learningcommunity
OF DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES

Annual Evaluation Report 2014-2015

- Elementary Centers and Programs
- Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan
- Open Enrollment

In compliance with
§79-2104.02 & §79-2118

Submitted to the Nebraska Legislature
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The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

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Acknowledgements: The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties acknowledges the cooperation and assistance of the Nebraska Department of Education Data, Research and Evaluation Team: Dr. Dean Folkers, Senior Administrator; Pam Tagart, IT Applications Developer; Jill Aurand, IT Applications Developer; and Becky Hamm-Massey, IT Data/Database Analyst.

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Introduction

This Learning Community Annual Report contains a great deal of information about the various programs, progress and priorities of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. This report complies with 79-2102.02 and 79-2118. However, as a greater purpose, it provides in-depth descriptions, insights, and recommendations in relation to the work of the Learning Community. That work is best described in the 2013 Coordinating Council adopted mission statement:

> Together with school districts and community organizations as partners, we demonstrate, share and implement more effective practices to measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families in poverty.

As the Interim CEO, I want to provide some observations of the work of the Learning Community from a two month perspective. This is a perspective of someone who is still "learning" about the intricate collaboration that exists between numerous partners who are committed to addressing the educational needs of children in poverty. The following is a snapshot of some of the collaboration:

- **Early Childhood and Family Engagement Partnership /Learning Community Center of North Omaha** – Located at 1612 North 24th Street, this center encompasses these four major programs: Early Childhood Teaching Teams, Future Teacher Clinical Training sites, Childcare Director Training and Parent University. The partners at this facility include Metro Community College, the Omaha Public Library, and Educare. A partnership with the Omaha Public Schools also exists at Kellom and Conestoga Elementary Schools. This partnership provides 8 Early Childhood classrooms, family support and engagement, teacher coaching, and strong teacher and administrative leadership.
- **Family Learning Program/Learning Community Center of South Omaha** – This Center, located at 2302 "M" Street, is focused on helping parents to be their child's most important teacher. This is done through a Family Learning Program (in partnership with OneWorld Community Center) which includes Parenting Education, Navigator Services, English & Adult Learning and Crisis Intervention Support. The South Omaha Center was recently recognized by the White House as a "Bright Spot in Educational Excellence for Hispanics".
- **Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan/Buffet Early Childhood Institute** – This partnership has implemented the Douglas and Sarpy County School Superintendents Early Childhood Plan in a number of school districts. Positive program evaluations fuel the Learning Community's ability to adapt programs for the families with children who have not yet entered K through 12 public education. This growing capacity, coupled with year one of the Superintendents' Plan gives school districts in the Learning Community tremendous potential to carve out a thoughtful and strategic direction to improve student outcomes.
- **Pilot Programs / Member School Districts** – A number of school districts who are members of the Learning Community are involved in Instructional Coaching Programs, Extended Learning Time Programs and Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs.

These programs are not only impressive from an outside viewpoint, they are effective in meeting the mission of the Learning Community. We continue to evaluate these programs as is evident in this Annual Report. The Learning Community Council and staff will take the recommendations from this report and continue to make changes that provide for additional ways to serve the educational needs of children in poverty.

We thank you for your continued support in these efforts.

Keith Rohwer – Learning Community Interim CEO

Section I – Evaluation of Elementary Learning Programs

SECTION I. EVALUATION REPORT OF ELEMENTARY LEARNING PROGRAMS

External evaluation principal investigator: Lisa St. Clair, Ed.D., Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation, Munroe Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center. Prepared December 22, 2015.

Background

The elementary learning centers funding levy was established to launch innovative programs to impact the achievement of elementary students who face challenges in the educational environment due to poverty, limited English skills, or mobility.

Evaluation Approach and Rationale

Generally based upon a Utilization-Focused evaluation design (Patton, 2012), the evaluation plan employed multiple methods to describe and measure the quality of implementation, the nature of programming, and to report outcomes demonstrated by the elementary learning programs funded by the Learning Community (LC). These programs included the early childhood and family engagement programs at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha, Jump Start to Kindergarten, Extended Learning (Tutoring, After School, and Summer School programs). Instructional Coaching, and the Family Learning Program at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha. This evaluation measures the collective impact experienced by program participants (Kania, Hanleybrown, and Splansky Juster, 2014). Meaning, what outcomes were found for participants that may have been influenced by program participation, as well as many other factors experienced by the participant (e.g., school district efforts, other services, family support)?

The overarching evaluation questions were:

1. ***Implementation***: What was the nature and quality of implementation? Who accessed and participated in the program? Was there variation in implementation and if so, what factors contributed?
    a. What happened?
    b. For whom?
    c. What was the quality of implementation?
2. ***Academic focus***: What were short and long term outcomes related to academic achievement?
    a. Did other stakeholders report improvement in student learning or engagement (parents, school day teachers)?

b. Was there improvement in communication skills (literacy)?
c. Was there improvement in quantitative thinking skills (numeracy)?

3. ***Family support focus***: What did the program or school provide to families/parents that will allow greater student success in school?
    a. What processes did the program or school use to support the needs of families?
    b. What processes did the program or school use to develop resources for helping to meet those needs?

External Evaluation (EE) Process

Funding for the external evaluation (EE) of the Elementary Learning Center programs occurs through the Learning Community's ESU core services funds which are restricted to research and evaluation. These funds were identified in statute to support research and evaluation. UNMC Munroe Meyer Institute's Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation (ICPE) has served as the external evaluation team for the Elementary Learning Center programs since 2010.

The external evaluation process is implemented collaboratively with district and agencies. The EE team meets about monthly with a committee called "The Evaluation Collaborative" for the Learning Community. This committee is well attended by district research and evaluation leadership and/or designee of the superintendent, and/or superintendents; university staff from University of Nebraska Lincoln, Omaha, and Medical Center; leadership staff from the Learning Community; and research staff from the Nebraska Department of Education. The purpose of the Evaluation Collaborative meetings is to jointly share information, planning of evaluation, and sharing results of evaluation findings on a regular basis.

Another way the EE team works collaboratively with districts and agencies is to meet individually to plan their program evaluations. In Patton's Utilization Focused program evaluation model, the districts and agencies are the Primary Intended User (PIU) of the evaluation results and, therefore, are the EE team's primary customer. There are certainly common core requirements or features within the evaluations of common programs implemented across districts and agencies (one example being the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System or CLASS tool, University of Virginia). The purpose of using common measures, where possible, is to aide in aggregate reporting. Individual evaluation results are not shared with the Learning Community leadership or council—unless they may be reported directly to them by the school district or agency themselves. All reporting at the Learning Community leadership and council level is in aggregate. Further, the evaluation focuses on continuous improvement of programming, particularly in the early phases of a new project (first two or three years). Evaluation results are shared in real-time with agencies and districts to provide greater opportunity for improvement of programming in order to better meet the needs of students and families.

How does the Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation at Munroe Meyer Institute (ICEP) assure validity and quality of the evaluation reporting? The process used by ICPE is to collect data (such as direct assessment of preschool students, surveys, videos for the purpose of rating teacher/student interactions) directly in coordination with districts and agencies, to receive data from districts and agencies (student achievement and demographic data), and to compile, analyze, and report on data for two purposes. The two purposes are overall evaluation of the ELC programs of the Learning Community (reported within this report) and to share with districts and agencies.

ELC data are shared back with individual districts and agencies. First, they are shared to **assure accuracy**. Did the district or agency find the same result (e.g., effect size)? Second, they are shared once approved and finalized for the purpose of **promoting utilization of results**. Sometimes fostering utilization of results includes grouping multiple districts or agencies with the same type of programming for joint learning (such as occurred with the Jump Start to Kindergarten grantees).

The audience for the Evaluation Report prepared by the EE team is the Education Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Once districts or agencies have approved their evaluation results (meaning agreement was reached on what those results were) and on the descriptions of their programs, they are no longer permitted to ask for edits to the contents of the final evaluation report (other than minor proofreading corrections, of course). Further, the Learning Community leadership staff and council members are not permitted to request edits to the report (again, other than minor proofreading corrections).

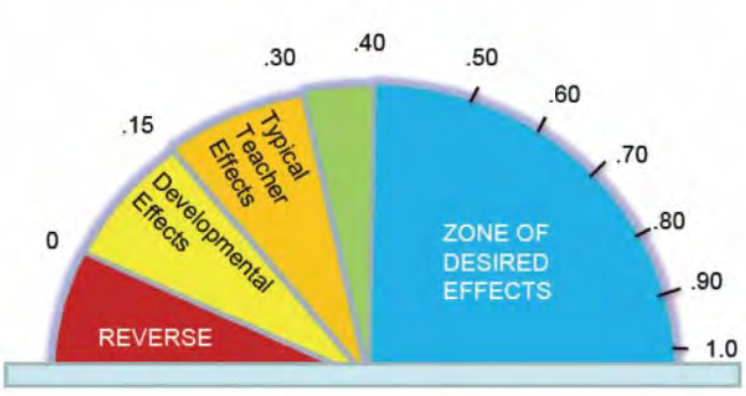
Evaluation team members are reliable in collecting and scoring assessment, observation, and rating tools. There are several processes used to assure the upmost accuracy of all data collected by ICPE staff members.

- Teacher completed tools: An ICPE member scores the protocol and then a second team member scores. If any differences are found, a master scorer re-scores the tool.
- Child measures (PLS, PPVT, Bracken): An ICPE member administers the assessment following the protocol of the examiner's manual. A second ICPE member double scores the assessment and checks for following of protocol (including re-calculating chronological age of child, rescoring, and re-interpretation of standard scores).
- Observational measures (ERS, CLASS, KIPS): Prior or concurrent to first observation or rating of the year, ICPE staff members re-anchor themselves with team members. In addition, CLASS has another reliability component completed online annually with the publishers of the tool (Teachstone). When the observation phase begins, an ICPE member observes and rates a classroom or representative teaching staff, or in the case of KIPS, a videotape of parent-child interactions. The observation may be in person (ERS) or on

video (KIPS, CLASS). Another team member will re-score the tool to assure numerical and protocol accuracy. If questions emerge, they are addressed by the leadership team. Concurrent reliability is completed throughout the year. For example, CLASS videos submitted by programs and districts may be scored by one or more evaluation team members and in some cases, every team member for inter-rater reliability practice and assessment. After reliability processes are completed, videos are either returned to the program or district (if requested) or deleted from UNMC servers. In the next evaluation year, the Kappa statistic will be used to measure inter-rater reliability (≥0.60). This is an improvement to the industry accepted practices of 'within 1' agreement on 80% or more of the items. By following the industry standard, "reliable" ratings may appear different. Therefore, by moving to using the Kappa statistic, ratings across raters should be essentially the same.

Measuring and Reporting on Program Impacts

To quantify program impacts, we will report all pre and post measures relative to significance (were the results significant) and if so, what was the magnitude of the change (effect size). To understand effect size and to place it in context, Cohen (1988) suggests using *d*=0.20 to be small, *d*=0.50 to be medium, and *d*=0.80 to be a large effect. To describe this another way, John Hattie in *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, uses a concept called "zone of desired effects" that starts at a medium effect size, 0.40 (Hattie, 2009). Hattie suggests that a 1.0 effect size (as shown in Hattie's graph) is equal to about 2-3 years of student growth and learning. Effect sizes can be greater than 1.0; however, they are less common and are therefore not shown on the graphic.



Effect sizes tend to be smaller with very young children. With younger students (infant through kindergarten), effect size is often lower because the range of measurement error is larger with very young children (Burchinal, 2008). This concern, seconded by the smaller number of early childhood assessments that measure learning domains, indicates why there might be more measurement error in the testing of young children. Therefore, for the very young, an effect size less than 0.40 may still be within the zone of desired effects.

Subsection I.1 Early Childhood & Family Engagement Partnership, Learning Community Center of North Omaha

Lisa St. Clair, Ed.D., Kari Price, & Terry Stone, Ph.D.

About the *Early Childhood Education & Family Engagement Program* at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha

The Learning Community Center of North Omaha opened its doors in January 2015. The LCCNO is home base for the Early Childhood and Family Engagement partnership, designed to be a demonstration site to share what's working with the ultimate goal of successful results which can be replicated. Members work together to provide a comprehensive mix of research-based programs to the children and families from neighborhoods within the attendance boundaries of Conestoga Magnet and Kellom Elementary schools. The ECPP encompasses four major programs: Early Childhood Teaching Teams (which began in August 2013 at Kellom and Conestoga), Future Teacher Clinical Training (which began onsite at the Center in December 2014), Childcare Director Training (which began in February 2013), and Parent University (which launched pilot programming in February 2015).

Early Childhood & Family Engagement Programs at LCCNO Key Findings

Early Childhood Teaching Teams (Kellom/Conestoga)

- **Served 130 students in two schools, with 112 total included in the evaluation study**
- **79% of students were eligible for free/reduced lunch**
- **Classrooms were of high quality**
- **Students significantly improved measured receptive vocabulary (*d*=0.49) but did not show significant change in expressive language skills**
- **Students significantly improved in measured academic readiness for kindergarten (*d*=0.42)**

Future Teacher Clinical Teaching program served an average of 30 students per semester and 13 practicum students

Childcare Director Training served nine community early childhood programs, seven completed and showed improvement on CLASS ratings

Parent University—Family Engagement Program designed using research based practices combined with parent input; first phase piloted in February

Purpose of Evaluation

The evaluation of the early childhood and family engagement program focused on determining the overall effectiveness of the program in providing parenting, intensive early childhood teaching teams as well as more intensive family liaison supports to families.

The evaluation strives to answer the following questions:

- Who does LCCNO serve?
- Are staff and classrooms of high quality?
- Are families benefiting and achieving positive outcomes?
- Are students benefitting and achieving positive outcomes?
- Are pre-service students from Metropolitan Community College benefitting from participation?
- Are neighborhood child care programs serving children before they enter the ECPP improving their services to very young children and their families?

These questions continue to be answered by collecting data across multiple sources and utilizing mixed methods approaches.

About the Early Childhood Teaching Teams and classrooms at Kellom and Conestoga

The Early Childhood teaching teams were implemented beginning in August of 2013 as a collaborative effort of the Omaha Public Schools, the Learning Community of Douglas & Sarpy Counties, and Metropolitan Community College. This year, it completed its second full year of operation.

Implementation

Students. The evaluation team collected evaluation data on the 130 three and four year old students served. Student demographics are reported in the following table.

Year	% Hispanic or Latino	% Black-African American	% White or Caucasian	% Multiple or Other	Gender % Male	% Verified for Special Education	% FRPL	Total Served To Date
2014-15	15%	62%	12%	27%	58%	24%	79%	130
2013-14	16%	61%	13%	26%	52%	30%	84%	128

Teaching Teams. Eight intensive early childhood classrooms at Kellom and Conestoga were designed to include instructional teams (early childhood and resource teachers, paraprofessionals, and family support workers). The vision of this component of the program is to replicate a successful, research-based interdisciplinary early childhood teaching model into a public school setting.

Staff Credentials

Leadership staff: The Early Childhood Specialist responsible for ECPP holds a bachelor's degree in child development and a master's degree in Bilingual and Multicultural Education.

Teaching staff: All (8 of 8) of the Preschool Lead Teachers held a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education, Preschool Disabilities, or Early Childhood Education Unified. In addition to a lead teacher in each classroom, the ECPP also has a paraprofessional working in each classroom. An early childhood paraprofessional is also assigned to each classroom and must meet the qualifications for this position within Omaha Public Schools. They held either Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate, or held or were pursuing associates' degrees or bachelors' degrees in early childhood or related fields.

Coaches: Two coaches were brought on board during the 2013-14 school year to support the professional development of the teaching teams and have continued this year. Coaches held masters' degrees in early childhood education.

There are also two early childhood resource teachers. One holds a Unified Early Childhood/Special Education credential and is completing of Master of Science degree. The other holds the same credential and a Master of Science degree.

ECERS-R

Authors: Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005

ITERS-R

Authors: Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2003

Scale: 1 to 7
1 = Inadequate
3 = Minimal
5 = Good
7 = Excellent

There are two family support staff members. One holds an Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Science degree, and a Behavioral Science Certificate in Human Services and Chemical Dependency. The other holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Corrections/Criminal Justice and a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and Management in Human Services.

Are Classrooms of High Quality?

Quality early childhood programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term, positive academic performance (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010; Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, & Clifford, 2000; Ramey & Ramey, 1998). Classroom settings themselves are associated with both positive and negative effects on young students' motivation (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Although the relationship between classroom environment and motivation is complex and requires further study, current research suggests that, "…students in classrooms characterized by minimal pressure to perform, ample child choice in activities, encouragement of collaboration, and more nurturing teacher-child interactions show more engagement when working on achievement tasks (Stipek et al., 1995; 1998 as cited by Shonkoff & Phillips, pg. 158, 2000)."

The key evaluation question for this section is: Are the early childhood classrooms with intensive teaching teams of high quality, as measured by industry-standard rating tools? Why should the Learning Community evaluation use nationally recognized and Nebraska recognized classroom quality measurement tools? It's important because it helps the Learning Community align with national intervention strategies (Educare) and Nebraska Department of Education approved quality measurement tools.

Environment Rating Scale. The quality of preschool classrooms will be measured using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) and Infant/Toddler classrooms will be rated using the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R). These observational tools are used to assess the quality of early childhood classrooms in various domains including: Space and Furnishings; Personal Care Routines; Language and Reasoning; Learning Activities; Interaction; Program Structure; and Parents and Staff, as well as an overall rating of quality.

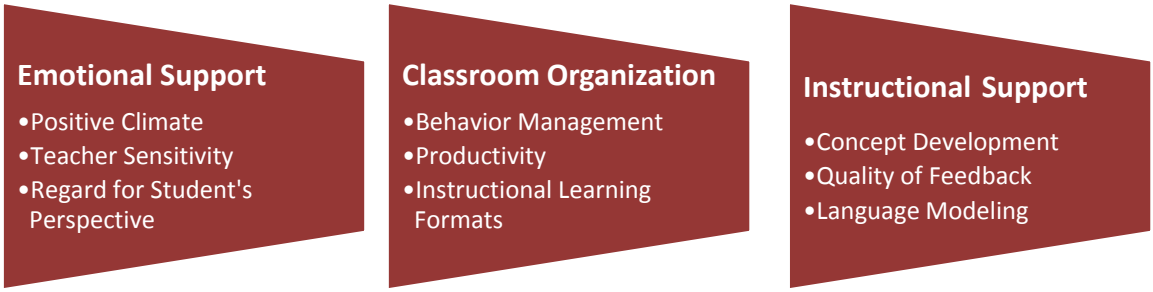
Environment Rating Scales Sub-scores and Overall Score, 2013-14 to 2014-15

Year & School	# of classrooms	Space & Furnishings	Personal Care Routines	Language-Reasoning	Learning Activities	Interactions	Program Structure	Parents & Staff	Overall Rating
Overall K & C 14-15	**8**	**4.71**	**3.61**	**6.19**	**5.87**	**5.83**	**6.04**	**6.00**	**5.32**
Conestoga 14-15	4	4.75	3.71	6.38	6.00	5.35	5.63	6.00	5.25
Kellom 14-15	4	4.66	3.50	6.00	5.73	6.30	6.44	6.00	5.38
Overall K & C 13-14	**8**	**5.16**	**3.92**	**6.69**	**5.68**	**6.85**	**6.18**	**5.94**	**5.65**
Conestoga 13-14	4	6.07	4.46	6.81	6.09	7.00	6.48	5.87	6.04
Kellom 13-14	4	4.26	3.38	6.56	5.28	6.70	5.88	6.00	5.26

Preschool classrooms were of good to excellent quality and, on average, exceeded the Nebraska Department of Education indicators of quality scores of "5" or greater on the ECERS-R. The area of Interactions, for example, was very positively rated, which is key because effective teaching begins with positive interactions. Interactions will be explored in more depth with the next evaluation tool--CLASS. An area for continuous improvement exploration would be personal care routines, which focuses on health and safety (such as nutrition and hand washing). Ratings decreased at Conestoga compared to the first year, whereas ratings slightly increased at Kellom. **It is recommended that the program explore strategies to consistently support the areas of personal care routines across classrooms. It is further recommended that the evaluation adopt the new version of ECERS 3.**

CLASS Observation Rating. The Pre-K version of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) will also be completed in each preschool classroom.

