as they can)
- β Jump Rope Race (how many jumps can you get in three minutes?)

At 6:00 there is an announcement that pizza is available in the cafeteria.

A long line quickly forms, but folks are in a cheerful mood, and the line moves quickly. Two smiling women from the Boys and Girls Club serve and chat with families as they get their food. Dinner is pizza, bread sticks, raw veggies, and juice boxes.

In the cafeteria families can also choose from a selection of math games. Throughout the event there is a raffle with prizes—all with a math theme.

During the community supper, the principal moves around the room talking with families, asking about their vision for the school. Responses include more focus on environmental issues, an emphasis on foreign languages, and more discussion of life skills in the classroom. One of the families suggests instituting GED [general equivalency diploma] classes at the school.

Representatives from each school mentioned academic content-focused family nights related to their lighted schoolhouse activities. These events varied from annual meetings organized by families to monthly activities that were designed to address issues in the school's state testing results. The Montford Family Math Night was the most elaborate in its intent to connect families with the school by (a) involving varied support groups including teachers, the Boys and Girls Club volunteers, and parents; (b) its integrated approach to curriculum; (c) its staff dedication to organizing activities; and (d) its data-driven approach. Staff collected data at each family night and provided information about family involvement with the hope of making practices more

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welcoming to all families. Montford Elementary School's concerted attempt toward a dialogic home-school relationship cultivated a school atmosphere that valued all families' capital: we observed many interactions between diverse families and school people and an openness on the part of staff to listening to families both during the school day and beyond.

Calloway Elementary organized its family nights in response to concerns about student performance on the state achievement test by holding monthly family meetings designed to illustrate some academic concept. Mrs. Howard, a first-grade teacher, reported that the district-level math specialist told her other types of home-school activities were a "waste of time." The field at Calloway framed family activities as valuable only if they directly related to student performance. Mrs. Delton, a third-grade teacher at Calloway, described the activities they had designed to address concerns about test scores:

In the past we've had family nights focused on math . . . because those are the scores that we had the greatest need for [bringing up]. And so that's how we decided different themes. For math we came up with a strategy night—how do kids come up with different strategies? Or how should you respond to questions? How can kids write out their thinking? And helping parents understand what that looks like, what the expectations are, and trying to get them to understand why math seems so different from what they have experienced in the past. . . . So how that gets generated was basically from data, from WKCE [Wisconsin Knowledge Concepts Examination], from district testing, from the SPS [student promotion system] scores, and things like that.

The idea of teaching families about instructional content is important in extending knowledge into the home. It is premised on developing the capital available for families to support learning. This extends the education field beyond the classroom. However, the implementation had some catches to it. In family focus group interviews held in these SAGE schools in 2005–6, participants talked about how unrewarding these sessions were—these families from mainly poor and working-class backgrounds said that they often felt insulted by the teaching because the programs were not planned with family expertise in mind. Instead, they were designed with a supposition of what families needed to learn (Graue and Oen 2009). In using student performance as the tool for designing family nights, activities may have missed the particular needs, resources, and interests of families who attended the activities. The organization brought together the home and the school but clearly sought to capitalize on the language of schooling; thus, the respective habitus of home and of school retained separate and socially reproductive functions. The second catch was that these programs were incredibly labor intensive—they required planning, development of material and human resources, and engagement of

families and of staff. Family nights were seen as “add-ons”—what staff did on top of their regular jobs, and that often was left to volunteers to coordinate and run. The work was gendered—a crucial component of reproductive habitus (Reay 2004)—with women ordering pizzas, cutting hundreds of paper tangrams, and organizing phone trees. This issue of resources will be discussed more fully later in this section.

Classroom Activities

The class size reduction component of SAGE provided teachers with additional home-school relations resources because they had about 15 families to communicate with, rather than 25 or 30 families per classroom, which was common before the reform was implemented. Many of our participants discussed their efforts to invite families into the classroom:

I communicate with families through the newsletter and then daily notes home with a “good” note or a “needs improvement” note . . . phone calls. I do some things in the classroom. Kind of around holidays or things where parents can come in and help out with those kinds of things . . . I provide volunteer opportunities that way. (Gina Perry, Wellstone Blvd.)

