

The Effect of Parental Involvement in Educational Process

Keramida Konstantia

Doctorate of Applied Informatics
University of Macedonia
Teacher of Applied Informatics in Secondary Education
Greece
keramidakon@gmail.com

Abstract: *The involvement of parents in the educational process is associated with improving the efficiency of the school. In addition, the involvement of parents in their children's education is an important predictor of school success. This involvement is supported by the development of programs and practices with a purpose to strengthening and promoting the parental intervention in educational process. In case of the Greek educational system, which characterized of interculturalism, parents are carriers of innovative and groundbreaking ideas and opinions, contributing to social osmosis and contributing to the efficient operation of the school. Certainly, in any case, both the school and the family must work, having always as priorities the development of the children and the satisfaction of all rights of students. Of course, a necessary condition for the implementation of all the above is the appropriate infrastructure and information to parents on issues concerning with the organization and function of the school unit. Moreover, there are six types of involvement of parents, who are now accepted by the majority of researchers and are analyzed in many studies. These types are the following: 1. Basic obligations of families, 2. Basic obligations of schools, 3. Involvement at school, 4. Involvement in learning activities at home, 5. Involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy, 6. Collaboration and exchange with community organizations. Of course, the effective involvement of parents in their children's education involves training seminars, which are available to parents who wish to participate actively in decision-making and control of the school unit. With the guidance and support of parents by teachers are established conditions of cooperation, solidarity and respect. A necessary condition for the implementation of all the above constitutes the existence of a decentralized education system, in which teachers and parents operate with autonomous ways. In addition, teachers should realize that parents of children aren't threat of the school. Instead, they are partners and have common goals and common visions. At the same time, parents must realize that teachers act with the basic goal to make better the future for their children, to create the schools' success and to improve the efficiency of the school.*

Keywords: *Parents' Involvement, Types of Involvement, Educational Process, Greek Educational System.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The involvement of parents in the educational process is associated with improving the efficiency of the school. This position is a basic belief and this is confirmed by the international literature (Epstein, 1992, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, Smit & Van Esch, 1996, Fan & Chen, 1999, Edwards & Alldred, 2000, Epstein, 2001, Griffith, 2001, Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007). The involvement of parents in their children's education is an important predictor of school success (Mixelonakou-Keke, 2006, Hill & Tyson, 2009). In global level, all the reform efforts undertaken in the sector of education include the involvement of parents in the educational process.

This involvement is supported by the development of programs and practices that have as a purpose to strengthening and promoting the parental intervention in educational process. Therefore, is necessary to develop an effective two-way communication between parents and the school and to create conditions for effective cooperation between teachers and student's families (Epstein, 2001, Angelides, Theophanous & Leigh, 2007). A necessary condition for the implementation of all the above are the perceptions for the improvement of the quality of education from any person who is involved in the educational process, whether they are teachers, whether they are parents or students.

2. THE GREEK LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE IN THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS

In the last decades in Greece, according to law 1566/1985 which refers to the structure and function of primary and secondary education is provided to the parents of public school students the opportunity of creation a Parents' Association. This association bears the name of the school, (Article 53, Paragraph 2). Particularly, all parents who have children in school take part in the general meeting of the association. In addition, this association elects each every two years the seven-member council.

Actions of the board are except of the implementation of the decisions of the general meetings and the representation, action and informing parents. For example, it is appropriate to report and G2/4867/92 G2/4832/90 circulars relating to subjects involving parents such as trips, school activities and committees that contribute to the development of the school (Dodontsakis, 2001). The involvement of parents in the educational process acts as a catalyst to improving the quality and formulation of educational practice and school unit. The Parents' Council in primary education plays the role of guardian of the rights of students of the school. Furthermore, children which are enrolled in primary education didn't have usually the ability to express themselves clearly and comprehensively. Therefore, the Council has the opportunity, with several ways which are specific and relevant to the age of the students, to express themselves and to participate in activities beyond the limited curriculum. The same law provides, however, all the institutions in which the club participates with representatives.