The Pre-K CLASS has three domains:



Dimensions include emotional, organizational, and instructional supports. Instructional Support tends to be the domain with the most opportunity for improvement as it challenges teachers to effectively extend language, model advanced language, and to promote higher-order thinking skills.

Research on the CLASS supports ratings of 5 or higher within the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and 3.25 or higher within the domain of Instructional Support, as being necessary to have impacts on student achievement (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010).

Pre-K CLASS
Authors: Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008
Scale: 1 to 7
1-2 = Low Range
3-5 = Middle Range
6-7 = High Range

Pre-K CLASS Domain Averages 2013-14 and 2014-15

Year & School	# of classrooms	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
Overall K&C 14-15	**8**	**6.27**	**6.26**	**3.01**
Conestoga 14-15	**4**	6.43	5.99	3.09
Kellom 14-15	**4**	6.11	6.52	2.92
Overall 13-14	**8**	**6.09**	**6.03**	**2.88**
Conestoga 13-14	4	6.48	5.96	3.38
Kellom 13-14	4	5.70	6.10	2.38

Preschool classrooms achieved the goal of 5 or greater in emotional support and classroom organization, and were below the goal of 3.25 in Instructional Support. Ratings at Conestoga remained the same or slightly decreased, whereas ratings at Kellom increased. **It is recommended that professional development focus on the strategies within the CLASS domain of Instructional Support: Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling.**

Continuous Quality Improvement. Upon completion of the ECERS-R or CLASS in each classroom, debrief consultation immediately followed with a member of the evaluation staff, the teaching team, and the Coach. Using a continuous quality improvement model, strengths as well as areas for improvement were discussed with each group. These data were also reviewed with program leadership, administrators and staff. Professional development plans can continue to be refined in accordance with the findings of the observation data. Data were also provided to the Research Office of Omaha Public Schools.

Student Outcomes

School readiness is an essential concern for students entering the educational system. Preparation to perform in an educational setting is a significant benefit for students, especially those who are from diverse backgrounds, with a greater number of risk factors, and have typically poorer school performance compared to their economically advantaged counterparts (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Multiple studies have examined the relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement (Jensen, 2009). Children living in poverty experience multiple environmental risk factors that can and often do adversely affect their academic skills (Lacour & Tissington, 2011). For these reasons, norm referenced widely used measures were selected for the evaluation. Students from economically

disadvantaged backgrounds will likely start well below the national norms for these assessments (well below a score of 100).

The approach used to measure student outcomes was to match fall and spring data. This means that data represented in pre and post or fall and spring data are exactly matched by student and if a student did not have a match in the fall or spring, their data were not included in the outcomes analyses.

PPVT-IV

Author: Dunn and Dunn, 2004, 2007

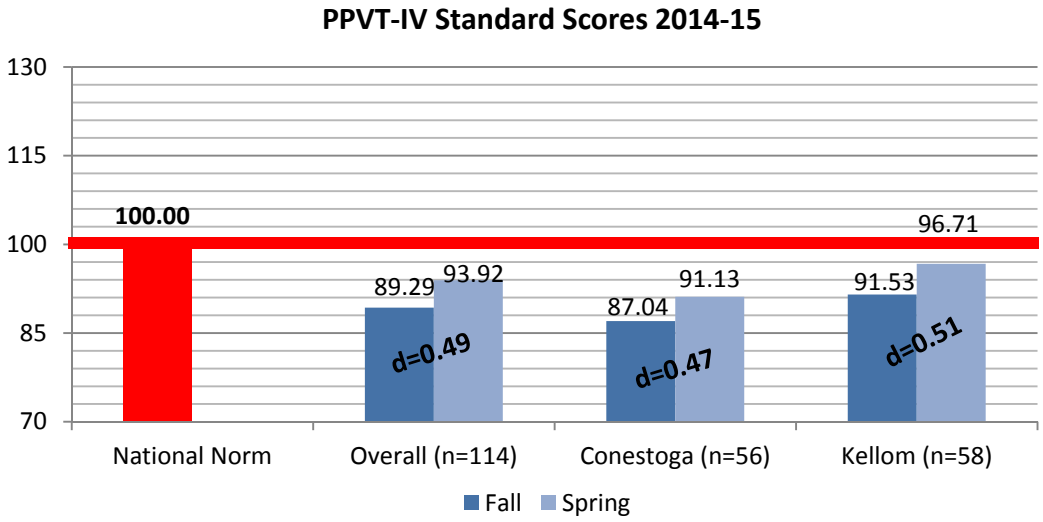
Scale: The average score is 100, with an average range of 85-115.

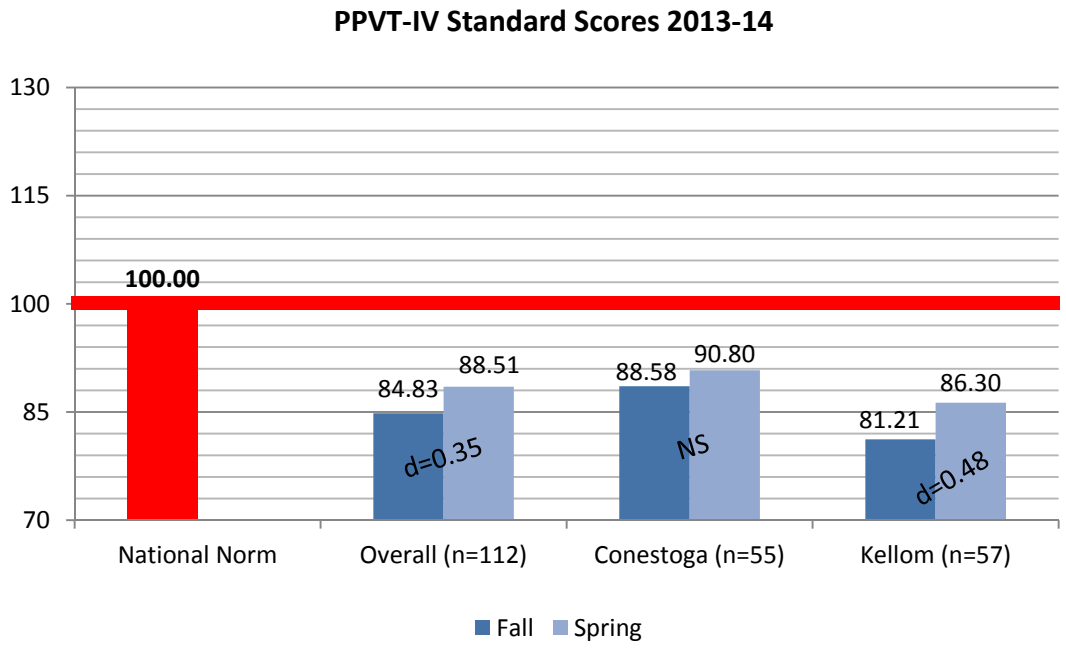
Vocabulary Development

The vocabulary of students is an important factor to explore when considering how students may fare as they progress through school. Students who have limited vocabularies at a very young age are likely to have more difficulty increasing their vocabulary to a level similar to those whose vocabulary is greater to start (Hart & Risley, 1995). Preschool students' receptive vocabulary development (understanding of language) was assessed using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test IV (PPVT-IV).

Students significantly improved receptive vocabulary skills. Using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (IV) pre and post, students significantly improved (p<.001, d=0.49) and gained an average of 3.68 standard score over the school year—same gain as was noted in 2013-14. Effect size change was within the zone of desired effects (0.40 or greater). School level differences were found, with Conestoga students increasing from 87.04 to 91.13 (*d=0.47*) and Kellom students increasing from 91.53 to 96.71 (p<.001, d=0.51, within the zone of desired effects).

In 2013-14, students significantly improved (p<.001, d=0.35) and gained an average of 3.68 standard score over the school year. Effect size change was below the zone of desired effects (0.40 or greater). School level differences were found, with Conestoga students increasing from 88.58 to 90.80 (not significant) and Kellom students increasing from 81.21 to 86.30 (d=0.48, within the zone of desired effects). It should be noted that children who are learning English often show greater increases in learning related to tests measuring English ability because they start lower and have more opportunity for improvement.





Language Development

Preschool students' English language development skills were assessed using the Preschool Language Scales-Fifth Edition (PLS-V). This tool measures preschool students' progress with language by looking at both expressive communication and auditory language comprehension. For this evaluation, the expressive communication was used. The evaluation question was: (1)

Do students make gains in English?

PLS-V

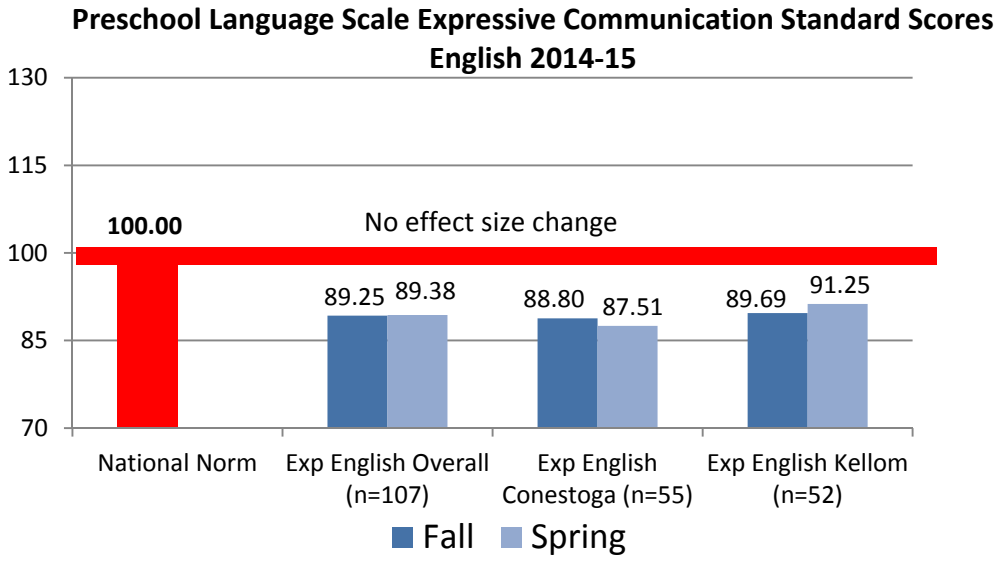
Authors: Zimmerman, Steiner & Pond (2011-English, 2012-Spanish)

Score:

The mean is 100 with the average range of 85-115

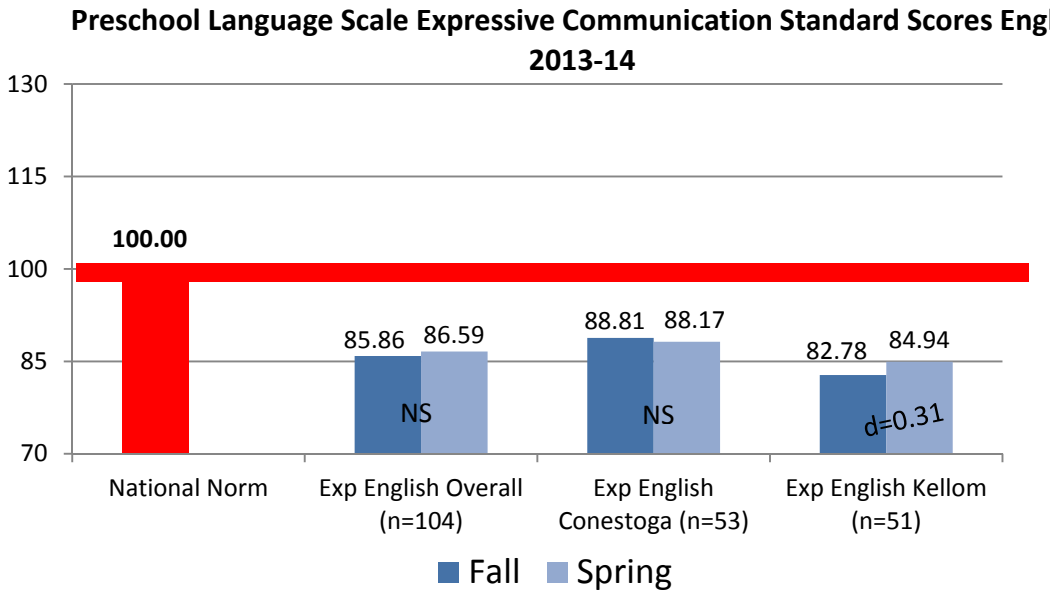
There were too few Spanish speaking students to report on outcomes. In the first year, Spanish language skills were measured at pre and post but so few students were stronger in Spanish skills than English that these outcomes will not be reported (*n*=8). This measure was dropped in the second year.

English language skills were measured for the expressive communication skills.



Students did not significantly improve in expressive communication skills in English. Using the Preschool Language Scale (5th) pre and post, students as a group did not significantly improve (*p*>.05). Nor did either of the schools' show significant change. Conestoga students showed a slight decline from 88.80 to 87.51 (*p*>.05, not significant) and Kellom students showed a slight increase from 89.69 to 91.25 (*p*>.05, not significant).

In 2013-14, students as a group did not significantly improve (*p*>.05). However, school level differences were found, with Conestoga students showing a slight decline from 88.81 to 88.17 (*M*=-0.64, *SD*=10.31, *p*>.05, not significant) and Kellom students increasing from 82.78 to 84.94 (*M*=2.16, *SD*=6.91, *p*=.03, *d*=0.31, approaching though not within the zone of desired effects).



Student Academic Readiness for Kindergarten

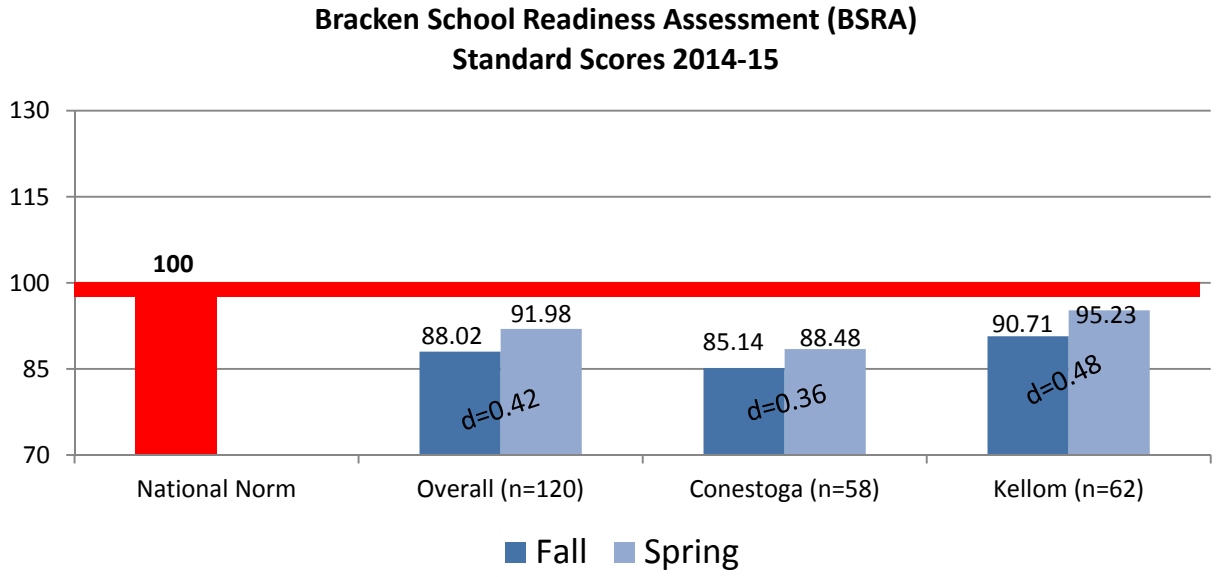
The importance of concept development, particularly for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in numerous research articles (Neuman, 2006; Panter and Bracken, 2009). Some researchers have found that basic concepts are a better means of predicting both reading and mathematics than are traditional vocabulary tests such as the PPVT-IV (Larrabee, 2007). The norm-referenced assessment selected to measure Kindergarten student's academic school readiness is the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA). The BSRA was used to measure the academic readiness skills of young students in the areas of colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, comparisons and shapes. The mean of the BSRA is 100, with 86 to 114 falling within the average range (one standard deviation above and below the mean). It has been used in numerous studies, including the Joint Center for Poverty Research, NICHD study of early child care and youth development, Harlem Project, and the national implementation study of Educare, to name but a few. The limitation of this assessment is that it does not measure social/emotional readiness for school, executive functioning, and other important qualities to consider relative to "readiness for school."

BSRA

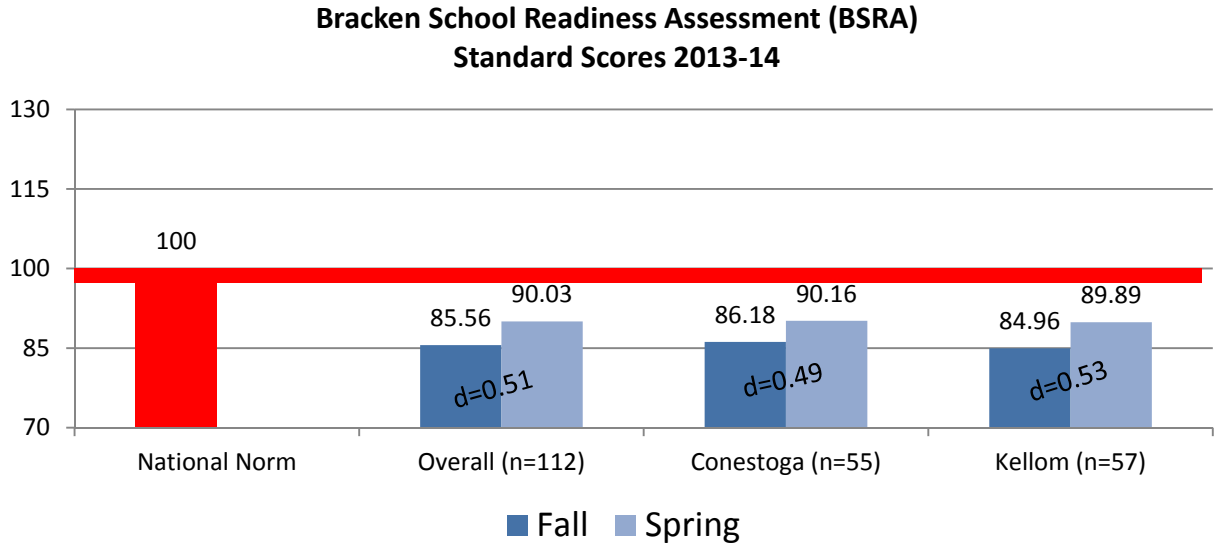
Author: Bracken, 2007

Scale: The average score is 100, with an average range of 86-114

BSRA standard scores are displayed in the following tables.