I have a weekly newsletter that tells what we’re doing and what’s coming up . . . that they are welcome and “please, you can come anytime . . . read a story, or if you have a project you want to share, that would be great.” So I guess that’s one sort of feedback, letting them know, “Please come in.” The only thing is [that] so many are both working. Mom and Dad are both working. So to get time off is pretty hard. (Sarah Ayermeyer, West Canton)

Classroom activities focused primarily on communication—general newsletters designed to inform families of instructional themes, specific lessons, or field trips; to invite volunteers to work, either in the classroom or at home on school-related tasks; and to supplement what typically proves to be a trickle of information provided by students about the daily experience of schooling. Teachers held the power in this communication—it was framed so that the information flow was primarily from the school to the home.

A number of teachers described the challenge of getting parents into the classroom, noting the gap between parents’ capital and what they needed. The parents had “trouble”—because they worked and their schedules conflicted with classroom needs, because transportation was too expensive, or because the parents had negative experiences with schools. Madeline Court

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of McMahon Elementary described this in terms of social stratification and its unique effects on school:

I think a lot of our families did not have good school experiences themselves. And we have many parents who are working. They're now just in their early 20s themselves. And they've got kids in kindergarten, first grade. They maybe didn't finish school. They didn't have a good experience in school, they weren't successful, and they didn't like it. And so they don't know how to support their child. Or they give negative comments, "Well, I hated math." And so the kid picks up on that. And I'm not sure if there's anything we can do to change that. Because I think it's a plight in our country right now. I don't think it's just particularly in Bellamy [School District]. I think there's a gap that's developing. The educated and the uneducated. Those with secondary degrees are going this way, and those who are high school or less are going this way. And those who are less than high school—they're really becoming a separate class. And we have a lot of those families here. And so I think maybe one of the things that we can do for the parents would be to offer them to get to know your school, get to know the curriculum, get to know what your kid is doing so that they can feel comfortable helping their children. Because I don't think they do.

This description could be taken directly from Bourdieu, illustrating the development of habitus and the reproduction of class-based inequities across generations. The capital held by poor and working-class parents and parents with lower educational levels was not just a matter of lacking the professional knowledge held by teachers. It was built in relation to their personal experiences that created a habitus that positioned them in certain ways vis-à-vis schooling. Parents' own embodied dispositions toward schooling developed through experiences—"hating math," for example—are modeled for their own young children in the home. Ms. Court recognized the role that education played in the perpetuation of class-based inequality—she also saw education as a key to disrupting the cycle. However, this model is school-driven, premised on teaching parents how school might be different than their own schooling experiences.

Many of the efforts to link home and school were designed with this in mind—to forge a bond with reluctant families, to let them see an open door to the classroom. The majority of teachers implemented these activities assuming families needed to make connections to school—that reaching out with their feet firmly planted on school turf would bring families to the school. This produced a field in which the power was located in the school.

A smaller number of teachers pondered turning the tables—with classroom connections organized from the families' perspectives. At Montford, the school