Additionally, in accordance with the provision G2/1870/96, parents who acting as professionals have the ability to cooperate with the school, during the course of the school guidance. This action has aiming the presentation of their knowledge and experiences to the students. In this way students receive appropriate and timely information on various labor issues in order to develop a comprehensive view of the jobs of their choice. Moreover, in accordance with the provision G2/517/98, the development cooperation between school and parents is defined as one indicator of evaluation of educational work and teachers.

The Parents' Association is an important institution and an integral element of the school council and the school community. The importance of the parents' association is connected with the fact that members of council are the director and the teachers' association of the school, who have the primary responsibility for administration of the school, and a representative of the municipality.

It is important that the members of the council, participating in these bodies have the potential for significant interventions primarily on issues related to the school administration, the management of financial resources, safety and hygiene of the premises of the school, and secondarily on pedagogical issues, such as the education and extracurricular activities. Influential role has the solution of each issue and problem with the initiative and responsibility of the council of the association, in collaboration with other institutions of the school community.

However, despite the efforts that have been implemented in order to strengthen the cooperation of parents and the school, parents haven't the opportunity to participate in the educational process and in decisions actively concerning, for example, with the curriculum, the choice of school and the evaluation of teachers. Therefore, the school must promote and further strengthens the collaboration of all stakeholders of the school community, with particular emphasis on the role of parents. In the Greek educational system, which characterized of interculturalism, parents are carriers of innovative and groundbreaking ideas and opinions, contributing to social osmosis and contributing to the efficient operation of the school. Certainly, in any case, both the school and the family must work, having always as priorities the development of the children and the satisfaction of all rights of students. Of course, a necessary condition for the implementation of all the above is the appropriate infrastructure and information to parents on issues concerning the organization and function of the school unit.

3. FIELDS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

According to the study of Epstein (1992) the involvement of parents in education is multifactorial theme, which is identified by six key areas of their involvement in their children's education (see Figure 1). The six types of involvement of parents, who are now accepted by the majority of

The Effect of Parental Involvement in Educational Process

researchers and are analyzed in many studies (Eccles & Harold, 1993, Georgiou, 1996, Edwards & Alldred, 2010), are the following:

- i. **Basic obligations of families:** This type is relative with supporting the children by the family in curricular and extracurricular issues. Parents must help to shape positive learning conditions for children in order to response in school requirements. Moreover, the school success of children depends largely on the family environment (Georgiou, 1998, Hill & Taylor, 2004, Jowett & Baginsky, 2006). Certainly, an influential role in shaping on supportive climate in school plays the home environment. The school, through the implementation of educational programs which aimed at parents, contributes both to inform parents about topical issues relating to their children, such as drugs, stress, depression, sexuality and guiding parents to cope with these properly. Additionally, these programs contribute to the development of effective control strategies for their children.
- ii. **Basic obligations of schools:** such as communication between the school and families of children in matters related to school programs and students' performance. Meetings between parents and teachers, telephone communication between parents and school or teachers with the family and the control performance of the students to their parents by teachers are some examples of the communication between school and parents. The appropriate information to parents about important changes taking place in the timetable and the curriculum of children has an important role in communication between schools and parents (Eccles & Harold, 1993).
- iii. **Involvement at school:** and voluntary participation of parents in school. Parents acting as helpers and supporters of events implemented within the school unit facilitate the work of teachers and contribute to the achievement of educational goals. Specifically, parents have the opportunity to provide support to the school and to actively participate and to attend students' festivals, sporting events, theatrical and musical performances and lectures. In addition, parents are able to organize trips, visits to museums, exhibitions and libraries (Eccles & Harold, 1993).



Fig1. *Types of the Parental Involvement in Education*

Source. Epstein, 1992.