Students significantly improved in academic readiness for kindergarten in 2014-15. Using the Bracken School Readiness Assessment pre and post, students significantly improved (p<.001, d=0.42) and gained an average of 3.97 standard score over the school year. Effect size change was within the zone of desired effects (0.40 or greater). School level differences were modest, with Conestoga students increasing from 85.14 to 88.48 (d=0.36, approaching the zone of desired effects) and Kellom students increasing from 90.71 to 95.26 (d=0.48, within the zone of desired effects).



In 2013-14, students also significantly improved (p<.001, d=0.51) and gained an average of 4.46 standard score over the school year. Effect size change was within the zone of desired effects (0.40 or greater). School level differences were minimal, with Conestoga students increasing from

86.18 to 90.16 (*d*=0.49) and Kellom students increasing from 84.96 to 89.89 (*d*=0.53).

The next table displays the percent of correct items identified by students across the five subscales of the BSRA. These are important data to report because the areas of strength and the opportunities for improvement can help drive the continuous improvement conversation.

Subtest	Fall Overall % Mastery	Spring Overall % Mastery
Colors	72	87
Letters	42	62
Numbers and Counting	34	51
Sizes and Comparisons	32	45
Shapes	45	57
Overall	42	57

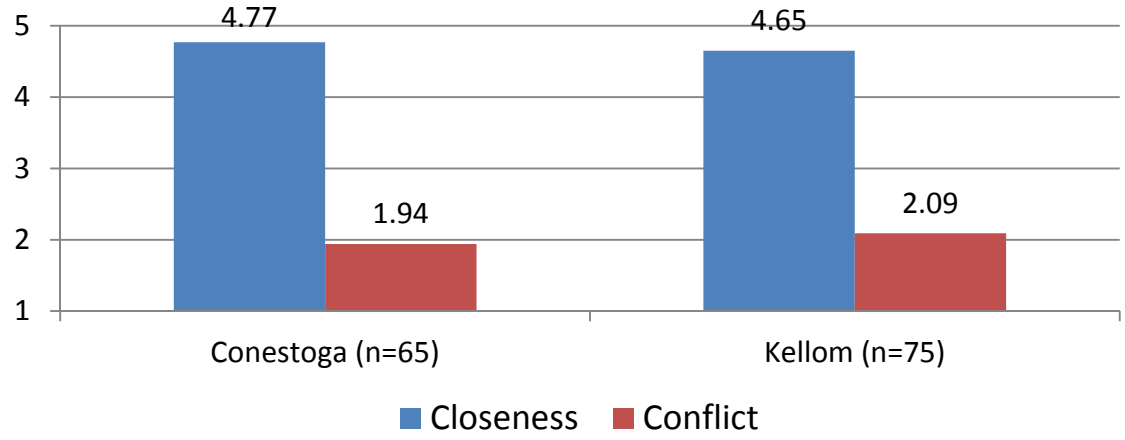
Utilization of Results with Schools and Programs. Teachers and coaches were debriefed on fall student outcome data (outlined in above chart) in late November and on spring student outcome data in April and May. Individual student reports were prepared both fall and spring for parents. Classroom level reports were shared with teachers, coaches, and program leaders. Classroom quality data results were shared with teachers, coaches, and program leaders in the winter, shortly after quality ratings were completed. Recommendations included providing greater professional development regarding how to support development of sizes and comparisons concepts with students.

Measures with Parents

Parents of students who attended Kellom and Conestoga were asked to complete Child Parent Relationship Scales. This is a 15 item measure of parent and child closeness and parent and child conflict (Pianta, 1992). This tool is set up to measure these constructs on a 5 point scale with 5 being "definitely applies" and 1 being "definitely does not apply." The hope is Closeness is rated closer to 5 and Conflict is rated closer to 1, acknowledging that there is natural variation and some degree lower or higher is not significant. This tool is used with parents of preschool students.

The data reported below represent baseline data for the 2014-15 program year. Each year, comparisons will be made to examine parent-child relationships.

Child Parent Relationship Scale (Spring 2015)



Parents demonstrated high ratings of closeness with their child and limited conflict.

Future Teachers

The goal of the future teacher clinical site is to provide more effective preparation to help college students understand and respond to the needs of children from higher poverty homes. Metropolitan Community College students initially began working with the intensive early childhood teams at Kellom and Conestoga last year. Using a group observation strategy combined with faculty supervision, students receive immediate feedback from instructors as they employ newly learned teaching techniques.

When the Learning Community Center of North Omaha opened its doors in January 2015, Metropolitan Community College (accredited by NAEYC, the National Association for the Education Young Children) relocated their entire early childhood learning program onsite and began working with infant and toddlers in the Educare program at the Center. In addition to the group strategy with real time feedback, the Metro students also have the opportunity to watch real time interactions via technology in the building. The technology allows Metro faculty to pause clips and share learning opportunities with the entire class.

Next year, students will be able to interact with the students in the infant and toddler classrooms with ear piece and audio technology at the Center which enables them to receive real time feedback from faculty and classmates. It is important that the evaluation address whether these infant and toddler classrooms are considered to be high quality. Therefore, the Infant CLASS and Toddler CLASS were used to evaluate the quality of these classrooms as implemented in the 2014-15 year.

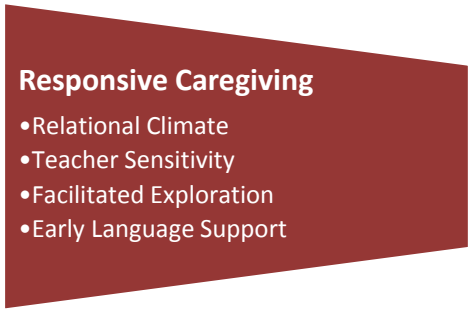
Infant CLASS Rating. According to its authors, the CLASS "is a rating tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student

learning." This was the first year that the Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Infant CLASS) was completed in classrooms with the majority of students under the age of 12 months. Whereas the Environment Rating Scales (ITERS and ECERS) rate materials and the environment, the CLASS focuses instead on what teachers are doing with those materials to boost learning, examining closely the interactions occurring. The Infant CLASS has one overall domain—Responsive Caregiving.

Toddler CLASS

Authors: Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2012

Scale: 1 to 7
1-2 = Low Range
3-5 = Middle Range
6-7 = High Range



Infant CLASS Domain Averages

Year	# of rooms	Responsive Caregiving
2014-2015	1	5.31

Toddler CLASS Observation Rating. The Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Toddler CLASS) was completed in each infant or toddler classroom with the majority of enrolled students over the age of 12 months. The Toddler CLASS has two domains: Emotional-Behavioral Support and Engaged Support for Learning. These dimensions include aspects such as: Positive Climate (focuses on how teachers interact with students to develop warm relationships that promote students' enjoyment of the classroom community) and Facilitation of Learning and Development (focuses on how well teachers facilitate activities to support students' learning and understanding opportunities).

Toddler CLASS Domain Averages

Year	# of rooms	Emotional Support & Behavior Guidance	Engaged Support for Learning
2014-2015	**1**	**6.35**	**4.08**

Over the last year, 17 early childhood education courses were taught at LCCNO. An average of 30 students were served per quarter (119 cumulatively with duplication). On average, there were 13 practicum students per quarter (52 cumulatively with duplication). There are five levels of practicum, so the same student may take more than one practicum.

Report by Lead of Metropolitan Community College Early Childhood Program-Kathy Halverson

Although strict procedures for data analysis were not in place during this year, students report the following in faculty evaluations:
(1) the facility is so impressive.
(2) the teachers and classrooms at Kellom/EDUCARE are so great for learning.
(3) my time at Kellom helped me know I can be a teacher.
(4) my MCC teacher was at Kellom with me, and she guided me in what I needed to learn to be a better teacher.
(5) EDUCARE Indian Hills really taught me what we are supposed to do with infants and toddlers.
(6) it is so much better when I can watch/observe a trained teacher.
(7) watching the children on the monitor (in the adult classroom) and analyzing the teacher behaviors proved very helpful.
(8) this was the best way to learn – watching real teachers in the classroom.
(9) getting to implement activities with the children was the best thing – it helped me know what to say and what not to say – and how to do it better.
(10) I really like working with the manipulatives available at the Learning Community.

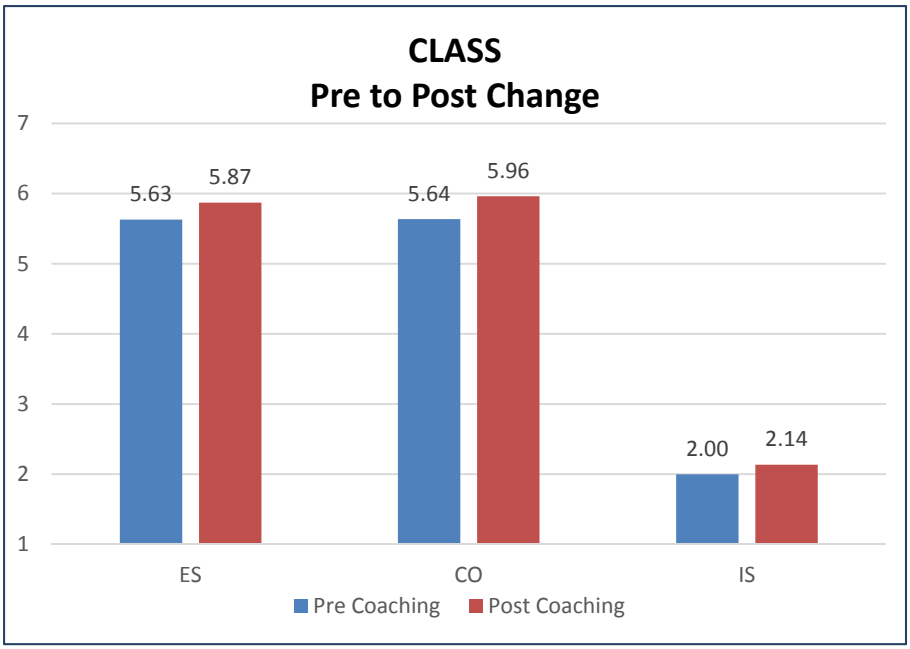
Note:
(1) Faculty members are evidencing students scoring higher on evaluation/assessment instruments in their courses and in their practicum experiences.
(2) Faculty members are evidencing students utilizing the resources available at the Learning Community to produce better products for class assignments and materials for curriculum delivery with the children.
(3) Faculty members appreciate the option of students seeing their instructors work with community partners to do what is "best" for children.

To strengthen the evaluation plan to begin to have more of an outcomes focus, it had been recommended that graduate and employer follow up survey occur as part of the evaluation design this year. That did not occur. It is strongly recommended these tools be implemented in the 2015-16 year.

Childcare Director Training:

Early Childhood Services-Network of Excellence (ECS-NOE) in partnership with the Learning Community was made up of nine childcare center directors within the Learning Community (serving the Kellom or Conestoga Elementary School area). Recruitment for the program began in February 2013 with training starting in the fall of 2014. Center eligibility included serving 50% or more of the children eligible to attend the early childhood classrooms at Kellom and Conestoga.

These directors received (approximately) monthly one-on-one coaching from a Master Coach from ECS-NOE as well as bimonthly group sessions with all directors. Coaching sessions were done on site and during monthly director meetings with other directors. This group concentrated on director coaching, which was initially planned to extend to one specific teacher at the center. These directors also participated in focus groups at the beginning, mid-way point, and at the end of coaching. Throughout these focus groups, directors agreed that learning the CLASS tool was a valuable asset for their centers. All of the focus group participants were aware of the expectations for their coaching option and felt confident that their training prepared them to coach the teachers in their centers.



When asked about the support they received from coaches, the directors' responses were overwhelmingly positive. The participants also noted that they would like to have a way to include parent engagement and interaction in their ongoing coaching. The final focus group included a Family Engagement Survey, which focused on the extension of services ECS could offer to centers participating in the ECS-NOE LC program. As with the previous two cohorts, there was a significant turnover rate (55%), with the participating directors and teachers. The CLASS (Pianta et al, 2008) was used to measure classroom quality in three domains—emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. CLASS uses a 7 point scale, with 6-7 indicating high quality, 3-5 indicating mid quality, and 1-2 indicating low quality. These are used to rate Emotional Support (ES),

Classroom Organization (CO), and Instructional Support (IS). Although the turnover rate was high, the programs did improve their respective CLASS scores. Because the number of subjects was very small, tests of statistical significance were not used (n=7).

LCCNO program staff held a focus group with the directors at the end of the year. Of the group (directors from six centers were present), four would be interested in receiving continued support. The following are the responses reported to the evaluators by staff from the Learning Community Center of North Omaha.

What did you like about the program?
* Collaboration of centers
* Bringing everyone together with Master Coach
* Family Engagement
* Learning about outside resources
* Good length of time (duration and specific hours)
* Scholarship training program

If the program were to continue, what would you change or add?
* Orientation for the teachers at the Center. For those who don't have an educational background, this program can sound intimidating but if teachers hear about it on front end, they'll see it is strengths based.
* The onsite coaching at the agency would be extremely helpful. Director would still be coach but it would be a third party coming in and reinforcing what the Director is promoting
* If coaches could help teachers with lesson planning, it would be valuable.
* There is interest from those who aren't mandated to Step Up but who would like to become part of the Step Up program (the Step Up program is an early childhood quality rating system through the state of Nebraska).

Families: Parent University

The fourth programming component at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha is a program designed to provide support for all of the parents and families whose children are supported by the early childhood intensive learning teams located at Kellom, Conestoga and the Learning Community Center of North Omaha as well as parents of infants and toddlers residing in the school catchment area who will soon be eligible to attend the programs. In August 2014, the Learning Community hired a Director of Family Engagement Services for the Learning Community Center of North Omaha with the primary responsibility of developing a program to help parents support their young child's learning.

The Director of Family Engagement Services researched numerous family engagement models and held focus groups with families. She consistently reported how much each parent wanted

to engage in their child's education. When asked what the Learning Community could do to support that engagement, four themes emerged, from which she designed Parent University which began in February 2015 and served approximately 75 families during the pilot period.

1. *Parenting:* Parents learn effective ways to parent their child(ren) and ways to support child development and learning through individualized and group classes, both designed to strengthen the parent-child bond and interactions. Groups which offer levels of support include Connections at Project Harmony, Boys Town, and UNL Extension office.

2. *Life Skills and Wellness:* Knowing families need stability in order to support their children's education, Parent University partners with organizations to provide family self-sufficiency such as adult basic literacy, ESL classes, employment skills, mental and behavioral health, etc. Groups which offer levels of support include Literacy Center of the Midlands, Lutheran Family Services, Creighton University's Financial Hope Collaborative and Connections at Project Harmony.

3. *School Success:* In order to become full partners in their child's education, parents have access to classes and workshops which emphasize the importance of their roles, responsibilities, and engagement opportunities. Groups which offer levels of support include PTI Nebraska, Omaha Public Schools and Nebraska Humanities are partners.

4. *Leadership:* Classes are available to empower parents to take on more active roles in their child's school and in their community. Groups who offer levels of support include community leaders and Omaha Public Schools.

Staff and leadership were interviewed regarding unmet needs during the first phase of the program. Two overarching needs emerged: (1) Capacity building to support needs of students and families at LCCNO and (2) additional mental health supports to children and families. The Family Liaison program can meet many of these needs, but for 90 days, and there are more needs than there are services. There are complex needs and staff are stretched to capacity. Students at Kellom and Conestoga sometimes have mental health needs that are beyond the reach of current resources. Even with the Connections at Project Harmony partnership, there are greater needs than there are supports; therefore, it will be recommended that this continue to be an area of focus for securing additional partnerships and resources to meet the needs.

In next year's evaluation report, the evaluation team will report on number of parents served, coursework completed, participant satisfaction, as well as reporting on the themes emerging from focus groups to be held with parents.

Early Childhood and Family Engagement Conclusions and Implications for Program Improvement—Learning Community Center of North Omaha

The Early Childhood and Family Engagement Program started in August of 2013 with the implementation of the intensive early childhood instructional teams at Kellom and Conestoga. There was not a tremendous amount of lead time to plan and implement the program that year. Coaches were brought in midway into the year. This was their second year. External measures of program quality indicate that classrooms are being operated in a high quality manner (ERS ratings great than 5, the indicator of quality established by the Nebraska Department of Education). CLASS ratings were generally in the high quality range for two of three subscales (Emotional Support and Classroom Organization), and showed improvement. **The recommendation for improvement of this program will continue to be to achieve a rating of 3.25 or greater in ratings of Instructional Support, with particular focus on coaching teachers on Concept Development (taking a concept from a beginning point and fully supporting the development of the concept).**

Parent University, the Child Care Director Partnerships, and the partnerships with Metropolitan Community College continue to be emerging or implemented. With regard to MCC, it is recommended that the evaluation strategies suggested for the past two years be implemented this year—alumni and employer surveys—to assure the efficacy of the program. If the evaluation merely reports the number of students and number of courses completed, this clearly does not constitute program evaluation.

With regard to unmet needs, there need to be further supports for capacity building to support needs and families with mental health needs. There also need to more supports for mental health counseling and service provision—beyond the 90 days that LFS can provide. **Therefore, it is recommended that an additional area of focus this year include identifying partnerships for securing more capacity building and services related to the mental health needs of students and families.**

Sub-Section I.2: Family Learning at Learning Community Center of South Omaha

Jolene Johnson, Ed.D.

Family Learning Program Key Findings

- **264 families and 384 students were served in 2014-15**
- **86% of the families were eligible for free/reduced lunch**
- **94% were "very satisfied to satisfied" with program services**
- **Parents significantly improved their English language skills (*d*=0.43)**
- **Academic achievement scores for students had an overall effect size in the zone of desired effects (*d*=0.77)**

In 2014-15, the Family Learning Program at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha was honored by The White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanics as a White House Bright Spot. The Family Learning Program provides parenting education, navigator services, English and Adult Learning and Crisis Intervention to provide parents with help needed to support their young child's education. This year the center served the most families to date and adapted the model into an early childhood-family learning program through a satellite site at Educare of Omaha Indian Hill. Data patterns indicate that parents are continuing to gain both English language and parenting skills as a result of the programming provided. This was also the first year that growth on normed assessment for students was able to be used as part of the evaluation.

Summary of Program Model

The Family Learning Program formed in 2012 as a collaborative effort of *The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy County*, *OneWorld Community Health Centers,* and *Boys Town.* The Family Learning program began providing family literacy services to parents and their children in a temporary location and moved into its permanent center at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha in the fall of 2013. Parents participating in the program met at the center to attend classes and access services. While parents participated in

educational activities, on-site child activities were provided for their children five years old and under.

To help children from low-income families succeed in school, the program collaborated with school districts and community partners. This collaboration activated long term strategies to support parents in their efforts to promote their children's education by teaching them the skills they need. LCCSO participants received a wide range of interrelated services, including, but not limited to Parent Education, Educational Navigator Services, English and Adult Learning and Crisis Intervention Support.

Parent and child outcomes were measured using a variety of assessments in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the various components of the program. The following sections will address what is being measured and present initial and follow-up results, beginning with parents/adults and followed by their children.

Parenting Education

The parenting component of the family learning program was carefully designed around parent needs and includes collaboration among various community organizations (at no cost) to deliver diverse workshops (KidSquad, Visiting Nurses Association, PTI Nebraska, Financial Literacy, Bullying, etc.) A further example of this is the program's alliance with Boys Town which integrated *Common Sense Parenting®* (CSP) into LCCSO group workshops. CSP was a practical, skill-based multiple-week parenting program which involved classroom instruction, videotape modeling, roleplaying, feedback and review. Professional parent trainers provided instruction, consultation and support to LCCSO participants, addressing issues of communication, discipline, decision-making, relationships, self-control and school success. Parents were taught proactive skills and techniques to help create healthy family relationships that fostered safety and well-being. Additionally, family activities were planned and implemented by the LCCSO staff and included a series of field trips to UNO to promote secondary education, graduation celebrations and parent-child time during non-school days for students.