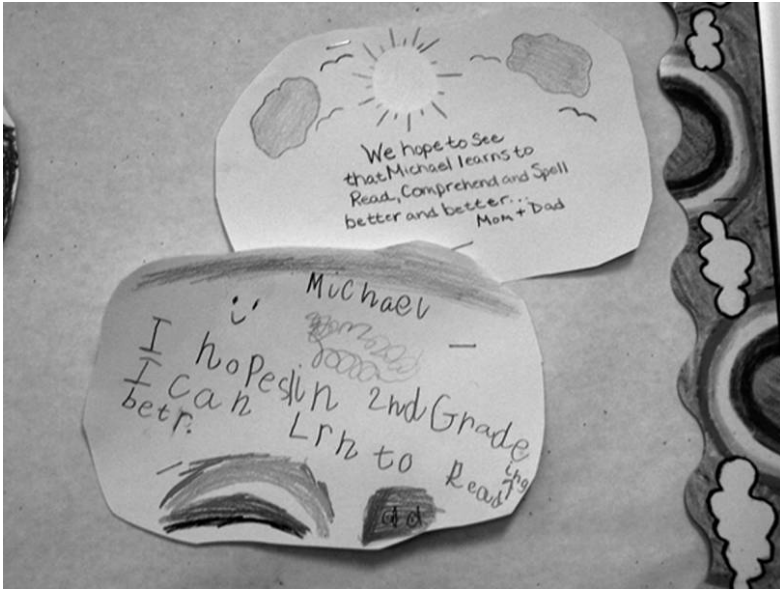


FIG. 1.—Valuing parent knowledge through Hopes & Dreams statements

started each year with Hopes & Dreams conferences, where families were encouraged to share their expectations with the school. Initially supported by a comprehensive school reform grant, these conferences provided staff stipends of \$30/hour to meet with families before their contracts began in August. This amount was reduced to \$14/hour when the grant ran out and the principal was working to find alternative funding. Figure 1 shows an example of documentation of these conferences—a bulletin board in a second grade classroom that displayed both parental and child hopes for the school year.

This is how Mrs. Durst, the principal at Montford, described the goal of these meetings:

I think the hardest part sometimes is we have to remember [that] we're not here and they're there (pointing in opposite directions). We're equally educators for our kids. And that, truthfully, they have this wealth of knowledge that we will never have about their kids. So [that is] the whole idea of starting with the Hopes & Dreams conferences . . . where I'm not telling you what first grade is all about. I want to find out from *you* what your first graders are like.

Since they begin the year by listening to families, many of the teachers at

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Montford felt that they were in a better position to plan instruction based on family information. Their suggestions were informed by their knowledge of family resources and needs, and the seeds of a relationship had been planted. Montford was the only school in our sample that positioned parents as knowers—individuals with important capital to share with the school. Montford staff collaboratively designed ways to show parents that they trusted them as parents. Staff at Montford envisioned a transformative habitus at both home and school, using dollars from outside the reform to co-create an educational field for transcending school business-as-usual in the spirit of the lighted schoolhouse.

The Role of Resources

A prominent theme in discussions of home-school relations and the lighted schoolhouse was the role that resources played in activating partnerships between home and school. Though participants believed education was too complex to be trusted to a single teacher, the system of schooling was still uncoordinated enough that anything that happened between teachers and families outside of the official school day was tacked onto an already stressed organization. Resources were the fuel for the SAGE engine; they allowed good ideas and intentions to get translated into action. Participants talked about three types of resources: funding, personnel, and time. At its core, SAGE funding was seen as a resource for staffing smaller classes and was frequently insufficient for that purpose:

There's not enough money to pay for the salaries. So that's always a big concern. . . . So the level of funding is the same as it was when I came five years ago, and yet salaries have gone up, insurance has gone up. So there really isn't any money beyond that to get my teachers covered. (Bill Post, principal, McMahan Elementary)

One of the biggest challenges in developing home-school partnerships was the cost. Virtually every school-based activity had a price tag, and in a period of budgetary retrenchment and increased focus on achievement, activities that linked home and school were often the first to be cut. Clearly, there was a hierarchy of what counted most in terms of school capital, a valuation that influenced not only programming but the ways families were positioned in relation to the school. Madeline Court, from McMahan described it this way:

I know that we could really use a bigger budget; we've had to cut out evening programs because there's no money. We had to cut out the chili

night. We had to cut out the math games night. We cut out the ice cream social. We've cut out almost all of our evening fun things. We don't have money to buy the chili and the hot dogs. We don't even have money to have the kids' field trips paid for. We're going to have to have the parents dip into their pockets this year. Which we haven't had to do since I've been here. This is my ninth year. So money, money, money. Money is just huge. Our parents are very low income. Almost all of them. Money is what's behind it all.

She went on to explain how general budget cuts also limited their ability to purchase materials that would help engage families in the school's mathematics series:

Investigations [the district math program] has this book that can be given to the parents at home so that they can look at what their kid is doing in school and understand it. It explains what we're doing in school so that they can help their child with their homework. And it's colorful, it's hardcover, it's interesting looking, it's inviting. Do you think we're going to be able to buy one for every family? It's not going to happen. So you know it comes down to dollars and cents.

Even things like making copies of stuff to send home to the families. We've got these letters to send home with the Investigations. We're supposed to be doing a minimal amount of copying. . . . It's too expensive to make the copies, so the parents are missing out on this piece.