- iv. *Involvement in learning activities at home*: This type includes the supervision of learning activities by students' parents at home. It is important to implement seminars of teachers for parents in basic school subjects such as Language, Mathematics and Computers. Ultimate goals of these programs are the training of parents in new technologies, the acquiring of basic knowledge and the strengthening of their self-confidence (Eccles & Harold, 1993).
- v. *Involvement in decision making, governance, and advocacy*: The stimulation of parental involvement in school management enables the design on a daily basis the activities which are happen in the school. This stimulation contributes to the submission of parents' proposals and claims, to the expression of their opposition and to the lobbying and control, in order to improve the educational process. It should be noted that global level there is a tendency to strengthen the role of parents in the exercise of administration of schools at all levels, aiming to create a sense of ownership towards of school (Eccles & Harold, 1993).
- vi. *Collaboration and exchange with community organizations*: Collaboration includes trade and economic cooperation with the community. The connection of school unit with the labor market of the each area, funding of school by local authorities for the implementation of specific educational and training programs, the use of resources and services which are provided from the wider community, and the evaluation of educational work in the level of school unit by the local community, enhance the activities of the school and the initiatives of parents (Eccles & Harold, 1993, Milonakou-Keke, 2006).

Ofcourse, in a comprehensive program of cooperation between the school, family and community should coexist all the above fields/types of the parental involvement in education. School with comprehensive programs encompassing the first five types of involvement help parents to build home conditions for learning, communicate with schools, become productive volunteers at school, take responsibilities at home to support and motivate learning and development, and contribute to decisions that affect the schools and their children. There are, in fact, hundreds of practices from which schools may choose to operationalize each type of involvement. The last, six type of involvement is a separate type because differs from the others. For example, school-community, family-community, and school-family-community connections may have separate and combined effects on children's learning. Or, community groups and individuals may provide resources to strengthen the other five types of school and family connections.

4. DIMENSIONS OF THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

The involvement of parents in the educational process is a form of socio-political and educational action, which has primary importance (Smit & Van Esch, 1996, Hill & Taylor, 2004, Angelides et al., 2007, Edwards & Alldred, 2010) (see Figure 2).

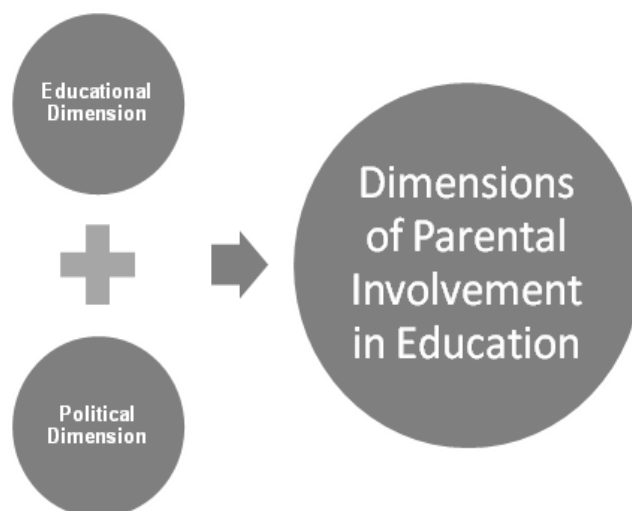


Fig2. Dimensions of Parental Involvement in Education

Source. Dodontsakis, 2001

4.1. The Educational Dimension of Parental Involvement

The educational dimension of the involvement of parents in their children's education is mainly oriented to the family, and is determined both by involving parents in activities carried out in the house, and the involvement of parents in activities carried out on site of school, and are characterized by educational or teaching and non-teaching dimensions (see Figure 3).