Navigator Services

The family learning program employed navigators that served as personal parent advocates, helping parents gain better understanding of the public school system, community resources and adult education programs. Navigators built strong relationships with participants to ensure individualized education and support. During the 2014-15 year the Navigators were all trained in the Growing Great Kids curriculum which they will use during the upcoming year.

Home Visitations: Navigators visited participants' homes to communicate with parents, conduct informal needs assessments, connect parents with resources, model supportive learning

activities, coach parenting skills, and attend to specific needs. Navigators completed home visitations as necessary, but on average, these were completed approximately once a month. Each participant worked with their navigator to design a Family Literacy Plan (FLP) and set personal and familial goals.

Parent Education: In addition to home visits, the navigators all prepare and present parent workshops on a variety of topics. Topics include dialogic reading, math at home, science at home, and setting up routines and schedules for children.

English & Adult Learning

English as a Second Language (ESL): Adult participants attended English language classes (personalized to supporting their child's learning) two days a week during the academic year and throughout the summer. The goal of learning English is to help parents become more confident in talking to teachers and asking questions about their child's progress as well as enabling parents to be comfortable and knowledgeable enough to use computers to access school information, write notes to teachers and use reading and learning activities to help reinforce learning in the home.

English classes were leveled based on 'BEST Plus' scores and teacher input in order to provide a more consistent learning experience. BEST Plus is the measurement tool used to assess English learning progress (generally, at the beginning of participation and again after every 60 hours of instruction).

Crisis Intervention Support

The Learning Community Family Liaison Program provided support to families struggling with significant needs. The 90 day program helped families develop goals, connect with resources and provided support across multiple needs (housing, mental health supports, behavioral supports, etc.). Impact of the family liaison program was measured using multiple tools including Client Satisfaction surveys, focus groups, family stress ratings, Trauma Symptom Checklist, goal reviews and academic ratings by teachers. The findings for the liaison program will be after the sections discussing both LCCSO and LCCNO as they served both sites. In the future, the results will be tied to the center being served.

Program Adaption (Educare Pilot)

The Learning Community Center of South Omaha piloted an adaptation of the family learning program in Educare of Omaha at Indian Hill this year. Classes were held twice a week in the evening at the Educare center with childcare being provided. Families received three hours of

ESL class and one hour of parent education during the classes. Home visits, field trips and family events were also a part of this satellite cohort.

Who did the Family Learning Program Serve?

Two hundred sixty-four families were served by the program in 2014-15. The program served approximately 384 (268 of school age) students across 27 schools. In addition, two child activity rooms (staffed by child learning employees) provided a safe environment for infants, toddlers and preschool children so their parents could attend classes. For the families with students in school, 86% qualified for free/reduced lunch status and 17% qualified for special education services.

What was the Quality of Services Implemented?

Multiple tools were used to measure growth, assess perceptions of the participants and demonstrate program quality. The evaluation is both summative and developmental in nature. The tools selected for the evaluation provided outcome information as well as informed the implementers about what is working and what needs improvement.

Focus Groups

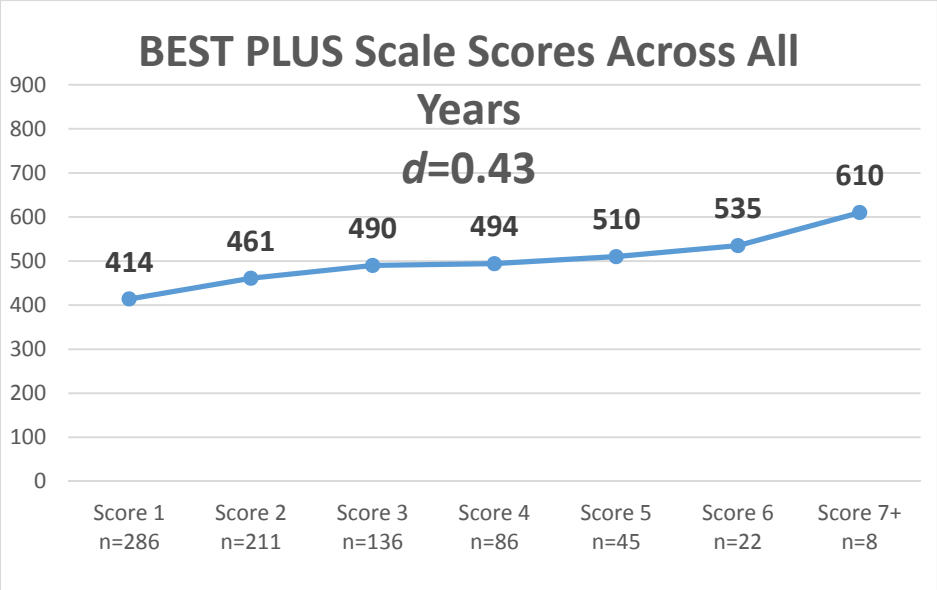
Multiple focus groups were conducted in August 2015 to allow participants who had been with the program for six months or longer the opportunity to voice their experiences and thoughts. Questions were broad in nature and asked about the participants overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with multiple facets of the program (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes) and ideas for improvements to the program. Clicker questions and open-ended questions were used to get the highest level of participation from all members of the focus groups.

Parent and Student Outcomes

Evaluation results for outcomes included BEST PLUS scores measuring English Language acquisition for parents, student achievement scores for students using both the state assessment (NeSA) and a nationally normed instrument (MAP), stress levels for parents using the Parent Stress Rating Scale, and change in parenting practices using the Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale (PARCA).

Parents significantly improved their English language skills. English language acquisition by the participants continues to show a significant upward trend. Participants are assessed after every

60 hours of English instruction. Scores were statistically significant using multiple paired samples *t*-tests. The average mean for participants entering the program was at a level 2 (*M*=414) while the mean for participants who have had roughly two years of class was at a level 8 (*M*=610). To put the scores in context, a score of 400 equates to a person having a few phrases with limited functionality while a score over 600 is equivalent to a person being able to participate effectively in social and work conversations. The ability to communicate beyond simple phrases has allowed the participants to interact to an increased degree with their students' teachers and in the workplace.



Effect size change on BEST Plus equated to *d* = 0.43 overall falling within the zone of desired effects. Participants showed the greatest gains between test 1 and test 2 followed by test 2 and test 3 which is plausible given that the language skills and fluency necessary to improve scores becomes increasingly more complex.

"During the first year I was very shy, I didn't even dare go to the store. Now after this year I can go to the store and communicate with people…it might not be perfect English, but I try to remember what I learned in class. There might be sentences where I think, "I can say this" and people are going to understand what I am trying to say. It is the same with my child, when talking to his teacher, I can now tell him I will ask his teacher if he did the homework. He used to think, 'Oh my mom is not going to ask.' But, now he knows I am able to go and ask his teacher about his behavior. And during conferences I do ask his teacher, but how is he doing?" ---LCCSO Parent

Student Outcomes

Student data were requested and obtained from Omaha Public Schools for the second and third grade students whose families had participated for any length of time in the family learning program at LCCSO. Scores were obtained for students who had taken the Nebraska State Assessments (NeSA) in reading and mathematics as well as for student who had taken the MAP assessment in

2nd grade. Students included in the NeSA analysis were those students enrolled in elementary schools only. Students enrolled in middle and high schools were not included as they have not been the target population for the program. Paired sample t-tests were used to analyze the pre to post score changes with Cohen's *d* effect sizes calculated for those where the change in scores was statistically significant.

Achievement Data

ASSESSMENT	COHEN'S D EFFECT SIZE	INTERPRETATION
NESA MATHEMATICS (N=41)	NS	**
NESA READING (N=40)	0.37	Approaching Zone of Desired Effects
MAP MATH RIT (N=24)	1.41	In the Zone of Desired Effects
MAP READING RIT (N=25)	1.79	In the Zone of Desired Effects
OVERALL	0.77	In the Zone of Desired Effects

Both reading assessments yielded significant change over time. The NeSA-Reading scores from 2013-14 were compared to the scores from 2014-15 with the average scale score increasing from 102.80 to 112.48, t (39) = 2.31, p =.026, d=0.37. The scores from the NeSA-Mathematics Assessment showed gain from 2013-14 (M=99.54) to 2014-15 (M=103.88) but the gain was not significant, t (40) = 1.161, p = 0.252. Scores on the MAP reading assessment were compared for second grade students from fall to spring and were statistically significant, t(23) = 8.804, p <.01, d = 1.79. For math, change from fall to spring for second grade students on the MAP scores was also significant, t (23) = 6.892, p <.01, d = 1.41. The results indicate that students whose parents have participated in the programming at LCCSO are making strong academic gains.

Supporting those academic gains was the parent engagement piece at LCCSO. Not only did 94% of the participants report attending parent teacher conferences but 98% reported feeling comfortable to very comfortable communicating with their child's teacher. In addition, 98% felt at least somewhat comfortable doing math with their children and 100% of the participants reported feeling at least somewhat comfortable reading to their children. The participants answering these questions were those who had been enrolled in the program for a minimum of three months.

Parenting Impacts

Parents reported improved parent-child relationships. This qualitative finding was bolstered by externally rated parent/child interactions showing significant improvement and effect sizes approaching the zone of desired effects. Parenting classes were offered one time a week and

provided instruction on several topics including parenting, healthy cooking, academic information, personal finance and how to manage difficult child behavior.

Information gathered from Boys Town on the Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale (PARCA) helped Navigators and the Boys Town trainer work on specific skills during training and visits. For participants completing a pre and post-test PARCA (n=20), 75% showed an effect size change of *d*=0.5 or greater. Participants made the most gains in supporting good behavior for their children. A survey of the participants found high levels of satisfaction with the *Common Sense Parenting* classes. Participants rated each item from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. No participants rated any of the survey items as Strongly Disagree or Disagree.

Boys Town Survey Question (*n*=19)	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
This workshop helped me improve my parenting skills.	26%	74%
This workshop helped me reduce stress related to parenting my child(ren).	37%	63%
This workshop helped me improve my child(ren)'s behavior.	37%	63%
Overall, I am satisfied with the workshop as a whole.	11%	89%

PARENT SUCCESS STORY

"I think we've had a lot of success stories. There is this person in particular and he is a Dad. I just love his story and I think he is what defines our families. When he started coming he would just come to the English classes, he did not come to the parent classes. He did not want to participate in anything else. And so we had a heart to heart and I said, 'This is a family literacy program and if you want the English classes we can refer you to Metro, but if you want to stay you need to start coming on Wednesdays.' He came once and then he would always give me excuses, like, "Oh, I have a doctor's appointment" or "I have other appointments" and he would just come for half an hour and he would ask me to sign his sheet and I would say, "No you have to stay for at least an hour and a half." But slowly and surely he started coming to the parent classes and he would only go to classroom C because that was his classroom and he did not want to participate in any other classroom. So this was a very slow progress with him, but eventually we broke through. He now comes to every Parent Time, he brings his wife along. He is trying to get her to come to the English classes and telling her the importance of them being here. He is participating in the UNO college prep because he has older children. He has really blossomed. We had a home visit and I told him his teacher has noticed the difference, he wants to congratulate you. And he felt really proud and he said, "That program has really helped me. I've noticed a difference. I'm reading with my daughter at night. I am trying to be a good Dad. I'm trying to set an example and I like the parent classes." So I think that is a huge success story of a parent sticking it out and eventually they will see the difference in themselves."

----LCCSO Family Navigator

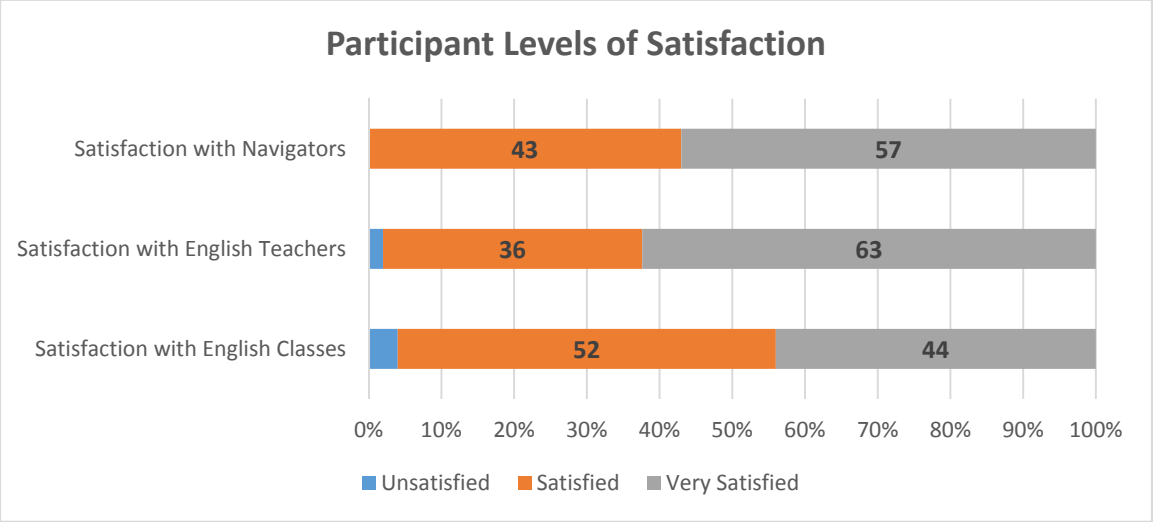
Focus Group Findings

Multiple focus groups were conducted to allow participants who had been with the program for six months or longer the opportunity to voice their experiences and thoughts. There were 50+ participants. Questions were broad in nature and asked about the participants overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with multiple facets of the program (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes) and ideas for improvements to the program. Digital response questions and open-ended questions were used to get the highest level of participation from all members of the focus groups. Below are some of participants' thoughts on the value of the programming at LCCSO.

"I am satisfied with everything; English classes, attention to my daughter, parenting classes, Boys Town was right in the moment of need. I'm very satisfied and surprised because when I signed up I thought I was going to take only English classes. The center surprised me even more."

"I have learned a lot. I learned how to read and now I am able to help my child with homework. I'm very happy with this program because I tried going to other programs, here in south Omaha and most of them are not organized well. This program is very well organized, it is a complete program and personally I am very happy with the program and the support we get from teachers, the principal, and the navigators."

"I feel very happy to keep improving in English. I told myself I was going to give me a chance because I have special needs in hearing and vision. I didn't think I was going to learn anything, I told myself I was going to try it. Here I can see the teacher's enthusiasm and actually everybody's enthusiasm, all the personnel, including the ladies at the front desk. Teachers do care about everybody's needs. Like my classmate said, 'We don't learn the same way, but they are aware of everybody's needs' so that makes us improve. After only a year here, I am very satisfied with everything I have learned even with my disability."



Responses showed that over 95% of the participants were either very satisfied or satisfied with all aspects of the program. In addition, 96% of the participants reported being informed of additional resources by LCCSO staff.

Themes. The following themes emerged across groups and participants.

1. Overall satisfaction with the program was high. Parents reported feeling satisfied with the English classes, parenting classes, childcare and the services of the navigators.
2. Relationships were a key component to program success. Participants often referred to the relationships they had developed with the teachers, navigators and other staff members.
3. Participants reported having more confidence interacting with their child(ren)'s school and within the community. Several talked about no longer needing a translator and feeling like they could communicate without assistance.
4. Parenting classes are a huge benefit. Parents singled out the financial classes and *Common Sense* parenting as being very beneficial and wanting them to continue.
5. Participants would like an increased writing component in the English classes as well as more time to practice conversational skills.
6. Summer classes were a change this year and the participants found them to be a bit confusing and not as comfortable as the levels of English speaking ability were mixed within groups of instruction.

Staff Focus Groups

Staff focus groups were conducted with all staff members to gain insight into both the successes and challenges at LCCSO. The focus groups were conducted in both Spanish and English. When asked about the biggest successes for the year, staff members identified the following: (1) White House Bright Spot; (2) Having 35 participants graduate this upcoming fall; (3) Giving confidence to parents as they go out in the community; and (4) Feeling stronger as a team.

The successes were likely due to a number of strengths discussed by the staff members. Multiple staff members talked about receiving the necessary training to improve their skills and knowledge while others pointed out receiving any support they needed to be successful in their position. In addition many staff members identified working at LCCSO as their biggest accomplishment to date and talked about how they felt the cohesiveness and teamwork has improved the center. They appreciate being able to have each other as resources and having open dialogues about what is happening in the center.

One of the biggest challenges is the lack of space in the center. The staff members have a hard time finding an area of private conversations with families. Additionally, the childcare rooms are crowded as is the outdoor play area. One question was, "Do we continue growing or do we just stay where we're at and do well? So I think that's kind of a question for our funders and see where they want to go. We'll go wherever they take us, but I know that's kind of a question. Do

we continue to grow and grow and have growing pains or do we do what we do well and then let's reset that foundation?"

Family Learning Program Implications and Recommendations

The Learning Community Center of South Omaha continued to expand during the 2014-15 year both in terms of expanding services and adapting the program into an Educare site. More families were served this year than any previous year and the goal for 2015-16 is to adapt the program to inside an elementary school. Even with the expansion and adaptation, satisfaction levels by the participants remain high. Along with the satisfaction levels, participants are increasing their English, becoming engaged in their students' schools and improving parenting practices. For the first time, the effects are becoming evident in the academic achievement scores of their students. **A recommendation would be to continue collecting student data and disaggregate the data based on time in program.**

One challenge for the LCCSO team to consider is how best to maintain the high levels of quality and relationships when expanding to satellite sites. **One recommendation would be for the LCCSO team to consider which elements of implementation are most necessary for building up a successful new site.**

A second challenge is the limited space available in the current center. Both participants and staff members are feeling like they have outgrown the available space. Are there ways to incorporate more spaces for private conversations?

Subsection I.3 Learning Community Family Liaison Program

Family Liaison Program

Lead: Jolene Johnson, Ed.D.

Program Description

Key Findings

158 students and 129 families served

92% free/reduced lunch eligible

Academic outcomes had strong effect size (*d*=1.57)

Parent Stress decreased significantly (*d*= 1.29)

75% of students missed 10 or fewer days of school

In 2014-15, the family liaison program provided intervention and supports to families within the community surrounding the two Learning Community Centers (LCCSO and LCCNO). The 90-day program is a partnership with Lutheran Family Services and is designed to help families deal with crisis and stabilize in order to support their children. Supports were provided by developing family goals, suggesting resources, collaborating with school personnel and assisting families to align supports with their needs. Over the course of the year, 158 students and their families were served. Of those families, 57 were served through the Learning Community Center of North Omaha (LCCNO) and 72 were served through the Learning Community Center of South Omaha (LCCSO). Overall, 85 of the 129 families served completed the program (66%).

Quality of Services Provided

In order to assess the quality of services provided by the family liaisons, a file review was conducted twice during the year. A licensed social worker from the evaluation team reviewed files for each liaison using a rubric scoring system developed during 2012-13 year. She then provided feedback to the supervisor and the second time directly to the liaison. Average scores for the two file reviews were 24.25/28 and 27/28 respectively. Strengths noted for the files included: (1) Well-written goals specifying a beginning and end date, (2) Multiple resources identified and shared with families and (3) Goals covered the needs identified by clients and referrals sources. Of the goals written for 2014-15, 70% had either been achieved or were

progressing at program's end. The goal for the service plans was to have a minimum score of 23/28 as an indicator of quality. This goal was exceeded for both rounds of the file review.