Other participants at McMahon noted that it was especially important to communicate with families about the new constructivist math program; it was so different from anything they might have experienced in their own educations. With fewer material resources for communication, teachers saw that there was a missing link in the home-school relationship.

Some participants imagined a future where districts made home-school relationships a part of their mission and budget. They saw a different field of home-school relationships, one with parents as a focus of the educational process.

I think the school district itself has to focus more on parents and providing things for the parents. I think eventually that's going to have to play a part in their budgeting. And I don't think there's any type of budgeting for that right now. You know, they say—OK we'll give you SAGE . . . well, you'll have smaller classrooms. I think probably it will need to be supported with some kind of stipend for the parents . . . to actually come in and take parenting classes, or here's a six-week set of classes for you to take on the math program or a six-week program on technology. I think it's going to have to reeducate parents about school.

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Because a lot of them missed out. They either dropped out or just didn't have good experiences or, you know, their lifestyle was just not conducive to learning and, you know, they just kind of got by . . . and got out. . . . Now that they have children, they are probably saying, "Well, if I knew how to do this, I could help my child or if I knew how to, you know, use a computer, [I] could do more for my child." But a lot of parents . . . they just don't know. So . . . if it takes educating you, let's educate you . . . if it takes educating you how to keep your child out of gangs, or how to keep your child home at night, or whatever the issue may be. (Crystal Stephens, kindergarten, Bethany)

While paying parents to take classes might be seen as outside the reach of today's schools, the intentions of this suggestion are important to consider. In a systems orientation to home-school relations, the needs of all participants are taken into account. For many of the teachers in our sample, family needs are a key aspect of child needs. Lacking educational resources at home, students are at a disadvantage. Finding ways to enhance student resources becomes an educational issue. A piece of this logic was in place at Montford, where a parent room provided families a place to meet and take classes. This was the exception rather than the rule, but it is an example of the intent of the lighted schoolhouse, where the school becomes a kind of center for the community. This focus on resources is related to economic capital, needed to help families and educators develop class-based cultural capital that plays a crucial role in social class reproduction through schooling (e.g., Bourdieu 2000). But it also highlights the need for shared, dialogically constituted cultural capital to allow them to communicate with and support each other. This creates a new habitus that is not restricted by the weight of power relations of middle-class schools over poor and working-class families but, rather, is more consonant across home and school. Mainstream images of home-school relations are built on assumptions about "good" parenting practice, linked to the capital available to engage in school life but also the perception of capital needed to succeed.

Staffing.—A number of participants felt they could use additional personnel to facilitate links between home and school. Individual teachers often felt that they did not have time or expertise to make home-school connections and so valued the work of these staff members. While some schools had home-school liaisons in the past, in most districts this type of resource had disappeared with budget cuts. Darren Delmar, second-grade teacher at Farmington, missed the support provided by the school's home-school liaison:

We used to have a home-school liaison. But that position was cut. She was great, because she knew all the families, and you could talk to her. But she's gone. We have a district-wide one now, and she'd be the one we talk to, but it's very difficult. I mean, she's servicing, what—seven

schools? Thousands of kids. It's very hard, and for you to get help is pretty impossible.

At McMahon Elementary, the principal used Title I funds to hire a home-school coordinator who provides information to families through home visits and workshops. What these requests for additional staff represented was outsourcing relationships with families—they wanted someone to serve as the school's public face who could give them information or who could connect with families to teach parents. At other schools, participants mentioned that they could do a better job with families if they had access to more ESL (English as a second language) or bilingual staff, a school nurse, and a guidance counselor. Some might argue that SAGE schools did have additional staffing for family involvement—with fewer students, teachers essentially had additional resources in themselves to devote to home-school connections. But in the field of schooling educators often preferred to delegate (Bourdieu 1986) the job of linking home and school to particular staff, shifting the responsibility for making and maintaining home-school connections to someone else. Many teachers saw this “efficient” reorganization as a gift of more time, though we wonder about its effects on families. Did this socially distance and “sanitize” the boundary between home and school, thus maintaining separate fields?