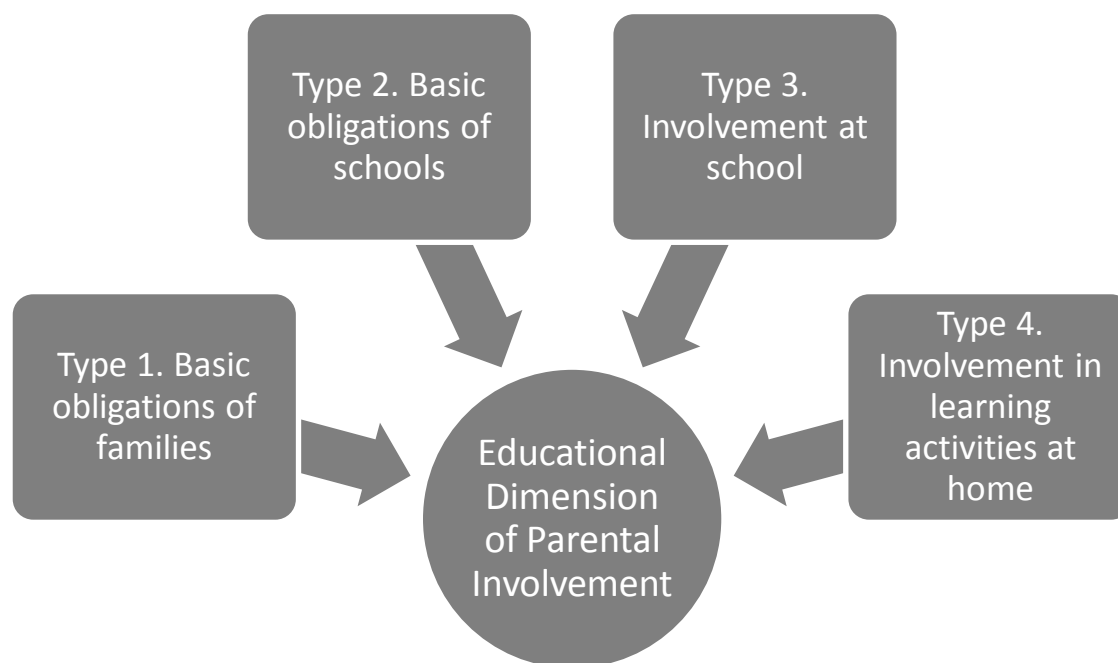


Fig3. Educational Dimension of Parental Involvement

Source. Epstein, 1992.

Specifically, the daily discussions between parents and their children on their home works and their school program, the control by parents of work carried out at home, and the supervision by their parents of extracurricular activities of their children are significant parameters that give educational dimension to the involvement of parents in education.

In addition, the participation of parents in teaching and non-teaching activities is determined by the communication and cooperation with teachers on issues which are related to the behavior and performance of their children. Also, an significant parameter that describes the aforementioned parental involvement is the voluntary participation in school activities, such as organizing and implementing educational tours and theatrical performances, and their involvement with personal work on cleaning and maintenance of school building well as through material means, such as the construction of gifts and the preparation of meals for organizing school bazaar and financial support of children. Furthermore, the provision of appropriate information, guidance and assistance to the families of students in sectors which are related to the curriculum, the school guidance and stress management contribute to a supportive environment for learning (Smit & Van Esch, 1996).

4.2. The Political Dimension of Parental Involvement

The political dimension of parental involvement in education is determined both by involving parents in decision-making related to the governance aspects of the school unit, and by their collaboration with the community. Specifically, parents have the opportunity to participate in school governance as elected, acting as representatives of the parents' association, and as trustees and as modulators of strategy (Robinson, Timperley, Parr & McNaughton, 1994, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Still, they can participate in broader political processes, implemented either at local, regional or national level, and related to the educational process (Crump & Eltis, 2006). The collaboration with the school leads to strengthen school programs and learning practices (see Figure 4).