Survey and Focus Groups

Survey Question *(1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree)*	Mean Rating N=13
I feel more confident in my ability to support my child academically.	4.15
I believe through the Family Liaison Program I have a better understanding of my child's academic needs.	4.31
As a result of the Family Liaison Program services, I believe I have a better understanding of how to deal with stress.	4.15
As a result of the Family Liaison Program, I believe I have a better understanding of the attendance requirement at my child's school.	4.69
Overall, the quality of my life has improved since participating in the Family Liaison Program.	4.25

Focus groups were conducted twice during the year to coincide with family celebration nights. Two were held at LCCNO and two at LCCSO so families could participate at their home center. Families who completed the program successfully received a certificate of completion and a celebration was held for all participants. Families (both those completing the program and those who had not) were invited to participate in the focus groups. Incentives, a meal and childcare were provided to encourage participation in the groups. Across the four focus groups held for LCCSO and LCCNO, 15 families participated.

Themes from the focus groups indicated strong levels of support for the LFS program. Parents felt very supported and assisted with their needs.

1. **Support provided led to decreased behavioral issues with children.** Across programs at both centers (LCCNO and LCCSO) parents felt supported in dealing with their child's significant behavior issues. They reported learning new strategies and feeling like their child had an advocate at the school.
2. **Parents felt more secure in their employment due to support.** Parents reported feeling less stress and more able to do their jobs with the help from LFS. Parents were able to stay at work (not having their student suspended due to behavior) and focus on work when other matters such as housing was taken care of.
3. **Individualized services led to high levels of participant satisfaction with services.** Parents expressed appreciation for the time the liaisons spent with them listening, developing a plan and following through. Some of the participants said it felt like they finally had someone they could turn to and trust.

4. **The one improvement noted was that families asked for the program to be longer.** Some felt 90 days was inadequate to address all the needs and to become secure with the changes they had made.

Some of the quotes from the focus groups were:

"It helped me a lot. I was having a lot of problems with my son at school. They were calling me often, every day. They were complaining about my son's behavior, but with the help of this program, they got my son a mentor."

"I think it was a very good program. They take time to help parents that need help… I think this program is really awesome."

"I would like to promote it more, maybe at the schools. I was taking classes here (LCCSO) and a girl told me about it. I felt like I got the service really quick…..I could not even believe it. Many people go through the same obstacles and don't know what to do. I will recommend it because it worked for me."

Parent Stress Level

In addition to high levels of satisfaction with the program, parent stress levels declined significantly (t (47) = 8.814, p <.01, d=1.29). The mean level of stress, on a 10 point scale, decreased by 3+ points from 6.87 down to 3.72. Cohen's d (d=1.29) was in the zone of desired effects.

Student Outcomes

One hundred and fifty-eight students were served across 23 schools with 92% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch status and 34% qualifying for special education services Student scores were obtained from Omaha Public Schools and attendance data was collected by Lutheran Family Services. While the program targeted fewer schools, older students of families are included in the analysis. Attendance data indicated students missed an average of 6.67 days over the year with 57% missing six or fewer days of school and 75% missing fewer than ten days of school during the year.

Student Achievement

Students gained skills in all of the pre to post-test assessments from fall to spring including the district developed math and reading assessments and the MAP reading and math assessments. NeSA scores were not included in this analysis as students are involved in the program for a shorter period than a school year so the measure did not seem a valid representation of the program. Paired sample t-tests were conducted using the MAP reading and math scores. Reading scores changed significantly from fall to spring, t (15) = 7.610, p <.01, d=1.90). Math scores also

changed significantly, t (15) = 4.979, p =<.01, d =1.24). Both of the Cohen's d effect sizes are within the zone of desired effects as is the overall effect size, d=1.57.

Student Mental Health and Behavior Outcomes

Upon entry and exit into the program, parents were asked to complete two checklists on the target child for the program. The *Trauma Symptoms Checklist for Young Children (TSCYC*) is a 90 item tool completed by the child's caregiver. It measures trauma-related symptoms in children including anxiety, anger/aggression, depression, dissociation, sexual concerns and an overall score for posttraumatic stress. Paired sample *t*-tests were conducted and no significant changes were found for any subscale or total scale.

In addition, caregivers complete the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.* The SDQ is a brief (25 item) behavior screen for children ages 3-16 years. The SDQ was administered at entry and again at exit from the program. The questionnaire can be broken down in five areas: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and pro-social behavior. It also generates a total difficulties score. Paired sample t-tests were conducted and significant changes were found for Emotional Symptoms, t(68) = 2.89, p<.01. Cohen's *d* effect size was calculated and was approaching the zone of desired effects (d= 0.35).

Family Liaison Program Summary and Recommendations

The family liaison program provided a critical services for many students and their families in the catchment areas surrounding both LCCNO and LCCSO. Those services yielded high levels of satisfaction from the participants and resulted in significant changes to stress levels and student achievement. **A recommendation for the FSL program would be to collect post data from families who did not achieve their goals. It would possibly yield suggestions for improvement.**

For the 2015-16 report, results for LFS will be broken down into the areas served, LCCSO and LCCNO. Additionally, the survey and the data requested may change in order to best capture the services being provided for the families.

A second recommendation would be to continue to differentiate the planning and individualized focus as families were responsive to that approach. The mental health supports in particular were mentioned by families as helpful in addressing their child's behavioral and mental health needs.

Sub-Section I.4: Jump Start to Kindergarten Pilot Programs

Lisa St. Clair, Ed.D & Abbey Siebler, M.A.

Kindergarten students from low income who attend classrooms with high quality teacher-child interactions along with effective instructional support demonstrate higher social competence and academic outcomes (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010).

Summary of Program Model

Jump Start programming is designed to provide students the opportunity to become more prepared for Kindergarten and start at a more equivalent level as their peers that may have had more extensive early childhood care and educational experiences. Programming focuses on pre-academic skills, routines and social skill development. Programs typically focus most on basic academic and social-emotional-behavioral readiness for kindergarten and orient students to the processes and procedures of school. Further, some programs also include a strong family engagement component such as home visits, parent days, or other family engagement activities. The first cohort of Jump Start to Kindergarten programs were funded in the summer of 2011.

Jump Start to Kindergarten Pilot Program Key Findings

- **872 kindergarten students were served in five districts**
- **Served an average of 19 days in the summer**
- **70% were eligible for free/reduced lunch**
- **Students were significantly more prepared for kindergarten by the end of the program, but the effect size change was below the desired zone (*d*=0.37).**
- **In a longitudinal study with three districts with 3rd grade students who had attended Jumpstart to Kindergarten in 2011: 88% proficient in NeSA Reading and 83% in NeSA Mathematics**
- **High ratings of parent satisfaction were found (4.58 on a 5 point scale)**

Who was served in these programs?

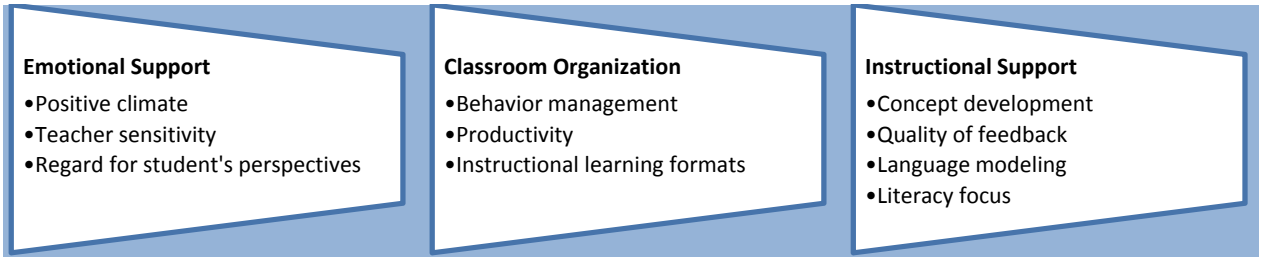
Jump Start to Kindergarten programs were funded in five districts. All Subcouncils were represented with programs. The programs ranged from three to four weeks, with varying hours and days per week. All programs utilized certified teachers for part or all of their staffing.

There were a total of 201 consented Kindergarten students served by the Jump Start to Kindergarten programs who were randomly selected and present for both pre and post assessment using the Bracken School Readiness Assessment.

Jump Start to Kindergarten was implemented in public schools in Elkhorn, Millard, Omaha, Ralston, and Papillion La Vista.

What was the quality of implementation for the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was used to measure classroom quality in Kindergarten programs. Developed by Bob Pianta and others at the University of Virginia Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, this external observation tool measures classroom quality across multiple domains.



CLASS was widely implemented this program year. A total of 52 CLASS ratings were completed. These classrooms were drawn from all funded districts and one community agency that received Jump Start to Kindergarten funding. Classrooms were video-recorded, submitted, and then scored at UNMC. A CLASS report was prepared for each participating classroom and results were sent to each district and agency. Districts and agencies determined how best to share the information with the teachers. The CLASS reports included video clips and written feedback along with dimension and domain scores. CLASS ratings were collected at one point in time only (summer). The table below summarizes the average CLASS domain scores for the last four years. The goal each year is to achieve average CLASS domain scores of at least 5 in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and at least 3.25 in Instructional Support.

CLASS

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

Author: Pianta, LaParo & Hamre, 2008

Scale:

1-2 = Low quality

3-5 = Moderate quality

6-7 = High quality

Jump Start to Kindergarten CLASS Domain Averages

Summer	# of classrooms observed	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2015	52 (RS)	5.68	6.18	2.32
2014	86	5.82	6.07	2.67
2013	32	5.55	5.82	2.55
2012	15	6.15	6.08	2.78
2011	7	6.41	5.80	3.14

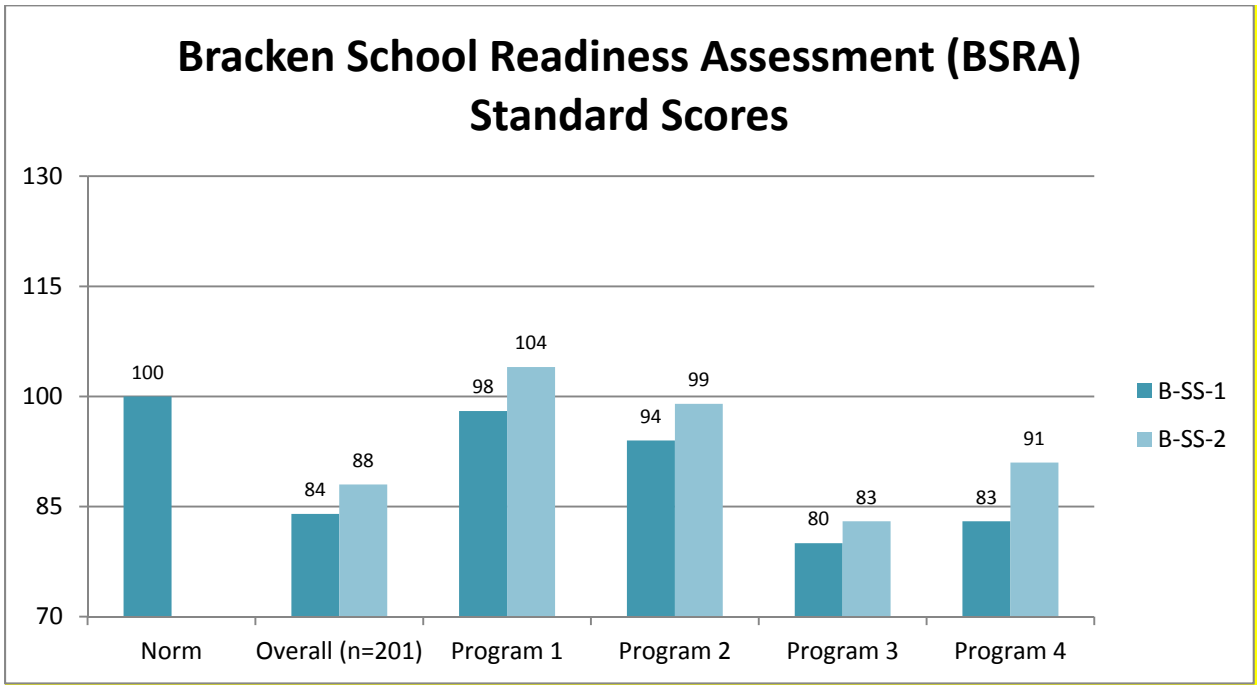
CLASS ratings increased in one of the three domains--Classroom Organization--compared to the previous year. With broad implementation of the CLASS it was positive to see the results improve from last year. The goal for continuous improvement should be to continue to support staff professional development with Instructional Support, aiming for a rating of 3.25 or greater in order to impact student achievement (Burchinal et al, 2010). Programs may benefit from exploring professional development, particularly in the Instructional Support domain, as well as a focus on continuous improvement.

Student Academic Achievement

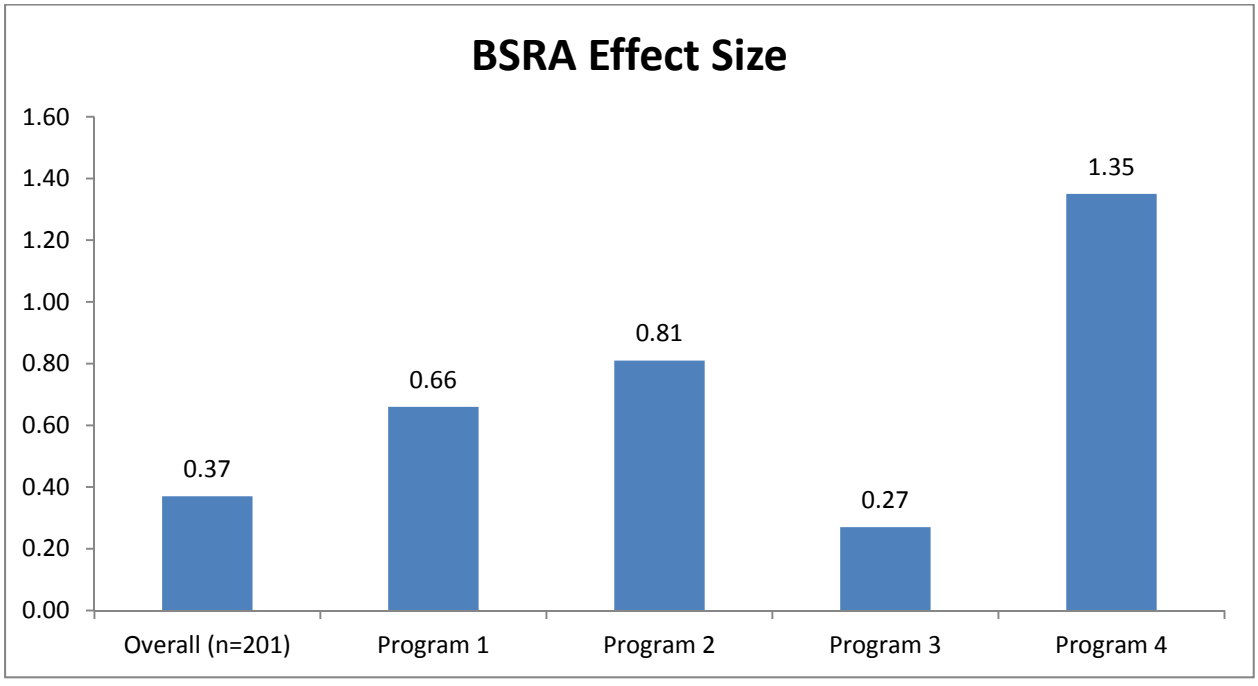
The importance of concept development, particularly for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in numerous research articles (Neuman, 2006; Panter & Bracken, 2009). Some researchers have found that basic concepts are a better means of predicting both reading and mathematics than are traditional vocabulary tests such as the PPVT-IV (Larrabee, 2007). The norm-referenced assessment selected to measure Kindergarten student's school readiness is the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA). The BSRA was used to measure the academic readiness skills of young students in the areas of colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, comparisons and shapes. The mean of the BSRA is 100, with 86 to 114 falling within the average range (one standard deviation above and below the mean). It has been used in numerous studies, including the Joint Center for Poverty Research, NICHD study of early child care and youth development, Harlem Project, and the national implementation study of Educare, to name but a few. The limitation of this assessment is that it does not measure social/emotional readiness for school, executive functioning, and other important qualities to consider relative to "readiness for school."

Papillion La Vista did not use BSRA's this year, as the evaluation team and Papillion agreed to explore a new observational measure, EduSnap, instead. EduSnap is a new measure being considered for the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan evaluation and Papillion volunteered to assist in the piloting so that any implementation challenges could be addressed. This was a very useful learning process for the evaluation team and furthered our knowledge in utilizing this tool in the future.

Using a random sampling technique to reduce assessment burden in most schools, BSRAs were completed pre and post with a total of 201 consented students. BSRA pre and post standard scores are displayed in the following chart.

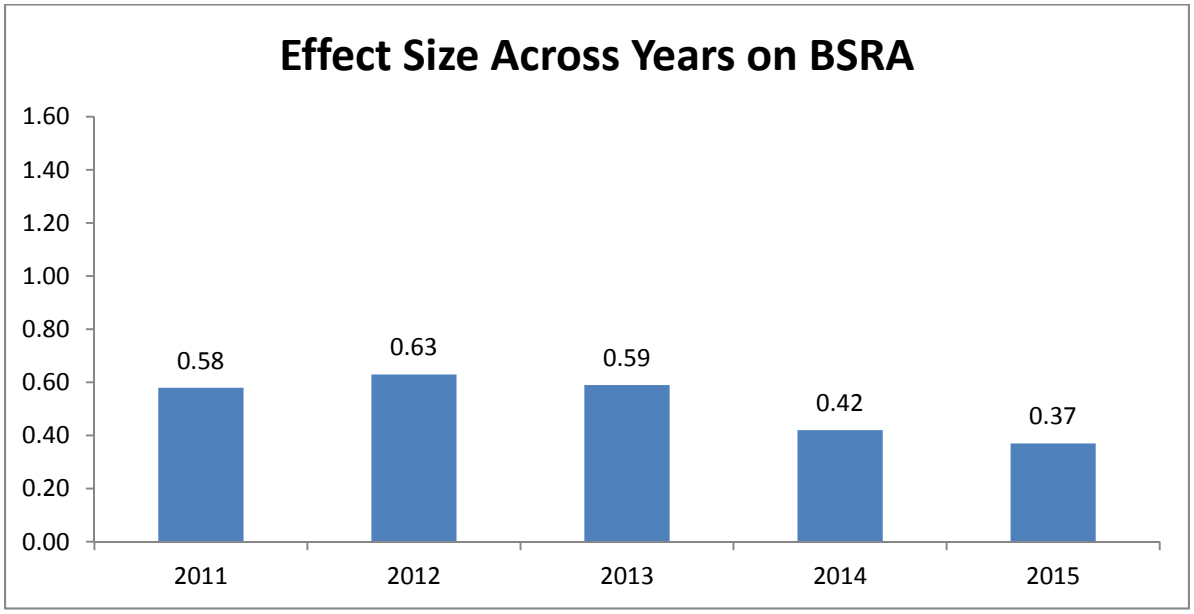


Students significantly improved overall in the Jump Start program. Effect size change varied by district.



