Slide 9 – Reasons Some Parents Are Not Involved
Research findings about why some parents are not involved in schools may surprise many teachers. Sometimes educators assume parents who are not active in school activities simply are not concerned about their student’s education. However, the following research findings listed below reveal some parents have justifiable reasons for not attending school functions (Finders and Lewis, 1994; Clark, 1995; and Bianchi & Robinson, 1997):

- The work schedules of many parents do not allow them to attend school functions at times convenient for school personnel;
- Parents who must work evenings have difficulties helping their children with homework;
- Many parents who did not graduate from high school are embarrassed about the lack of formal education;
- School personnel often use technical jargon, which some parents do not understand;
- Some parents, especially those from low-income backgrounds, do not believe school personnel really want their involvement. However, most low-income parents are very concerned about their children’s education because they understand how educational opportunities often result in socio-economic advancement.

Slide 11 – Parental Involvement and Student Success (cont.)
- Equality of Educational Opportunity Report (Coleman et al., 1966)
  - Parental involvement was an important predictor of academic achievement in schools.
  - Schools with high levels of parental involvement typically had much higher levels of academic achievement than did those schools with little parental involvement.
- Bianchi and Robinson (1997):
  - Parental expectations of academic achievement significantly affect children’s attitudes about the importance of school.
- Henderson and Berla (1994):
  - Increases in parental involvement result in higher graduation rates, better attendance, and higher completion rates of homework.

Slide 12 – Involving Parents at the Classroom Level
Teachers can keep parents apprised of student performance, homework assignments, and future classroom events through letters home, email messages, and or phone calls to parents. Some communication between teachers and parents needs to concentrate on positive themes such as calls home to inform parents their children completed an excellent science project (Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel, 2001).
Slide 14 – Parent-Teacher Conferences
In terms of preparing for effective parent-teacher conferences, teachers can provide parents with academic and attendance records and samples of student work.

In addition, teachers need to give parents prior notice about respective conferences so that parents can arrange their work schedules in advance and so that teachers are able to determine if an interpreter (e.g., another teacher, counselor, trusted parent) is needed. Parents who are English language learners need to feel welcome at school and to know they will be able to communicate with teachers (Burden and Byrd, 2010).

Equally important, when teachers discuss problems with parents, they need to present the respective situation in factual ways and to avoid judgmental statements. For instance, if a student has not turned in 7 of the last 10 homework assignments, then the teacher needs to show the parents the student’s record. Using objective comments helps to clarify problems and reduces the chances for conflicts or misunderstandings. Also, when a teacher shows concern for the student and is open to parents’ suggestions about how to help the student, parents are more inclined to trust the teacher and to keep avenues of communication open.

When parents do not respond to a teacher’s efforts to meet, teachers can send follow-up messages and show their appreciation when the parent does respond.

Slide 15 – School-wide Efforts to Increase Parental Involvement
Research has shown:

- When needs assessments are conducted to identify the concerns of parents, parents are more inclined to become involved because they believe their input is valued.
- Parents should be part of key school committees that set policy, approve curriculum, or establish guidelines for various school events. In this respect, a collaboration model is developed to include parents with all other school personnel.
- School districts need to conduct workshops at the request of parents, who may want training about various parenting skills or about ways to help their children with homework, reading, or mathematics.
- The establishment of a parent-teacher liaison to keep parents informed about student progress and other school-related activities.
- The development of community involvement with businesses, religious organization, and other community groups (e.g., Lion’s Club) to expand community involvement with organizations interested in helping children, adolescents, and young adults.
Vertical teaming requires teachers to work with other teachers one grade below and above them to ensure that the curriculum is sequenced in a logical manner. For instance, a third grade teacher may work with both the second and fourth grade teachers on mathematics concepts to ensure second grade students are prepared for third grade and third grade students have the prerequisite skills for fourth grade.

Horizontal teaming provides teachers with opportunities to work with teachers from their own grade or content areas.

Professional Development Planning Teams organize professional development activities and in-service training for teachers to continue their professional development to stay current with best practice and new policies.

Site-based management decision making provides teachers opportunities to serve on committees which make recommendations to administrators about various decisions concerning:
- school regulations and policies;
- curriculum innovations;
- the school calendar;
- the creation of innovative programs;
- ways to increase parental involvement;
- or to improve any other school-related function or activity.

Some specialists such as diagnosticians and school psychologists assist teachers in their work with students while others work as supervisors in that they oversee the instructional practices of teachers such as:
- special education, bilingual, and ESL directors;
- science, mathematics, language arts, or social studies coordinators;
- technology coordinators.

A collegial group of administrators and school staff who are united in their commitment to student learning.
- Share a vision, work and learn collaboratively, visit and review other classrooms, and participate in decision making.
- The benefits to the staff and students include a reduced isolation of teachers, better informed and committed teachers, and academic gains for students.
• Is seen as a powerful staff-development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement.
• A good book that describes this: “Zapp! In Education”.