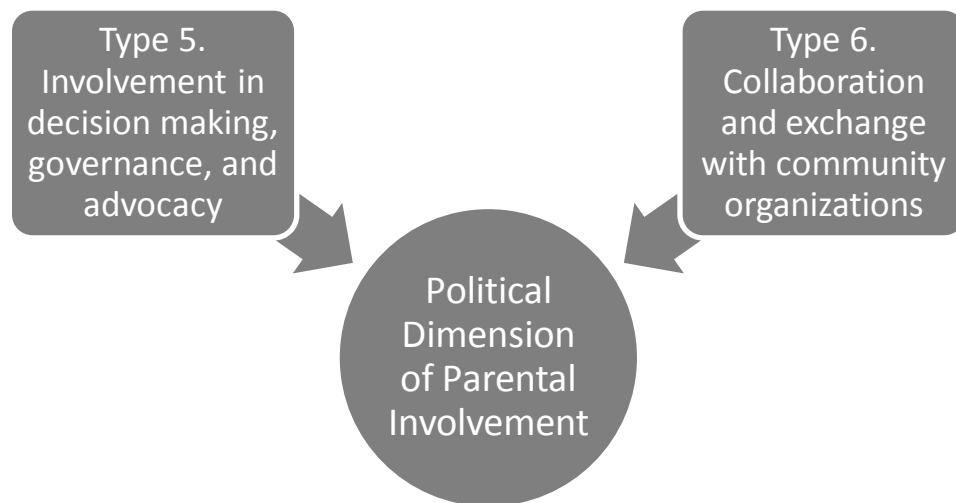


Fig4. *The Political Dimension of Parental Involvement*

Source. Epstein, 1992.

In addition, the involvement of parents in the administration of the school unit contributes to the formation of new relationships and roles. Specifically, the role of the consumer / client triggered by parents exercising their right to choose the school they will attend their children and by consuming, through their children, of the cultural goods offered by the school (Smit & Van Esch, 1996). Also, the role of parent as trustee is conducted by enhanced control over financial matters of the school unit. Finally, the roles of participant and of the creator of strategy are enhanced through the involvement of each parent in the assessing the school unit and educators. This engagement is concentrated to requests and proposals and to the lobbying. Therefore, the activation of all these roles contributes to both satisfaction of the parents' needs, and to exercise of their rights as citizens (Smit & Van Esch, 1996, Jowett & Baginsky, 2006, Angelides et al. 2007).

The involvement of parents in education is a multifunctional subject, which is changing and evolving constantly. To determine the role of parental involvement in school life is appropriate to modeling the situations and processes that take place in the school environment, and promote cooperation between parents and teachers. In this paper we present the three categories of models which are developed by Dodontsakis (2001). Dodontsakis attempts to describe the involvement of parents in school, and their relationship with their teachers.