Overall, the group of students significantly improved in their readiness for kindergarten (p<.001). Mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 84 to 88--moving them slightly closer to the desired mean of 100 and ending within the average range; however, with a group mean standard score of 88, students were slightly less prepared to enter kindergarten than in prior years when the post scores were in the 90's range. One consideration about this to reflect upon is that the group also started lower this year—and that could limit the opportunity to show greater post scores. Generally speaking, the goal each year is to move the group as close to scores of 100 or greater as possible.

The effect size overall was lower than in previous years, was below the zone of desired effects, and has been declining since 2012.



Bracken School Readiness Overall Standard Scores

Year	# of students	Average Pre Standard Scores	Average Post Standard Scores	Average Bracken SRA Standard Scores Change	Statistical significance using T-Test analysis	Effect Size
2015	201 (RS)[1]	84.25	87.80	3.55	p <.001*	*d=0.37*
2014	1011	88.98	91.63	2.66	p <.001*	d=0.42
2013	649	86.42	90.50	4.08	p <.001*	d=0.59
2012	800	87.97	92.08	4.11	p<.001*	d=0.63
2011	156	85.85	90.13	4.28	p<.001*	d=0.58

**Significant improvement using a paired samples t-test, one-tailed*

Effect size calculated using paired samples mean differences/mean standard deviation

[1]*Random sampling technique utilized*

Bracken Percent of Mastery by Subtest

Bracken Subtest	Percent of Mastery Pre	Percent of Mastery Post	Percent Increase
Colors	91	92	1
Letters	57	62	5
Numbers and Counting	56	61	5
Sizes and Comparisons	46	53	7
Shapes	57	61	4
Overall	58	63	5

The Jump Start to Kindergarten outcomes on the Bracken suggest that an area of strength for these students was color naming (92% mastery). An area for improvement would be Sizes/Comparisons (53% mastery). Sizes/Comparison may be a higher level skill for students as this subtest assesses their understanding of location words, comparison concepts and understanding directional concepts.

Longitudinal Study: Jump Start to Kindergarten students from the first cohort (2011)

Three districts participated in a longitudinal study to examine 3rd grade proficiency rates NeSA Reading and NeSA Mathematics for former Jump Start to Kindergarten participants.

- **70% were still attending school in the district**
- **88% were proficient in reading**
- **83% were proficient in mathematics**

What did parents report about the Jump Start Kindergarten Programs?

Parents provided feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program. Using a collaborative process across all districts and agencies, a master parent survey was developed. Districts or agencies were then able to choose which sections they would use for their program. Parent survey data was received from each of the participating districts and agencies; however, rates of participation varied widely. Parent survey results are displayed in the following table (*n*=252).

Parent Satisfaction and Ratings of Impact

How much do you agree or disagree with each statement:	Average
a. I was satisfied with the hours of the program.	4.61
b. I was satisfied with the length of the program.	4.63
c. I was satisfied with the program as a whole.	4.63
d. The staff were excellent (caring, reliable, skilled).	4.71
e. My child enjoyed attending the program.	4.74
f. I was able to communicate with my child's teacher.	4.46
g. I was informed about my child's progress.	4.27
h. I believe that my child will be more successful in Kindergarten as a result of the program.	4.58
i. I feel more prepared to be the parent of a Kindergartener as a result of the program.	4.49
j. My child believes that school will be a fun place to learn.	4.64
k. If my child begins to struggle in Kindergarten I would feel comfortable approaching his/her teacher or principal.	4.64
Overall	4.58

Scale ranges from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

Families reported high overall satisfaction with the structure and environment of the program. They also reported high levels of impact on such items as believing their child is more ready for kindergarten as a result of the program and feeling comfortable to talk with their child's teacher if a problem emerges. The lowest level of satisfaction was (4.27) for being informed about their child's progress.

Parents were also surveyed about their perceptions of how the program impacted their child (see below).

Parent Report of Child Change

Check level of improvement:	My child already had these skills		Did Not Improve	Improved
a. Willingness to separate from parents	64%	Or choose one of the following	3%	34%
b. Likes to listen to stories	70%		1%	29%
c. Recognizes letters of the alphabet	44%		4%	53%
d. Knows different colors and shapes	62%		2%	36%
e. Plays well with other children	56%		1%	43%
f. Willingness to share with other children	52%		2%	45%
g. Interest in sharing what they have learned	41%		5%	54%
h. Attentiveness when read to	51%		5%	44%
i. Attention span for tasks	37%		7%	56%
j. Eagerness to attend school	47%		2%	51%

More than half of respondents reported child improvement in recognizing letters of the alphabet, interest in sharing what they learned, attention span for tasks, and eagerness to attend school. Some areas where the majority of students already possessed the skills were willingness to separate from parents, likes to listen to stories, knows different colors and shapes, plays well with other children, and willingness to share with other children. The lowest rated area for children already having skills was attention span for tasks (37%), which associated with the highest percentage of "did not improve" (7%), and 56% showing improvement in this area. Perhaps one of the values of Jump Start to Kindergarten is to begin to teach children how to attend to tasks in a school setting?

Jump Start to Kindergarten Program Conclusions and Implications for Program Improvement

Jump Start to Kindergarten programs were implemented in five districts and one community agency. A total of 872 kindergarten students were served an average 19 days over the summer. Students significantly improved on the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (Bracken, 2002, $p<.001$, $d=0.37$), and the effect size was approaching the zone of desired effects. Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with and impact by the Jump Start Kindergarten programs

(4.58 on a 5 point scale). CLASS ratings improved from the previous year with strengths found in emotional support and classroom organization, with opportunity for improvement in the area of instructional support. **Therefore, it is recommended that programs explore professional development in the area of instructional support with emphasis on Concept Development.** Given the consistently positive results for the students after attending the Jump Start Kindergarten summer programs, districts and programs may want to follow students to see if the programming has lasting effects.

Subsection I.5: Extended Learning Time Pilot Programs

Lead: Jolene Johnson, Ed.D. & Colleen Gibilisco, M.S.

Introduction

The Learning Community funded a number of Extended Learning Time programs that included comprehensive out-of-school time programs throughout the school year, before-school and after-school tutoring sessions with targeted academic support, and summer learning programs to students. Below is a description of the programs that served students during 2014-2015 year.

Extended Learning Time Pilot Program Key Findings

- **407 elementary students were served**
- **48% of students were eligible for free/reduced lunch**
- **An overall effect size was calculated and was of medium size (*d*=0.25)**
- **Overall, parents found the programs to be a positive experience for their students**

One limitation to this evaluation is the variability both within programs and with how programs measure student success. The programs funded for extended learning varied in the students served, the structures implemented and in program focus. Student outcomes were measured for each program but the measures are quite different and may be difficult to make comparisons across programs.

School Year Program Descriptions

South Sarpy/Springfield Platteview Community Schools. During this year-long program, students participated in a mathematics intervention program. Students received 60 minutes per week of additional instruction in mathematics after school. The instruction was provided in small group and individualized settings and was targeted to meet the needs of each student. Teachers and the math interventionist collaborated on a frequent basis to design and implement the best plan for each student. Students were progress monitored and their plans adjusted according to student data. A total of 12 students participated in the program with 25% qualifying for free/reduced lunch.

Summer Program Descriptions

Douglas County West Community Schools: *XtraMath, Voyager® Ticket to Read*. DC West summer program served Kindergarten-Third Grade students for 4 weeks during the summer months, 4 days a week. During this time, students participated in XtraMath, a web-based

program, designed to increase speed and accuracy in arithmetic skills. *Ticket to Read®*, an interactive online reading program designed to strengthen fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension. A total of 40 students were served with 53% qualifying for free/reduced lunch status.

Elkhorn Public Schools*. Jump Start to Reading*. This program served incoming first through fourth grade students who met certain criteria based on the AIMSweb winter benchmarking national norms. Students scoring at or below the 25th percentile received an invitation to attend the program. The three-week program was held four days week for three hours each day. The program focused on individual student reading needs and provided instruction based on one or more programs (Reading Street's My Sidewalks, Read Naturally, Guided Reading and/or Guided Writing). Students received instruction from a certified teacher. The average ratio was one teacher to six students. A total of 77 students were served with 7% qualifying for free/reduced lunch.

Millard Public Schools Extended Learning. This program featured summer school learning targeted to K-2 students who have academic deficiencies in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Students are invited from eight Millard schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged and/or limited English proficiency students. The program was implemented for three weeks, three hours per day, in two elementary schools in the district. In addition, the program offered three Family Days that included informational, instructional, and community services in areas such as successful strategies to support student learning, health and wellness, personal finance, assessing social services, and child care. Transportation, meals, and books were provided to students, along with a bilingual liaison and licensed social worker to help families who could benefit from those services. Students entering kindergarten are also invited to attend this program as a jump-start experience for school. One hundred thirty-seven students were served in the program with 51% qualifying for free/reduced lunch.

Ralston Public Schools: The Summer School program provided instruction in reading and mathematics to students in grades K-6. Students (*n*=141) were selected for participation based on recent classroom data. Summer school and classroom teachers collaborated on the individual goals for each student. Instruction was provided in small group settings using a variety of strategies and different forms of technology. Specific programs used for intervention included Mathletics (Harcourt) and Leveled Literacy Intervention (Fountas and Pinnell, 2009). Of the students participating, 69% qualified for free/reduced lunch.

Students Served

Who did these programs serve? Participation data were collected on the 407 elementary students who attended the programs.

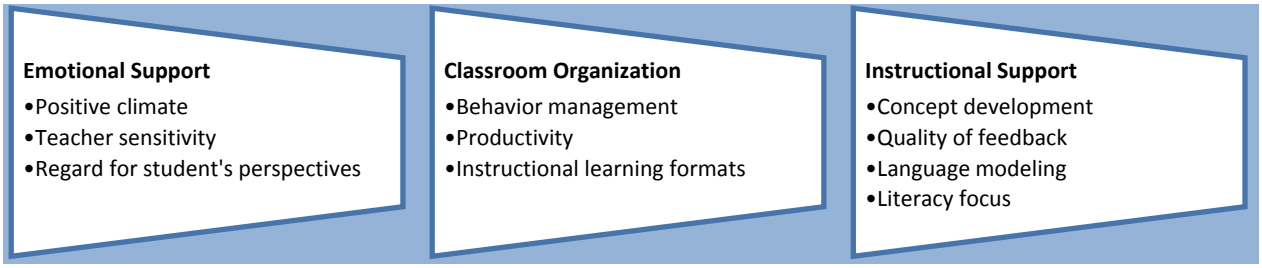
Demographic data provided on these students indicated that 48% of the students served were eligible for free/reduced lunch.

The population served by the extended learning time programs appeared to generally fall within the target of the population identified to benefit from the resources of the Learning Community—those most at risk for academic failure due to socio-economic status. School districts often targeted students for their tutoring and extended learning programs based upon school performance and need to remediate specific academic skills. The programming provided by the programs varied considerably and should be taken into consideration when examining the results. Parent engagement strategies varied by program.

Evaluation Data Collection

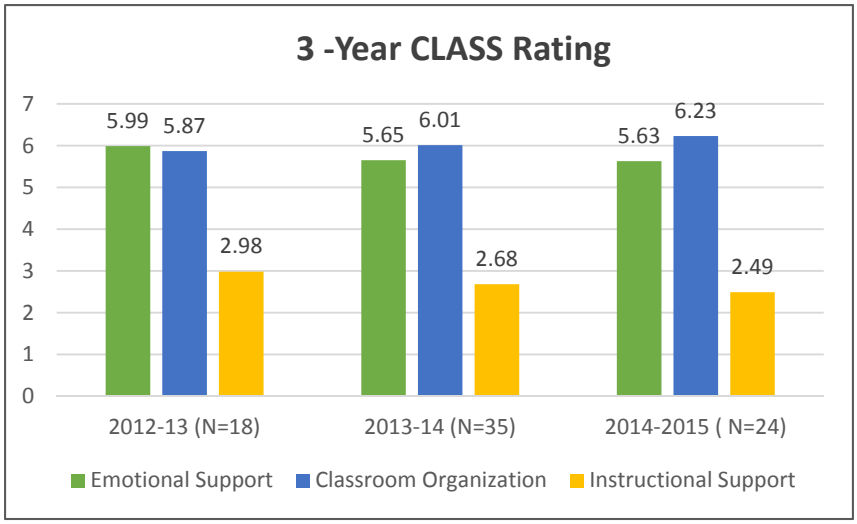
Quality. Quality programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term positive academic performance (Beckett, Capizzano, Parsley, Ross, Schirm, & Taylor, 2009; Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, & Clifford, 2000). Measurement of the quality of programs is central to program evaluation. This section reports on the CLASS observations completed by the UNMC evaluation team with extended learning programs funded through the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (LC).

To examine program instructional quality, the evaluation team recommended use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Developed by Bob Pianta and others at the University of Virginia Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, this external observation tool measures classroom quality across multiple domains including: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and instructional delivery. According to its authors, the CLASS "*is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning*." It has three domains:



In addition to these domains, interactions are further considered relative to dimensions. These dimensions include aspects such as: Positive Climate (focuses on how teachers interact with students to develop warm relationships that promote student's enjoyment of the classroom community) and Concept Development (focuses on how teachers interact with students to promote higher-order thinking and cognition).

For these reasons, the evaluation team has identified the CLASS observation tool as a valid way to gather an externally rated measure of quality, and one with the added benefit of it having the potential to drive continuous improvement because of the specificity of the feedback from the observation.



All of the after school and summer school sites participated in this piece of the evaluation. For the majority of the program, CLASS scores were calculated for the program rather than per teacher. Multiple teachers were recorded, rated, and the CLASS rating feedback report given to the program included an average of their ratings. However, some programs wanted feedback for each teacher. In those cases, a CLASS rating feedback report was completed and provided.

Scores at or above 6.00 indicate high levels of quality, scores at or above 3.00 are in moderate quality range, with scores below 3.00 indicating low quality. CLASS scores in national studies have been found to be in the low to moderate quality for Instructional Support (Kane et al, 2013), but effectively support continuous improvement/professional development to support teacher effectiveness.

CLASS:

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

Scale:

1-2 = Low quality

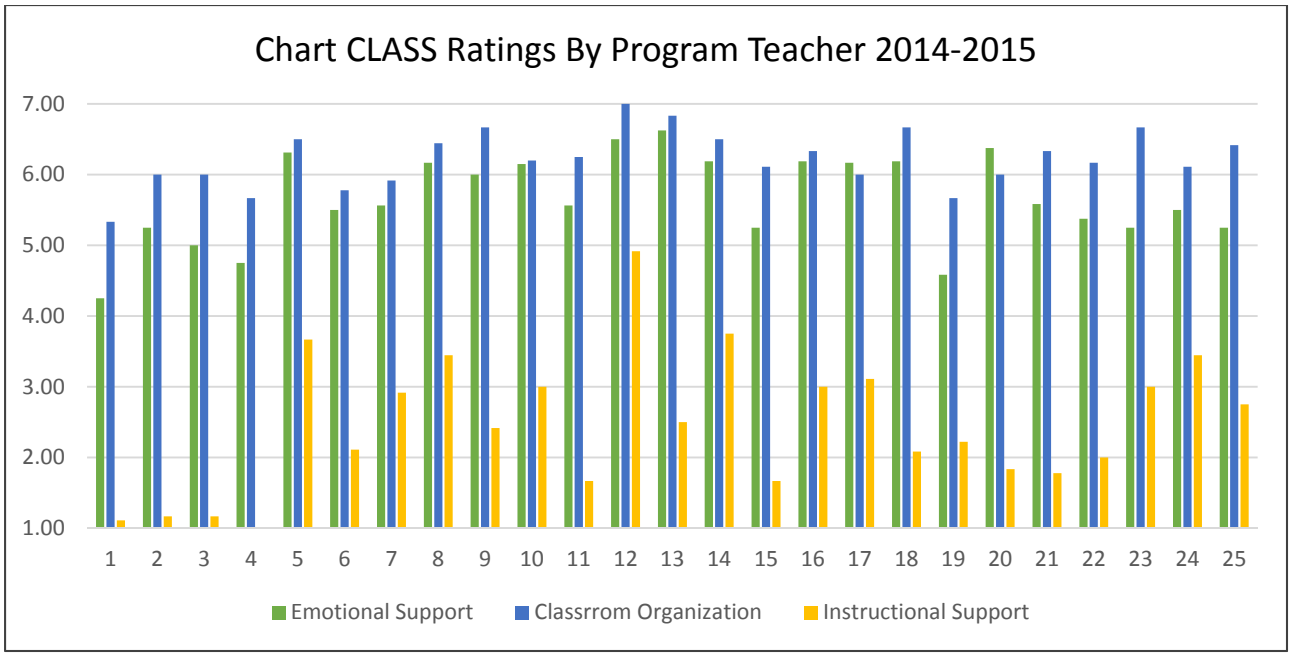
3-5 = Moderate quality

6-7 = High quality

Author: Pianta, LaParo & Hamre, 2008

Across programs, average CLASS ratings were 5.63 for Emotional Support, 6.23 for Class Organization and 2.49 for Instructional Support. Overall, the program average rated near the high range for Emotional Support, in the high range for Classroom Organization, and in the low to moderate range for Instructional Support. Instructional Support scores may be low as a result of the programs selected by the districts. Scripted programs focused on remediating skill deficits do not score well in the area of Instructional Support. Yet, districts often use these programs as they have an evidence base in remediating skills for at-risk students.

The following chart displays the scores across all programs and teachers.



Student Achievement

The collection of student level achievement data varied greatly by program. The type of measure chosen by the district to measure student growth impacts both the analysis and the expected rate of growth across a short period of time. Some programs used progress monitoring measures (AIMSweb) to monitor change while others used more comprehensive norm-referenced assessments (MAP) which are not as sensitive to small amounts of student change. The MAP requires students to show more growth before it will change significantly whereas AIMSweb measure could change significantly in a short period of time. Four of the five programs submitted student level achievement data. Of those four programs, three showed significant pre to post change using paired-samples t-tests on at least one measure and/or at one or more grade levels. The Cohen's *d* effect sizes for those programs with significant results ranged from *d*=0.86-2.09 across multiple measures. It should be noted that the differences in effect sizes is likely due to the nature of the measurement tools being used. Student performance over such a short period of time may or may not be captured by the tool selected by the district. The overall effect size for student achievement was *d*=0.25, which is in the typical teacher effects zone—below the zone of desired effects.

Parent Satisfaction. Parent surveys were collected for students enrolled in the extended learning programs. A total of 195 parent surveys were collected across the programs. Some programs and districts had additional questions not included on all surveys. Those questions are not reported here.

Parent Survey Results 2014-15 (N=195)

Survey Question	Average
I was satisfied with the hours of the program.	4.50
I was satisfied with the length of the program.	4.46
I was satisfied with the program as a whole.	4.47
The staff were excellent (caring, reliable, skilled).	4.53
My child enjoyed attending the program.	4.50
I am satisfied with the level of communication I had with my child's teacher.	3.92
I was informed about my child's progress.	3.54
I believe that my child will be more successful in school next year as a result of the program.	4.24

Scale ranges from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

Overall, parents rated the extended learning programs positively. The pattern of survey responses was consistent with the survey results from 2013-14. As in 2013-14, parents requested increased communication from the school on their student's progress. For programs that had Family Days and other specific family activities, the comments were quite positive with families expressing appreciation for the opportunity to interact with their students in a fun and engaging manner.

Extended Learning Conclusions and Implications for Program Improvement

Extended learning programs served 407 students across two major types of programs: broader extended learning programs during the school year that served students greater than one hour daily and all/most days of the week and summer extended learning programs. Forty-eight percent (48%) of students were eligible for free/reduced lunch.