Time.—Having fewer students was thought to provide various time resources—more time for individualized instruction, more time for planning, and more time to connect with fewer families. Some teachers used SAGE resources quite effectively for this purpose. In SAGE classrooms, some teachers coteach for all or part of each day, combining two classrooms of approximately 15 students into one classroom with 2 teachers and about 30 students. Mrs. Monroe and Mrs. Bronkowski organized their team-taught half days so that some time each day was devoted to family communication.

Mrs. Monroe: Right away in the morning is Bridget's time to look through the folders, see if there's any issues from the night before, that families are writing us and letting us know. That's when I can [be] sure everybody is working quietly and make sure everything is going as it should and that allows Bridget to do that parent contact.

Mrs. Bronkowski: Thank goodness there's two of us because otherwise I would be doing that in my prep, and I don't have the time, which is only a half hour by the time you walk the kids, get back, do that. It's done. So that's just so helpful to have two people to do those kinds of things. (Montford)

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This division of labor added families into the instructional time used in this classroom. It opened the educational field so that families were central to teaching and learning. Other participants keenly felt a lack of time for working with families. This was especially difficult in a budget-cutting era when some teachers were losing all discretionary noninstructional time. In this context, shrinking prep time served as teacher sanctions (Grenfell 2009), intensifying their need to make difficult choices in practice. June Allenton, a second-grade teacher at Gallows, talked about how—as the old saying tells us—time is money. She felt her work with families getting squeezed out as she lost planning time and took up other duties:

I could use more time to make more positive phone calls. I don't always do that as much as I'd like to. My job is getting harder because I have so much more to do because of the budget cuts. I also think it would be really good if I could get some time freed up where I could go to the parents' houses. I have done that against the advice of my administration and the union. Kids are very impressed that I would take the time to go and see them at their home. And it's amazing what you learn about a child in just those five minutes at their house. I think it's very, very empowering.

We've had three specials and [next year] we're cut down to one. So that's going to cut into our collaborative planning time and our ability to keep up with the demands of our job. And that's going to make it harder for us to reach out to parents. Sometimes that's the last thing that happens because we have to do the paperwork and we have to grade the papers and we have to help the kids and sometimes that's the last thing, and we're too tired.

Mrs. Allenton's comments highlight an important issue in our SAGE fieldwork over three years—that SAGE is implemented in a broader context that shapes what is possible. Just as educational networks should span micro-, meso-, and macro-levels (Grenfell 2009), poor connections threaten the development of equitable home-school relations. The ability to extend educational attention to families is constrained by issues beyond the SAGE program. The fiscal environment in schools today has pared budgets down beyond the bone—teachers told us that there was no money for photocopying, no money for paper, no money for planning time. With fewer resources devoted to activities for families, some administrators attempting to control how teachers connected with families, and growing concerns about the resources that families brought to school, SAGE educators felt pressed to offer more with less. And some just

ran out of gas. There were only so many after-school activities one could go to when you were exhausted. With a guilty look, this is what Mrs. Felton from Montford told us:

I don't know, to be real honest with you. There are some events that I choose to go to and some that I don't. I don't go to every one because I have a life too (laughs). . . . My children are old—I have a senior in high school, and my son is in college, but I still have things that I'm interested in outside of school so that, you know, if my night is open, then I will go over, and if it's not, then I've got my life too.

Building relationships with families is a time-consuming and energy-intensive process. It requires information about what families have and what they need, it requires human capital to invest their time in creating activities that connect the school and home, it is facilitated through funding that supports staff working outside of their contract day and for incentives or materials for families. And to do it well, you cannot rest on your laurels—you take stock of your most recent activity, go back to the drawing board, and design something even better next time.