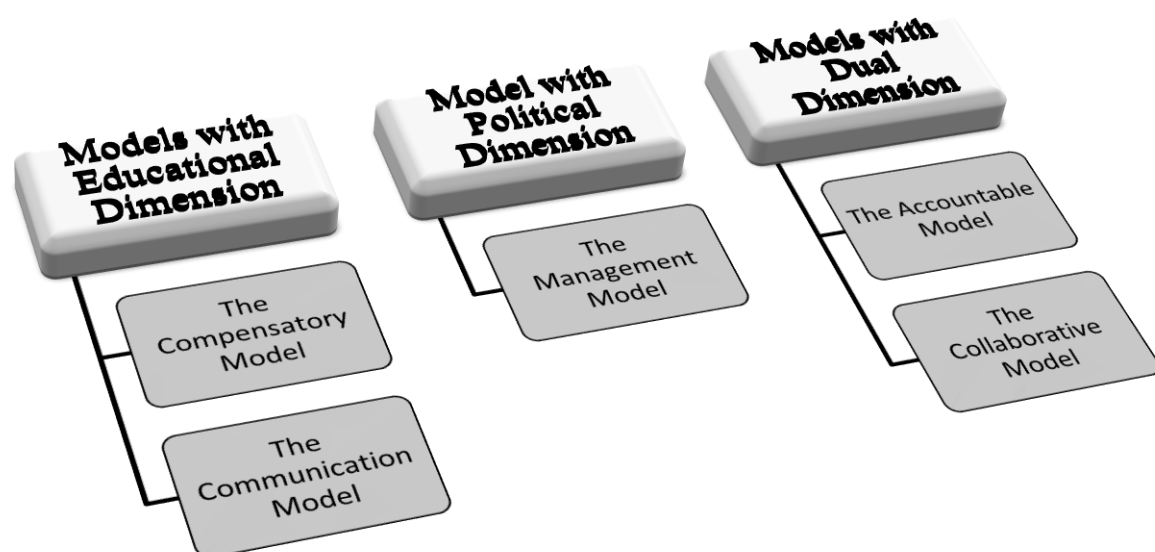


Fig5. *Models of Parental Involvement in Education*

Source. Dodontsakis, 2001.

5. MODELS WITH EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION

The compensatory model: This model supports the aspect that the family characteristics, such as family situation, income and family size, education and interests of parents, are significant factors that affect directly the educational success and development of children.

The communication model: This model supports the aspect that providing continuous information in parents ensures the effective participation of parents in the school. In addition, this model focuses on the ways of communication between teachers and parents. This model treats parents as helpers and supporters and as instructors. In this way the parents act as companions and supporters of teachers.

6. MODEL WITH POLITICAL DIMENSION

The management model: The political dimension of the involvement of parents in schooling emerges from the election of the parents' association at school, attending their children. In the management model parents express their opinions, their suggestions, and their differences both at the school level, at the Director and at the teachers and, at the municipal level, at county and at central departments of education.

7. MODELS WITH DUAL DIMENSION

The model of "efficiency ratio" or the "accountable" model: This model considers the parents as guests of the schools, because they have the right to choose free the school that their child attends. The free choice of school by their parents stems from personal freedom as citizens. Utilizing this freedom they have the opportunity to choose the services they need. It stems also from the performance ratio - accountability of schools about the projects that the schools produce. This model aims to improve the effectiveness of schools, through the competition of schools and the prevalence of market forces in education (Dodontsakis, 2001).

The collaborative model: This model is the blending of two other models, namely communicational model, with educational dimension, and the management model with political dimension. In this model, parents play an important and active role in decision-making through the development of relationships with the local community. They act as partners in policy making in the field of education, such as, for example, the enrichment of the curriculum, and improving the methodology of assessing the performance of children (Robinson et al., 1994, Georgiou, 1996, Jowett & Baginsky, 2006, MaClure & Walker, 2010). Those people who are involved in education have common goals, and have cultivated each other mutual respect. The differences and the obstacles are faced with practical compromises. All persons are accountable for the project that they undertake. In addition, they participate in anticipated in the profits or losses.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The issues of parental involvement in school and cooperation with teachers cannot be addressed in isolation, because they are a unique process, whose components interact and are interdependent. Moreover, the complexity of the roles played by parents, such as the role of parent, citizen, manager, customer, in relation to their children's education makes inadequate the adoption of either compensatory model, in which the family environment is considered responsible for school failure of students, or the communication model. Specifically, in the communication model, the parent is not treated as citizen who is able to operate in the context of school education, through interventions in the management of the school and making suggestions for improving school effectiveness. This model is mainly limited to the ways of communication between parents and the school.

As regards the model of "efficiency ratio" or the "accountable" model seems inappropriate because it treats parent exclusive as customer, who have a right, under the laws of the market, to choose the school for their children, and to require improvement of quality in education. Therefore, in this model is exacerbated the competition between schools, and also is expanded the social, economic and cultural inequality. Let us not forget that teachers, as members of the free market system, primarily forced to work harder in fear dismissal, in case of reduction in the number of students in non-competitive schools, and secondarily, their evaluation, whereby they are characterized as inefficient and ineffective. Specifically, this model contributes to the

development of fierce and unfair competition among teachers in order to maintain their position. Besides, the right of parents to participate in decision-making of the school is approved that serves to improve school effectiveness. The right of free choice of school by their parents, and their involvement in curriculum creates unfair competitive conditions and rivalries at the school level.