Students appeared to benefit academically from participation in extended learning programs (*d*=0.25). Parents were positive about the experience and the support their student had while attending the programs.

It is challenging to compare programs as they have different goals and vary in terms of programming, assessments and time frames. Some programs served multiple grade levels and more students while other programs are targeted in both grade level and the students whom they serve. Broader programs may be less intense than those programs which focus on one specific academic area. Additionally, programs using a scripted, remedial intervention program almost always have lower scores on the CLASS rating tool.

One recommendation for the Extended Learning programs is to select a measure for each program that is sensitive to change in short periods of time. A second recommendation would

be for the districts to consider sharing what is working in their districts' Extended Learning Program.

Sub-Section I.6: Instructional Coaching Pilot Programs

Jolene Johnson, Ed.D.

Instructional Coaching was implemented with the belief that improving teachers' instruction of literacy would improve student achievement in the area of reading. Hattie's research indicated that ongoing use of formative evaluation by the teacher including data analysis and use of evidence-based models yielded an effect size in the high range (*d*=0.90). Given that instructional coaching provides teachers with formative information, it is possible to affect change in teacher instruction (Hattie, 2009). Research into literacy coaching found that intensive coaching activities such as modeling and conferencing are significant predictors of student reading achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011).

Summary of Program Models

Three districts were funded to implement instructional coaching: Bellevue Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools and Westside Community Schools. The coaching models/frameworks used by the districts varied but there were common elements in the models including: feedback, modeling, working with teachers collaboratively and having minimal time spent in direct instruction of students. Bellevue Public School focused on overall delivery of instruction across curriculum areas while both Omaha Public Schools and Westside Community Schools focused on literacy with Omaha Public serving teachers in the primary grades and Westside providing coaching for K-6 teachers in the two buildings.

Instructional Coaching Pilot Program Key Findings

- **658 teachers were served across three districts**
- **Approximately 9000 students were part of an instructional coaching model**
- **Overall effect size on instructional practices is within the zone of desired effects (*d*=0.54)**
- **Student achievement effect size was in the zone of desired effects (*d*=1.09)**

Who was served in this program?

Across both districts, approximately 9000 students were served through literacy coaching in the building in which they were located. A total of 658 teachers were impacted by literacy coaching but not all teachers participated in the CLASS observations or worked with a Learning Community funded literacy coach.

What was the quality of the program?

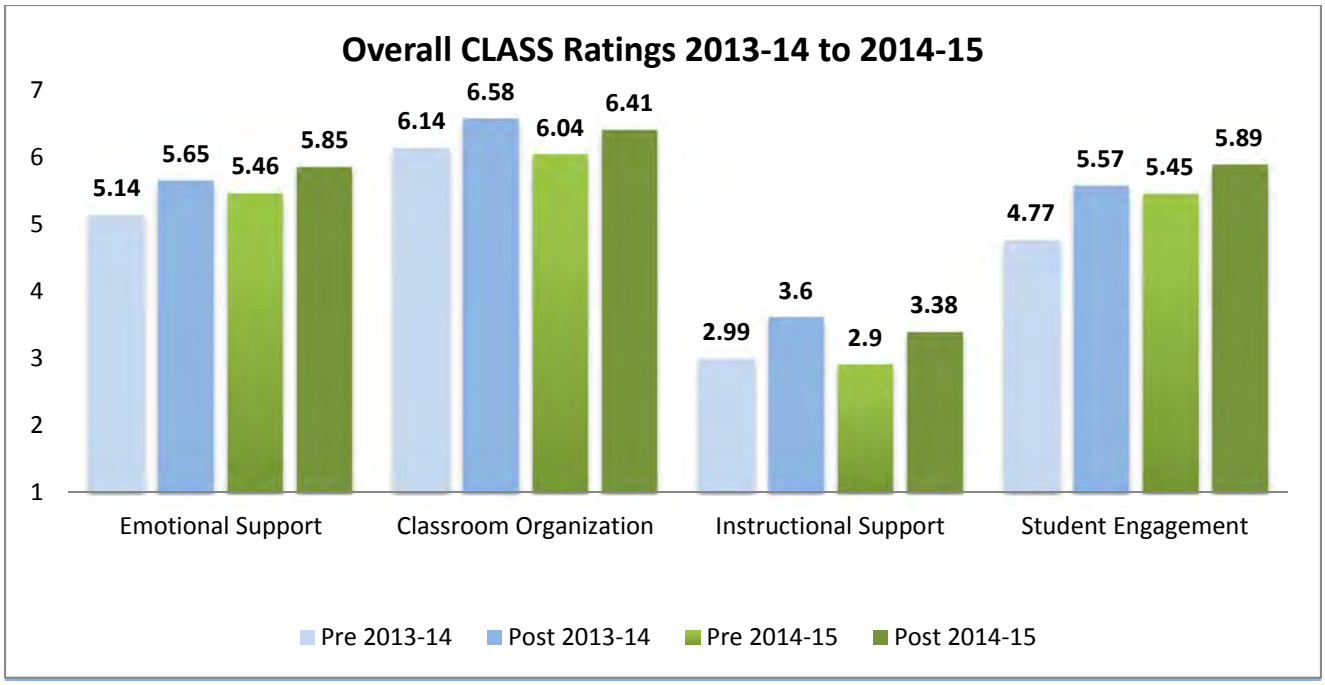
Quality of the program was evaluated using several different methods. The CLASS observation tool was used as a pre and post measure for a large sample of teachers. Focus groups were conducted with literacy coaches, teachers and administrators. Finally, an online survey was administered to teachers to provide their input on the program.

CLASS Ratings

Teaching and learning interactions significantly improved in ratings of emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support and student engagement, with effect size change found within the zone of desired effects. Part of the evaluation process for the 2014-15 year was the use of the CLASS rating tool. Districts varied in their selection processes with one selecting all teachers within buildings and the other two selecting a sample of teachers to participate in the process.

Classroom teachers were videotaped during the first semester, provided written feedback along with CLASS ratings and then were videotaped once more toward the end of second semester. Each district was provided the opportunity to debrief with an evaluation team member on the results of the observations.

The following chart shows the pre to post ratings on the CLASS tool across all the teachers participating in the evaluation process.



Effect Size Change for 2014-15

Paired-sample t-tests were conducted for each district. Cohen's *d* effect sizes were calculated for each CLASS dimension showing significant change. The table provides information for each district and CLASS dimension. Neither Student Engagement or Analysis and Inquiry will be reported as doing so would identify the district. Overall effect sizes are listed for each district with the overall effect size for instructional coaching on instructional practices being in the Zone of Desired Effects (*d*=0.54).

Dimension	District A N=29	District B N=31	District C N=18
Positive Climate	0.40	0.53	NS
Absence of Negative Climate	NS	0.05	NS
Teacher Sensitivity	0.46	0.92	0.63
Regard for Student Perspectives	0.43	NS	NS

Dimension	District A N=29	District B N=31	District C N=18
Behavior Management	NS	0.43	0.69
Productivity	NS	0.47	NS
Instructional Learning Formats	0.62	0.65	0.87
Concept Development	NS	0.49	0.58
Quality of Feedback	NS	0.60	NS
Language Modeling	0.39	0.64	NS
OVERALL EFFECT SIZE	0.46	0.53	0.69

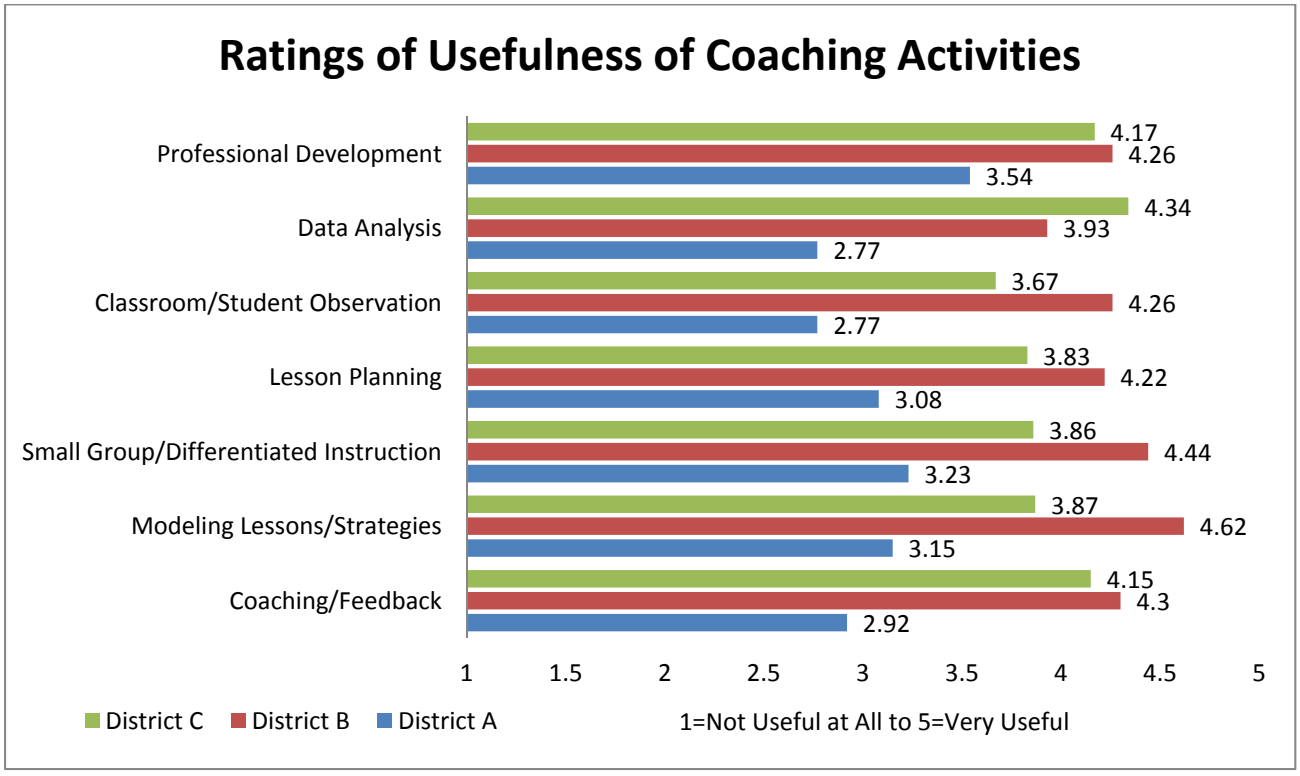
Teacher Feedback

A total of 98 teachers completed the online survey developed collaboratively between the districts and the evaluation team. The survey explored satisfaction with the coach and the program and the perceived helpfulness of each coaching activity. Each district administered the survey online to teachers and submitted the data to the external evaluation team. Items in the chart below were rated from 1 to 5 with *1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree*. For two districts, open-ended items asking about benefits and challenges of literacy coaching were included in the survey. For the other district, the open-ended items were completed in focus groups conducted by members of the evaluation team.

Survey Item	Mean Scores		
	District A	District B	District C
My literacy coach/facilitator and I have a positive working relationship.	4.00	4.70	4.45
My literacy coach/facilitator listens to me.	3.69	4.81	4.48
My literacy coach/facilitator is available when I need him/her.	3.85	4.85	4.34

Survey Item	Mean Scores		
When I have a problem, my literacy coach/facilitator is helpful in developing a plan to address it.	3.38	4.85	4.26
My literacy coach/facilitator communicates with me in a way that is easy to understand.	3.92	4.85	4.45
Building level support was positive as it related to the literacy coaching/facilitator program.	3.15	4.59	3.88
Considering everything, I am satisfied with the literacy coaching program.	3.08	4.63	3.78

1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree



Focus Groups for District A

Focus groups for coaches were scheduled and attempted by the evaluation team. However, only one coach agreed to participate. Therefore, no focus group data are available for District A.

Open-ended survey items were completed by teachers. Responses by the teachers provided a mixed review on the coaching in their buildings. Teachers appreciated the chance to share ideas

and collaborate with another professional. Specifically teachers mentioned feeling more confident and capable in teaching reading, especially with small group reading. Other benefits included streamlined lesson plans and effective questioning strategies. However, teachers expressed confusion about the role of the coach. Some expected more support in the classroom, others would have liked more modeling and others wished for more time with their coach.

Focus Groups for District B

In the spring of 2015, multiple focus groups were conducted with staff members. Teachers and literacy coaches met with members of the evaluation team to discuss the literacy coaching program funded by the Learning Community. Overall, teachers and literacy coaches viewed the Literacy Coaching program as an asset in their buildings. Literacy coaches in the buildings were viewed as experts in the field of reading, approachable, respectful to teachers, and able to follow through with teachers. These literacy coach qualities helped to engage teachers into dialogue about reading and reading practices.

Benefits to Teachers

Coaches saw more purposeful reflection from teachers. They were willing to go deeper with some areas of instruction and more willing to try new things.

New teachers were eager to learn and sought out the help of the coaches. The new teachers were also willing to share the work they had done with the coaches. This sharing often prompted other teachers, both new and veteran, to approach the coaches about working together.

Having to implement two new curricula this year was taxing for both coaches and staff, but it provided an entry point for the coaches for some teachers. During team planning at one building, the weekly meetings were spent figuring out curriculum maps, debugging the curriculum and determining how to teach the curriculum within the indicator framework. Teachers were most apprehensive to start the writing curriculum but after the coaches co-taught and modeled lessons, the teachers were using the curriculum. Particularly in kindergarten and first grade, good progress was seen with both teachers and students. “Our kindergarten and first grade students can really write” said one of the coaches.

Effective Strategies

The following strategies were determined to be effective by the literacy coaches.

1. Meeting with teachers one on one was the most beneficial. It allowed for collaboration and for helping the teacher reflect on their instructional practices. Honest conversations

were able to occur as teachers could be vulnerable and reflect with the coach on practices and what they wanted to focus on.

2. Coaching cycles for teams has been effective. The coaches were able to plan and problem-solve with the team on units, curricula or broad instructional practices.
3. Continued professional development on the part of the coaches has led to better questioning and reflection sessions with teachers which have helped build and develop teacher capacity.
4. Use of the Google drive to share resources and include more technology has increased communication and allowed staff to be on the same page. Folders were created for teachers for coaching feedback, coaching cycles and data forms. It has been helpful with communication and provided accessibility of the resources to the teachers.
5. Collaboration time between the coaches has proven useful. They have discussed Knight's work, forms, coaching strategies, Google docs and the new curricula being implemented for 2014-15.
6. Another useful strategy has been the involvement of the building level administrators in understanding the role of coaching and how to effectively use that for staff development and within a growth plan structure.

Development of practices over the past two years

The coaches have seen a shift in awareness of instruction and a shift from asking for just literacy assistance to a focus on overall instruction. Shifts have also occurred in terms of classroom management and focusing more on student engagement in the classroom. Teachers have begun collaborating and working more on streamlining indicators. More teachers are coming together and sharing the benefits of working with a coach with new teachers often leading the way. It has become more about collaboration and mutual problem-solving and less about having the coach find resources.

A common language across classrooms and grade levels has developed and led to richer discussions about students. There is now more communication about where students need to be within a grade level and where they need to end up. This discussion has evolved to setting goals both as teachers and for the students. The teachers now know that they will be asked to set goals and asked to evaluate progress on their goals.

Some of the shift by teachers may be attributed to the growth of the coaches themselves. The coaches expressed how their own knowledge of their position had increased and thus allowed their coaching skills to move to a higher level. One coach stated, "I can now offer a different level of support and have higher level conversations with teachers." The coaches expressed interest in continuing to branch out and expand their skill sets moving into the next year. There was some

concern expressed about having to stand still and wait for new instructional coaches within the district to "catch up" as they wanted to continue moving forward with the momentum from this year.

Challenges

One of the challenges for the coaches was how to bring on-board more of the veteran teachers. While the new teachers have embraced the coaches, some of the more experienced teachers have been reluctant to approach the coach or see the value of coaching. One coach said, "It's difficult when you see the teacher who needs to grow and they don't seem to see it." The coaches have seen more buy-in from veteran staff this year but would like to see the buy-in continue expand. One of the solutions has been a team approach or a unit approach where all the teachers come together from a grade level around a particular unit to collaborate with the coach.

Having to implement two new curricula this year was a challenge for coaches and teachers. With the curricula, not all the pieces were in place and the coaches' role was to keep everybody positive and moving forward while at the same time figuring out how to work with and implement the curricula. Therefore instead of focusing on the "how" of instruction much of the year was focused on the "what" of the curricula. The coaches discussed that most teachers needed at least some scaffolding to implement and understand the curricula pieces. As discussion/PLC time at grade level meetings was minimal, the coaches had to work with multiple grade levels on interpreting the curriculum maps and how to integrate the curricula within those frameworks. The writing curriculum proved to be challenging and intimidating for teachers but both coaches felt that as they worked with teachers understanding and implementation increased throughout the year.

Teacher Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with the teachers in May 2015. Teachers were asked to discuss their experience in working with the literacy coaches, their successes, challenges and possible improvements to the overall coaching program. Teachers from all grade levels participated at both schools. One school included the special education teachers as they had worked closely with the literacy coach and other teachers on student plans.

Over the past school year, what benefits have you experienced as a result of your work with the literacy coach in your building?

Several benefits were discussed by multiple teachers across the focus groups. Teachers appreciated having someone to collaborate with on a professional basis. They expressed a great

deal of trust for their coaches. Because of that trust, teachers were open to modeling, video-taping and ongoing feedback. More than once teachers discussed watching video with the coach, reflecting on their instructional practices and incorporating those changes into instruction.

Not all teachers worked on the same practices and that was appreciated. The teachers liked being able to differentiate the use of the coach's time to meet the needs within their classroom. For one building including the special education staff in the coaching model has led to greater gains for students on IEPs and led to increased collaboration between the general education and special education staff. The coordination efforts by the reading coach at one building had one teacher comment, "We use a common language when talking about reading practices throughout the building".

First year teachers perhaps gained the most from working with the coach. They discussed having the coach help them organize centers, model strategies, assist with classroom management and provide ongoing feedback made them understand the curricula and how reading works for students.

Areas addressed through the coaching model included fluency, reading, getting started with two new curricula (reading and writing), student engagement, classroom management and strategy development for students who were struggling as well as for those who needed to be challenged. Additionally, teachers discussed how the coach helped teachers focus on essential questions/objectives and worked with teams on developing different strategies for whole group engagement.

Teachers also commented on being less frustrated and stressed than teachers in other buildings because they have a coach. Multiple references were made to how essential the coaches were to begin implementation of the new curricula and how necessary the coach was to knowing what was happening in the district. Coaches were seen as a key ingredient to student success.

What challenges, if any, have you experienced in working with a literacy coach?

The one consistent challenge mentioned by teachers was time. Although it was mentioned as a challenge the teachers recognized it was due to the coaches' duties and not due to being unresponsive or neglectful.

District C

A focus group was conducted in May 2015 with the instructional coaches from District C.

Benefits

Coaches talked about how teacher responsiveness depended on the building they were working in. Teachers who approached the coaches were more interested in growth while others were less interested if assigned to coaching by building leadership.

The coaches discussed how teachers felt less isolated, were able to have collaboration with a colleague and did not have to problem-solve as much on their own. Coaches felt they were able to relieve some stress from teachers and this allowed for more meaningful collaboration time.

Another benefit was helping building shift from being teacher-centric to more student-centric practices. Most coaches felt like they were able to help teacher develop clear action plans around the building objectives.