Discussion

Any policy drawn up in order to open up accessibility to educational success . . . is bound to fail since it would entail a form of pedagogic work that runs counter to the “interests of the dominant classes who delegate its pedagogic authority to it.” Any notion of a “general interest” is purely idealist since, “none of the functions of the educational system can be defined independently of a given state of the structure of class relations.” (Bourdieu and Passeron [1970], quoted in Grenfell [2008], 159)

Bourdieu points out that change in education is facilitated and constrained by cultural power systems. These power systems are conservative, protecting the relative advantage held by the dominant class. It is within this system that the SAGE program was created to ameliorate poverty-related differences in opportunity. SAGE's legislative focus on families is framed in that conservative context but also the current attention to producing performance. Today's schools are characterized by laser-like focus on the production of achievement. Time, attention, and financial and human capital are dedicated to a very specific set of student outcomes. Even relationships with families are framed in terms of supporting achievement, either through research that argues that parents' involvement is worth the investment for a payoff in student test scores

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or as the focus of programming that is designed to educate parents to be more effective education agents. The SAGE program is an interesting venue to examine the role of families in the education process. It presents an opportunity to increase the resources that teachers have to connect with families; both the class size reduction and the lighted schoolhouse components are designed to enhance social networks and capital available to families. The hopeful intents of the legislation were met with deeply held ideas about what families bring to school and practices that limited the degree to which educators could look for resources outside the school.

We detailed how SAGE classroom activities were often designed to inform families about instructional programs and to connect reluctant families to school. Most teachers described the challenges of getting parents into the classroom: parents whose work schedules conflicted with classroom needs, who could not afford transportation, and those who had negative experiences with schools. These explanations provided an easy out for already stressed teachers who could not fit families into their educational picture in a simple way. A habitus of separation, in which home and school were only loosely coupled, dominated much of the talk and action of educators in a program designed to lessen the gap. Some teachers decided that classroom connections needed to be organized from the families' perspectives. Montford's Hopes & Dreams conferences invited families to share their expectations with the school. By beginning the year with listening, many of the Montford teachers felt that they were in a better position to suggest strategies that might work for families. Their suggestions were informed by their knowledge of family resources and needs, and the seeds of a relationship had been planted. It was the Montford story that prompted us to explore a slight variation on a traditional reading of Bourdieu. We wanted to examine how home-school relations might be read differently if families were seen as having a productive habitus with relevant capital vis-à-vis the school.

Schoolwide activities designed by school people were most successful when they responded to particular family needs. These school-based activities were built on the idea that education must be a partnership between home and school, but the idea of partnership took many forms across contexts. Teaching families about instructional content has become very popular as schools are challenged to increase student achievement, often using curricula that look very different from the experiences of either teachers or parents. This is especially important when district-level administrators tell teachers that other types of parent activities are a waste of time. However, the implementation had limitations. In focus group interviews held earlier in these SAGE schools, participants described how they often felt insulted by the teaching because the programs were not planned with family expertise in mind (Graue and Oen 2009). In using concerns about student test performance as the foundation

for designing family nights, activities may have missed the particular needs and interests of families who attended the activities. Further, these programs were incredibly labor intensive—they required planning, development of material and human resources, and the engagement of families and staff.

Another type of school-led partnership is exemplified in schools that provided weekly open houses where families received a meal, access to the computer lab, gym, and library. As rural schools, they provided these services in areas where families were often unable to access these types of activities in town during the day; the activities were designed to build social capital. Both schools used additional funding to support these activities. Developing an image of practice that was specific and related to particular needs in a local context is a shift of both educator habitus and field, framing action responsively.

One of the biggest challenges in developing home-school partnerships was the cost. SAGE funding was seen as a resource for staffing smaller classes and, in most cases, was insufficient to cover staffing. Virtually every school-based activity carried a cost. In a period of budgetary retrenchment, activities that linked home and school were often the first to be cut. Having fewer students should provide time resources—more time for individualized instruction, for planning, and for connecting with (comparatively fewer) families. Some teachers used SAGE resources quite effectively for this purpose. Other participants felt a lack of time keenly in their practice of working with families. This was especially difficult when some teachers were losing all discretionary non-instructional time. And it was not supported when teachers did not see parents as having something to offer the school in their cultural capital.