Therefore, the model that covers the needs of parents, activating the role of the parent as co educator and as a citizen, is the collaborative model. This model emphasizes the democratic participation of parents in school governance (Jowett & Baginsky, 2006) and the right to profess their aspects in decision making. Of course, a prerequisite for the success of this model is to develop a decentralized education system, which will act in more relaxed central control. The parental involvement is not confined to the classroom level or school level, but it will grow under conditions, and at local, regional or national. In addition, important factor of success is the sufficient continuous information of parents on issues related to the educational process. In addition, parents act as facilitators of their children in matters of learning and guidance, always in collaboration with teachers.

The involvement of parents in decision making and in control of the education system as a whole helps to create conditions of trust between parents and teachers. Still, the education of both parents and teachers on topics that enhance cooperation between them, ensures the smooth operation of the school unit, increases the school success and academic achievement of students, and improves the school effectiveness.

9. BARRIERS AND CONFLICTS IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL

From the review of literacy is found that the constructive cooperation between schools and parents on issues of education, socialization and stimulation contributes positively to the academic performance of students, and school effectiveness. The involvement of parents in the education of students contributes to the development of attitudes, which cause the cultivation of knowledge and the development of skills and competencies which are important for later life.

However, the involvement of parents in their children's education is not free of obstacles and problems. These are connected to the lack of time on the part of parents, to the cognitive weakness and ignorance of parents on educational issues, to cultural and linguistic differences of parents and the reluctance of teachers. These problems are implicated with conflicts between parents and school. Preventing and avoiding them requires addressing educational achievement both by teachers and by parents of students as a shared responsibility (Georgiou, 1998, Hill & Taylor, 2004, Jowett & Baginsky, 2006).

The management of conflict developed in the context of cooperation between parents and the school primarily necessitates the training of teachers in various subjects. These are issues such as organizing regular meetings with parents, the action of parents as volunteers, administrators, speakers, organizers and partners, the counseling of parents on behavioral issues, and the cultural perceptions of parents from other countries, as well as the provision information in parents such is the assessing students and educational project, the learning strategies and the use of textbooks (Markadas, 2010). In this way, teachers will understand the importance of the involvement of parents in their children's education and its contribution to improving school effectiveness.

In addition, parents should receive systematic information from school. Also, on the initiative of teachers and local authorities should be set up training courses, which are targeted to parents, in order to parents have the knowledge to establish administrative, financial management of funds that are allocated to the operating costs of the school and to have the responsibility for finding resources. Moreover, the evaluation of the educational project involves setting up of mechanisms for regular and two-way communication with parents, and of the development of cooperation between school and parents.

10. CONCLUSIONS

All above support the drafting of the aspect that the involvement of parents in their children's education is a significant factor of school effectiveness. Specifically, students have better academic performance when their parents are active in the school environment. Increasing the degree of parental involvement in education is, in global level, one of the most important goals of

modern schools (Robinson et al., 1994, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, Crosnoe, 2001, Jowett & Baginsky, 2006, Green et al., 2007).

Of course, the effective involvement of parents in their children's education involves training seminars, which are available to parents who wish to participate actively in decision-making and control of the school unit. With the guidance and support of parents by teachers are established conditions of cooperation, solidarity and respect. A necessary condition for the implementation of all the above constitutes the existence of a decentralized education system, in which teachers and parents operate with autonomous ways.

In addition, teachers should realize that parents of children aren't threat of the school. Instead, they are partners of teachers who have common goals and common visions. At the same time, parents must realize that teachers act with the basic goal to make better the future for their children, to create the schools' success and to improve the efficiency of the school.