Slide 36 – Professional Development
Teachers have the following options to complete their 150 hours of Continuing Professional Development:
• workshops;
• distance learning;
• conferences;
• university courses;
• self-study;
• published written work;
• inservice training and staff development.

Staff Development- Most school districts have made strong commitments to provide staff development opportunities for teachers so that they are able to stay current with research-based best teaching practices (Borich, 2011). As society becomes more diverse and the needs of student change to some extent from decade to decade, teachers need to stay current in the professional knowledge-base of teachers. School districts often offer a wide array of teacher training session focusing on the following themes to note a few examples:
• classroom management;
• teaching reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies;
• diversity training;
• critical thinking;
• cooperative learning;
• classroom assessment;
• and ways to increase parental involvement.

Slide 40 Teacher Mentoring Programs
As Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) have noted, beginning teachers have to teach and learn to teach. Teaching is a higher cognitive activity; consequently, it is not surprising that research on learning to teach has shown becoming an expert teacher takes several years (Munby, Russell, and Martin, 2001). Some mentors observe lessons of new teachers and include conferences before and after a given lesson is taught to provide feedback about the strengths of the lesson as well about tips for improvement. Equally important, mentors helps mentees to understand how learning theories guide practices and how reflecting mindfully on practice guides theory (Dewey, 1993). Reflective practice leads to the self-assessment of teachers and improvements in teaching.
Slide 51 – Individualized Education Program (IEP)
Here are some of the requirements for written IEP’s as mandated by the IDEA Act:

- statements about the child’s present level of educational performance;
- statements about annual and short-term goals and objectives;
- statements about specific special education and related services to be provided to the child and the extent to which the child will be able to participate in general educational programs;
- the projected dates for the initiation of services and the anticipated duration of the given services;
- statements about the objective criteria, evaluation procedures, and schedules for determining, at least on an annual basis, whether short-term objectives are being achieved;
- IEP’s must be reviewed each year by a parent/guardian, student, a qualified professional who recently has evaluated the student, a teacher, and another party (usually a special education professional or the principal). The ARD committee makes recommendations about an appropriate placement for the student and meets at least once a year.

Slide 57 – Student Rights and Due Process
A student facing possible suspension or expulsion has the right under the guidelines of due process to prepare a defense. Other than the Brown decision of 1954, Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent School District is the most influential U. S. Supreme Court case of the 20th Century in terms of school law.

Slide 58 – Suspension/Expulsion
There is an exception, however, in that principals can use their authority to issue an emergency expulsion before a hearing if there is strong evidence that students, school personnel, or school property are potentially at risk. In this case, the principal’s primary responsibility is to protect students, school personnel, and school property from harm. No one wants another Columbine incident to occur. Nevertheless, a student who is expelled on an emergency basis still has the opportunity for a hearing at a later date as required by due process.

Slide 59 – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Teachers need to understand:

- A student’s records (e.g., such as grades) are only to be given to the student, parents/guardians, or school personnel who are directly involved in the student’s program;
- A student’s records are not to be shared with other students or their parents/guardians.
- Grade reports and other student records ought not to be left in the open where others may be able to view this confidential information.

Slide 61 – Child Abuse
The question frequently arises, “Can I Be sued if I am wrong, and there is no child abuse?” Understand that Texas law requires you to make the call, and you have immunity from possible lawsuits even if you are wrong about your assumption a child is being abused. The only reason a person would be vulnerable
to a lawsuit is if s/he reported child abuse to maliciously hurt a parent's reputation; in this case, the teacher would be guilty of slander, which is against the law in and of itself.

**Slide 62 – Corporal Punishment**
Many school districts avoid corporal punishment and instead make the consequences of an infraction congruent with the infraction itself. For example, if a student spray painted an image on a brick wall, a logical consequence is to require the painter to remove the image from the wall even if it takes hours to do so (Dreikers, Grunwald and Pepper, 1998).

**Slide 63 – Copyright Laws, the Fair-Use Exception, and Acceptable Use Policy**
Instances where you can make copies of copyrighted material:

- a complete work of prose if it is less than 2,500 words;
- a poem of 250 words or less;
- an excerpt from a work of prose if it is less than 1,000 words and less than 10% of the work;
- one graph, chart, etc. from an article or book,
- a back up copy of software if used for the teaching context (Henderson, 2006).

In addition, teachers need to be aware that each school district has an **Acceptable Use Policy**, which consists of a district's guidelines concerning the proper use of computers, Internet resources, and other school resources; School districts typically require teachers to sign a copy of its Acceptable Use Policy to show their understanding of and willingness to comply with the district’s respective guidelines.