Building relationships with families is a time-consuming and energy-intensive process at the classroom, school, and district levels. Educators' abilities to extend their attention to families are constrained by issues beyond the SAGE program. With fewer and fewer resources devoted to activities related to families, and with growing concerns about the resources that families brought to school, SAGE educators felt pressed to offer more with less. As more is required within the classroom, less can be extended beyond it. Effective partnership with families requires information about what families have and need, human resources to create activities that connect the school and home, funding that supports staff working outside of their contract day, and incentives or materials for families. These needs are easily translated into Bourdieuan concepts, with resources as capital, dispositions to work with families as habitus, and the field seen as the ways educators configure their practice to include or exclude families. The SAGE legislation recognized the complexity of these relationships and specifically linked home, school, and community to the success of the class size reduction program through the lighted schoolhouse component. Lack of resources hampers the potential for full enactment of this element of the program. In turn, the potential benefits of class size reduction

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are limited. While it might be tempting to argue that more money would be a simple fix for this resource problem, Bourdieu (1986) notes that the value of capital rests in its social valuation.

To truly capitalize on the potential of SAGE's intentions, we can suggest several strategies. The first is to change the social valuation of family contributions to schooling, helping educators to appreciate what families bring to education. Development of programs that recognize and utilize family capital would provide resources for both families and educators. Finally, it will be vital to support educators in that recognition with sufficient time and education. SAGE's potential remains and is sometimes recognized, but we are convinced that there is more to be realized.

Bourdieu's theories illustrate the complexity of class-based power in those relationships. This reading is important for "rethinking" the work of Pierre Bourdieu in contemporary education, because as he states:

Enchanted adherence to the scholastic point of view is rooted in the sense, which is specific to academic elites, of natural election through gift: one of the least noticed effects of academic procedures of training and selection, functioning as rites of institution, is that they set up a magic boundary between the elect and the excluded while contriving to repress the differences of condition that are the condition of the difference they repress and consecrate. . . . This aristocratism owes its success to the fact that it offers to the inhabitants of scholastic universes a perfect "theodicy of their privilege." (Bourdieu 2000, 25)

When we consider school reform in an increasingly complex world, we need to cast a wide net in terms of our readings of policy execution. This will allow us to move beyond our own "theodicy of privilege" as scholars to reveal how "magic boundar[ies] between the elect and the excluded" can be changed by the work that school people are positioned to do. We have worked to show how a broad-based class size reduction reform had the potential to influence much more than the test scores. Therefore, we tried to reveal the production and reproduction of home-school relations and the place of those relationships in the nexus of school improvement.

The research community has had an enduring fascination with the topic of home-school relations, and much of that foundational work has been critically interpretive, portraying the work of the middle class in framing the habitus and practice of schooling. Future research could work to be explicitly transformative, recognizing that both diverse families and mainstream educators have specific capital that can and should bring value to learning. Frameworks for practice, policy, and research from this perspective would take what has been to date a deficit model and articulate an asset-based approach. From the research side this would require designs that (a) describe the family re-

sources available across contexts and (b) build models that would recognize that relationships—including those forged between home and school—are resources that must be activated to be generative (Cohen et al. 2003). This would be moving beyond correlational work that links particular class-based practices with class-based outcomes, while still recognizing the power that class plays in schooling success. It would involve design work that identifies social and cultural practices in all homes and school that can be built upon in learning, much like that advocated within Gonzalez and colleagues' *Funds of Knowledge* (Gonzalez et al. 2005). Careful empirical analysis of resources, curriculum, instructional practices, and student outcomes would help provide evidence that capital can be transformed across sites of practice. The result would be a type of hybrid field, one that is mutually assimilative.

Notes

1. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, amendments to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. 6301 *et seq.*
2. Bourdieu (1986) outlined three types of capital: economic capital, which represents money or its investment in things like property rights; cultural capital, which is often conceptualized in the form of educational credentials; and social capital, which describes the relations and social networks that connect individuals.
3. Prior years' research classified three levels of school achievement: low achieving, rapidly improving, and high achieving. See publications at <http://varc.wceruw.org/sage/> for more information on these classifications.
4. Each SAGE teacher in the school was offered a \$5 gift card for completing the 16-item instrument. There were 100 respondents and a response rate of 85 percent.
5. The 33-item SAGE End of Year (EoY) report is completed on an annual basis by a representative of each SAGE school. In 2007, the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER) teamed with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to create an instrument for submission via the Internet that would be useful for both program administration and research. Representatives from 480 schools (representing a total of 6,198 SAGE classes) completed the report in the spring of 2007.
6. Available publicly at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sig/index.html>.
7. We are grateful to Denise Oen for the fieldwork on which this vignette is based.

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