REFERENCES

- [1] Angelides, P., Theophanous, L. & Leigh, J., Understanding teacher – parent relationships for improving pre-primary schools in Cyprus, *Educational Review*. 58 (3), pp. 303-316 (2006).
- [2] Crosnoe, R., Academic orientation and parental involvement in education during high school, *Sociology of Education*. 74, pp. 210-230 (2001).
- [3] Crump, S. & Kenneth, E., Schools, parents and community: teaching and learning together?, *International Journal of Educational Research*. 25 (1), pp. 45-62 (1996).
- [4] Dodontsakis G., *The Common Orientation in Education: Another Strategy. (Koini poria stin ekpaideysi: mia alli stratigiki)*, Athens, Dardanos (2001).
- [5] Eccles, J. & Harold, R., Parent – school involvement during the early adolescent years, *Teachers College Record*. 94 (3), 568-587 (1993).
- [6] Edwards, E. & Alldred, P., A typology of parental involvement in education centring on children and young people: negotiating familialisation, institutionalisation and individualization, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. 21 (3), pp. 435-455 (2000).
- [7] Epstein, J. *School and family partnerships*. Στο M. Aiken (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, New York. MacMillan, 1992, pp. 1139-1151.
- [8] Epstein, J., *School Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*, USA, Westview Press (2001).
- [9] Fan, X. & Chen, M. Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: a meta – analysis, *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, Canada, (1999, April).
- [10] Georgiou, S., A study of two Cypriot school communities, *The School Community Journal*. 8 (1), pp. 73-91 (1998).
- [11] Georgiou, S., Parental involvement in Cyprus, *International Journal of Educational Research*. 25 (1), pp. 33-43 (1996).
- [12] Green, C., Walker, J., Hoover-Dempsey, K. & Sandler, M., Parents' motivation for involvement in children's education: an empirical test of a theoretical model of parental involvement, *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 99 (3), pp. 532-544 (2007).
- [13] Griffith, J., Principal leadership of parent involvement, *Journal of Educational Administration*. 39 (2), pp. 162-186 (2001).
- [14] Hill, N. & Taylor, L., Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: pragmatics and issues, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. 13 (4), pp. 161-164 (2004).
- [15] Hill, N. & Tyson, D., Parental involvement in middle school: a meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement, *American Psychological Association*. 45 (3), pp. 740-763 (2009).
- [16] Jowett, S. & Baginsky, M., Parents and education: a survey of their involvement and a discussion of some issues, *Educational Research*. 30, pp. 36-45 (1988).

- [17] Hoover-Dempsey, K. & Sandler, H., Parental involvement in children's education: why does it make a difference?, *Teachers College Record*. 97 (2), pp. 310-331 (1995).
- [18] McClure, M. & Walker, B., Disenchanted evenings: the social organization of talk in parent – teacher consultations in UK secondary schools, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. 21 (1), pp. 5-25 (2000).
- [19] Markadas, S., One Model of Parental Involvement in Greece in Education of Teaching Mathematics (Ena Montelo gia ton Prosdiorismo tis Gonikis Emploukis ton Ellinon Goneon stin Ekpaideysi ton Paidion tous sta Mathimatika), Ph. D. Thesis University of Western Macedonia, Available in National Record of Dissertation (2010).
- [20] Milonakou-Keke, I., *Modern Theoretical Approaches in Communication between School, Family and Community*. Athens, Atrapos (2006).
- [21] Robinson, V., Timperley, H., Parr, J. & McNaughton, S., The community – school partnership in the management of New Zealand schools, *Journal of Educational Administration*. 32 (3), pp. 72-87 (1994).
- [22] Smit, F. & Van Esch, W., Current trends in the partnership between parents and schools in the Netherlands, *International Journal of Educational Research*. 25 (1), pp. 67-73 (1996).