Effective Strategies

The use of data was an effective strategy for many of the coaches. Data helped make the collaboration and coaching more objective and less about teacher qualities. By using data, teachers "didn't feel like they were being judged" and the coaching sessions were more effective. Data also helped coaches focus on goal setting with teacher and student which helped to maximize the intervention time.

Modeling and co-teaching were seen as effective strategies to help guide the coaching process and to allow classroom teachers to feel they were still in the driver's seat. Particularly with implementing a new curriculum, the coaches were able to help model and guide teachers' understanding and use of the materials and framework.

Challenges

All of the coaches discussed needing support from administration in clarifying their roles, promoting their roles with teachers and holding teachers accountable for new skills. Several discussed how principals seemed unsure of how to use them in their buildings which has led to an inconsistent utilization of the coaches across the buildings.

Being new to the coaching role, coaches discussed how the first year had been exhausting. It has been difficult at times to build relationship and get teachers to buy-in to the use of instructional coaches. One coach expressed that it can be demoralizing "to put yourself out there only to be

ignored". While the coaches felt at least some support from their principals and that principals were supportive of their ideas that frequently there was a lack of follow through with the teachers.

The coaches also discussed how it would be helpful to have a common district or building vision for the curriculum and instruction process. Coaches were sometimes unclear about what the vision was for those areas and that made it difficult to know how to support the teachers.

Teacher Feedback

Teachers for District provided additional feedback on the coaching program. Teachers expressed appreciation for having a go to person for questions about new curricula, instructional strategies and assistance with student engagement. Teachers found coaches to be helpful when they modeled in the classroom, worked with them on developing small reading groups and Writer's Workshop and collaborated as individuals and with entire teaching teams. One teacher said, "I am clearly a better teacher because I have her in my building and I have heard several teachers express the same thing".

Student Achievement

While the theory behind instructional coaching implies that teacher change will happen first, student outcomes were analyzed as a long-term outcome of the model. Because of the variable experiences with the coaching and the length of time coaching has been implemented in each district, results are reported both by district and in aggregate form. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare the pre to post scores on a variety of assessments. No single measure was used as the programs had different areas of emphasis and labeling the measures would end up identifying the district. The Cohen's *d* effect sizes differed depending on grade level assessed and which measure was used.

District	Effect Size
District A	*d*=0.56
District B	*d*=-0.45 to *d*=0.61
District C	*d*=0.40-d=1.63
Overall	*d*=1.09

Instructional Coaching Implications and Recommendations:

Instructional coaching associates with improvements in teacher practices and in turn, student achievement. The changes on CLASS ratings would suggest the power and effectiveness of feedback on instructional practices for the 78 teachers involved in the observations. While it is a sample, the results

are consistent with feedback from the teacher surveys and coaches interviews. Information from teacher surveys and focus groups indicate that teachers want to improve their instruction and value the relationship with a coach when it is collaborative and professional in nature. Teachers appreciated immediate feedback on their practices and the opportunity to observe a fellow professional modeling a lesson. However, when the relationship with the coach was not one of collaboration and there was a perceived inequity of roles, teachers were less receptive to the feedback and to working with the coach. The personal characteristics (approachability and professionalism) are as important as content expertise in building a trusting, coaching relationship.

Student outcome data showed significant gains. However, it is difficult to compare gains across districts and/or across measures used. In the future, it is possible that a common metric will be used to gauge student progress across districts and grade levels. Additionally, teacher data may be better utilized were districts to break it down into which teachers are best served through a coaching model. One district in particular found that new teachers were the most open and benefitted the most from having time with an instructional coach.

One recommendation for the Instructional Coaching districts would be to consider increased collaboration across districts. There are enough similarities that conversations between coaches and districts could lead to improvements across all sites.

Learning Community Evaluation Overall Conclusions

The Learning Community supported a variety of programs to serve its mission to improve educational outcomes for children and families challenged by poverty. The evaluation used diverse methods, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, to describe and measure the quality of implementation, the nature of programming, and to report outcomes demonstrated by the elementary learning programs funded by the Learning Community including early childhood focused, elementary focused, and family focused programs. The LC served 10,951 students in the past program year. Overall, the evaluation results of the funded programs were positive and suggested that the Learning Community's efforts were accomplishing two overarching tasks: (1) programs appear to be using evaluation data for improvement and (2) examination of family or student data suggested they were showing improvement. Effect size improvements for participants in most programs were within the zone of desired effects.

The following table summarizes findings for the 2014-15 year by program. It includes the type of program, the number of student served, percentage of those students eligible for free or reduced price lunch in school, the type of measurement source used for calculation of effect size, and the effect size found. Results are most likely attributable to collective impact—the result of multiple efforts from the schools, parents, community partners, and the program described. A limitation of this evaluation is that not all measures are created equal. Meaning, effect size changes are reported for a variety of measures, some of which are standardized, norm referenced assessments and others were district created, criterion referenced assessments. Effect size improvements are naturally much larger on criterion referenced pre and post measures where growth is expected, as opposed to norm referenced, age-anchored tools where growth is more likely attributable to interventions.

Summary of Findings for 2014-15[1]

Program	Number Served	% FRPL	Measurement	Effect Size
LCCNO, ECPP	130	79%	Bracken School Readiness Assessment	0.42
LCCSO, Family Learning	384	86%	BEST-Adult English Parent-Child Interactions (PARCA) Student Achievement (NeSA-R, MAP, NeSA-M)	0.43 0.50 0.77
Family Liaison Program	158	92%	Parent Stress Declined Student Achievement (MAP Reading and Math)	1.29 1.57
Jump to Start Kindergarten	872	70%	Bracken School Readiness Assessment	0.37
Extended Learning	407	48%	AimsWeb, MAP, DIBELS, NeSA	0.25
Instructional Coaching	9000	64%	MAP, NeSA-R, NeSA-M CLASS Ratings	1.09 0.54
Overall	10951	65%		0.25-1.57

[1]Collective impact-

The table that follows compares effect sizes in the primary area of focus for the program found across programs over multiple years, where such results exist and where such a primary focus exists. If more than one primary focus, a range of effect sizes may be listed. If NS is noted, the results were not significant. A dash (--) indicates no data were available to calculate a group result. NA indicates program did not exist in that program year. Note: For the 2011-12 year, extended learning had a range of effect sizes found but there was such variability in the data provided and examined, it was deemed most appropriate to report a group effect size beginning in 2012-13.

One note: it is unclear to the evaluators why the percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch in extended learning decreased from 73% in the previous year to 48% in this year, or why the percent eligible in instructional coaching went from 84% the previous year to 64% in this year. It would be worth examining this in more detail with the school districts during the next evaluation year.

Comparison of Effect Size Impacts Across Years[1]

Program	2010-11 Effect Size	2011-12 Effect Size	2012-13 Effect Size	2013-14 Effect Size	2014-15 Effect Size
LCCNO: Early Childhood Partnership Program	NA	NA	NA	0.51	0.42
LCCSO: Family Learning	--	--	0.41-1.06	0.34-0.69 K2 Rdg 1.53	0.43-0.50 0.77 (MAP and NESA)
Family Liaison Program	--	Stress 1.39 Rdg 0.48 Wrtg 0.50 Math 0.47	Stress 1.67 Rdg 0.35 Wrtg 0.22 Math NS	Stress 1.16 K2 Rdg 1.31	Stress 1.29 1.57 (MAP Reading and Math)
Jump Start to Kindergarten	0.58	0.63	0.59	0.42	0.37
Extended Learning	--	--	0.30	0.59	0.25
Instructional Coaching	--	NS	0.56	0.54-0.67	0.54-1.09
Overall	--	NS to 1.39	NS to 1.67	NS to 1.53	0.25-1.57

[1]Collective impact

Summary

Overall, the programs evaluated in this report served the students that the Learning Community targeted and provided quality programming. A total of 10,951 students were served this program year (65% eligible for free/reduced price meals). It is possible that within this count, there is some duplication (e.g., a student who participated in both instructional or literacy coaching, as well as extended learning). When available, outcomes related to academic achievement were measured and in general, showed that students benefitted from the additional resources, with strongest effect sizes found in external ratings of teaching/learning interaction, school readiness, and student achievement.

Recommendations that follow pertain to opportunities for improvement.

Recommendations

1. The process and concept of 'knowledge transfer' or sharing of best practices across districts and programs has begun and it is recommended that this should continue, as school districts are reporting that this practice is beneficial.

2. It is recommended that programs including teacher quality as part of the evaluation design (Instructional Coaching, Early Childhood and family engagement program at LCCNO, and Jump Start to Kindergarten) continue to explore professional development in the area of Instructional Support, with particular emphasis on Concept Development.

3. For extended learning programs, the evaluation team recommends determining a measure sensitive to discrete changes in student achievement.

4. It is recommended that, where possible, longitudinal follow up data be gathered on students who participated in Learning Community funded programming, to determine whether long term benefits of participation are found.

5. For the Family Learning Program, it is recommended to disaggregate student level data by levels of time parents spent in the program. Additionally, it is recommended that the LCCSO team consider which elements of the program are critical to success as they expand into other sites.

6. For the Family Liaison Program, it is recommended they continue the differentiation and individualization of services provided to families. Specifically, the program provided necessary services of providing mental health supports, resources and referrals for families.

7. Across programs, it is recommended that staff and leadership explore partnerships and strategies for how to increase capacity to support students and families with mental health needs, as well as how to increase the supports and resources to families who need greater supports than are currently available.

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Section II – Buffett Early Childhood Institute Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

Buffett Early Childhood Institute
at the University of Nebraska

Start early. Start well.

SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE LEARNING COMMUNITY
DECEMBER 18, 2015

Background

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is an innovative, comprehensive approach to reducing achievement gaps among young children of greatest need living in the 11 school districts of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The plan was mandated in 2013 by LB 585 of the Nebraska Legislature. This legislation directed the Learning Community Council to enact a program created by the metro Omaha superintendents "to establish early childhood programs for children in poverty." The plan is financed by a half-cent levy, resulting in annual funding of approximately $2.5 million to be used for this purpose.

The superintendents invited the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska to prepare a plan for their review and, after approval by the Learning Community Council, implement it in Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The Buffett Institute collaborated with the superintendents and a workgroup of district representatives to develop the draft plan. The plan was adopted unanimously by the 11 superintendents in June 2014 and approved by the Learning Community Council in August 2014.

With the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan in place, the Buffett Institute engaged the districts with in-depth planning and initial implementation activities throughout the 2014-15 school year. The launch of implementation activities was completed during summer 2015 and all components are now in operation. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on implementation progress.

Overview of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

The overall goal of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is to eliminate or reduce income-based social, cognitive, and achievement gaps among young children. The plan is built around intensive, continuous services for children, birth through Grade 3, who live in high concentrations of poverty. By applying research and evidence-based practices, the plan provides for the comprehensive, systematic programming required to increase opportunity to learn and eliminate achievement gaps for children in greatest need by the end of third grade. In so doing, the plan also elevates the capacity of the metro Omaha school districts to serve all young children well.

Big Ideas: Six big ideas derived from the science of early childhood development and learning provide the foundation for all work undertaken through the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan and facilitated by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

1. **Birth Through Grade 3:** Early childhood begins at birth and extends through third grade. Research documents that intervention must be provided across this full continuum in order to attain enduring benefits for children's learning and development.

2. **School as Hub:** Schools are ideal centers for early learning systems, serving as connectors across communities and age groupings to resources beyond their walls. In this way, schools provide an essential source of long-term continuity for young children and families.

3. **Developmental Change:** Decades of research documents the impossibility of actively engaging young children in academic learning without promoting all areas of development. Practices undertaken through the Superintendents' Plan are committed to a "whole child" developmental approach, which emphasizes not only children's academic learning but also their cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical development.

4. **Family Engagement and Support:** Partnerships with families are key to the success of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan and the success of children. Families of children placed at risk are our most powerful allies in enhancing children's learning and development, but families know too well the stress and barriers that accompany poverty. Whether in home-visiting, preschool, or K – Grade 3, active family engagement and support are central to our work.

5. **Professional Growth and Support:** A core role of the Buffett Institute in facilitating the Superintendents' Plan implementation is to help practitioners translate developmental research into effective, gap-closing programs and practices from birth through Grade 3. As professionals work together to gain and apply new skills and leadership capacities, children benefit by gaining new levels of skill and mastery. One cannot occur without the other.

6. **Persistence of Effort Leads to Persistence of Effect:** This sums up the principal hypothesis of our work under the Superintendents' Plan. The evidence assures us that the earlier we begin working with children and families placed at risk, and the more persistent, consistent, and well-designed our efforts are, the more likely it is that children will be launched on a path toward life success.

Levels of Implementation: Just as the big research-based ideas guiding the Superintendents' Plan are multi-faceted, the plan's implementation strategies are multi-faceted and designed to be applicable to different situations, needs, and birth through Grade 3 populations across the Learning Community. There are three levels of district and school participation for which the Buffett Institute provides guidance and facilitation.

1. **Professional Development for All:** The broadest level of participation is an ongoing series of "Professional Development for All" institutes. These institutes are available to all educators and related professionals who serve young children, birth through Grade 3, and their families in the Learning Community. This system for professional growth and support creates new connections and builds capacity among the professionals and programs that are pivotal in providing high-quality early childhood education and services to young children in greatest need.

2. **Customized Technical Assistance and Professional Development:** A second participation option enables districts to receive customized assistance that provides access to district-specific professional development and consultation in strategic planning. These improvement efforts are designed to impact system-wide early childhood education and services in line with the goals of the Superintendents' Plan.

3. **Full Implementation of Birth – Grade 3:** The final and most intensive level of participation is the full implementation of a birth – Grade 3 approach in specific elementary schools. This is currently taking place in 12 schools where half or more of students live in high concentrations of poverty coming from six districts. Full implementation integrates early childhood services and quality improvements across birth through Grade 3 to build the comprehensive, systematic programming needed to increase opportunity to learn and eliminate achievement gaps by the end of third grade. Full implementation includes the following key components:

    - **Home Visiting for Birth – Age 3:** The home visiting model supports the development of strong parent/child relationships, child development skills, parenting education, and connections between parents and community resources. A home visitor works out of the school and is closely affiliated with the school community.
    - **High-Quality Preschool for 3 – 4-Year-Olds:** Families are supported in transitioning their children into school-based pre-Kindergarten or community-based preschool. A family facilitator continues the family support and educational activities initiated during the 0 – 3 home visiting.
    - **Aligned Pre-K Through Grade 3:** This component builds upon children's preschool experiences to promote academic, intellectual, language, and social-emotional competence across children's early years in school. As with home visiting and preschool, strong family-school partnerships and family support are combined with a high-quality, rigorous educational approach.

    Throughout all full implementation efforts, the school is viewed as the hub or connector among the various components. Similarly, there is ongoing professional development for teachers, home visitors, family facilitators, principals, caregivers, and directors. This professional development helps to ensure that effective, cohesive early learning and family engagement experiences are provided by each school hub from birth through Grade 3.

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Implementation Accomplishments

The initial months of implementing the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan have been marked by districts' active engagement with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute in further developing and carrying out strategies set forth in the plan. Early successes are evident and are already paving the way toward the more comprehensive, systematic, and equitable early childhood education required for all children to reach their full potential.

Professional Development for All: The inaugural session of the Professional Development for All series, entitled "What Matters Most for Young Children, Families, and Communities," took place in May 2015. This first daylong professional learning opportunity introduced participants to key research and effective practices with a focus on quality and continuity for children, birth – Grade 3, and their families. Response to the Professional Development for All kickoff was overwhelmingly enthusiastic—so much so that the Buffett Institute opened up a second repeat session based on demand. A total of more than 240 individuals participated, representing all 11 Learning Community districts and more than 70 different

organizations. Participants included district-level leaders, principals, classroom teachers, Head Start directors, child care directors, and home visitors committed to closing opportunity and achievement gaps for young children placed at risk.

The 2015-16 continuation of the Professional Development for All series was met with equal enthusiasm and commitment when it was launched on December 4, 2015. This year's series highlights the importance of nurturing the whole child as we prepare young children for long-term success in school and beyond. The spotlight is on research-based strategies for fostering children's social and emotional skills as a critical foundation for building their academic and cognitive capabilities. Mirroring the widespread interest demonstrated last May, close to 200 professionals representing all 11 Learning Community districts and 78 different organizations participated in the first session for 2015-16. Additional PD for All institutes are scheduled for March and May, 2016. These institutes will engage participants in considering the role of cultural responsiveness and family partnerships in fostering whole child development and optimal learning outcomes for diverse young children.

Customized Technical Assistance and Professional Development: As noted, additional options for district participation in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan have enabled districts to receive customized assistance that provides access to district-specific consultation in strategic planning and professional development. Seven districts have collaborated with the Buffett Institute to tailor initiatives under this option. Staff within each district are now immersed in carrying out their customized work plans with coordination and facilitation by the Buffett Institute and a team of national consultants, making strides that will deepen the effectiveness and reach of their early childhood programming for young children placed at risk.

Comprehensive Early Childhood System Plans: Bellevue Public Schools and Elkhorn Public Schools are both engaged in in-depth processes to develop comprehensive district-level early childhood plans, to be completed by summer 2016. A central question for both districts is how best to invest in early childhood programming in order to promote the school preparedness of children birth to age 5, particularly those placed at risk by poverty and related family stresses. The development of each district's plan is centered upon analyses of existing data and assessments of strengths to leverage current initiatives underway and to identify new opportunities to advance the district's early learning efforts. Highlights of recent activities are the hands-on learning tours of existing programs that were conducted within Bellevue and Elkhorn by the team of consultants and Buffett Institute staff. These learning tours incorporated site visits, classroom observations and focus groups with district leaders, principals, teachers, families, and other stakeholders. Excitingly, the learning tours generated strong interest among participants so that when comprehensive district early childhood plans are completed they will be truly owned by the stakeholders most impacted.

Professional Development Matched to District Needs: Research tells us that professional development promotes classroom and program applications most fully when it is matched to the needs of a specific setting and sustained over time. This research-based approach is exemplified in the customized early childhood professional development initiatives facilitated by the Buffett Institute through the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan and currently underway in Gretna Public Schools, Papillion-La Vista Community Schools, and Ralston Public Schools. Based on needs assessments, these initiatives directly address key commitments and components of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan:

- **Gretna** is cultivating teachers' capacity to promote young children's social, emotional, and behavioral competence as a necessary foundation for intellectual and academic growth. Building upon their district's effective pre-Kindergarten practices in this regard, Gretna Kindergarten teachers are receiving quarterly professional development and regular classroom coaching about strategies to promote children's self-regulation and social skills. First through third grade teachers will participate in upcoming years, so that Gretna will ultimately have a comprehensive, continuous approach to social and emotional learning from Pre-K – Grade 3 with well-prepared teachers to execute the approach.

- **Papillion-La Vista** is focused on increasing the positive benefits of home visiting for family-educator partnerships and child learning outcomes. Twenty-five early intervention specialists and pre-K– Grade 3 teachers participated in a three-day professional learning institute in summer 2015, through which they developed home visiting tool kits. As they apply their new knowledge and home visiting approaches during the current school year, the staff continue to participate in quarterly professional learning groups to share home visiting practices and to advance their family engagement skills.

- **Ralston** has placed the lens of its customized professional development initiative on advancing the effectiveness of its district-wide practices, including building the early childhood leadership capacity of district administrators and elementary principals. Starting in January 2016, school leaders will engage in professional learning activities to update their own research-based knowledge of effective pre-Kindergarten practices and the alignment of pre-K with Kindergarten through Grade 3. With the support of the Buffett Institute, the leaders will then engage in ongoing strategies to collaborate with preschool teachers district-wide to enhance their existing practices by applying what has been learned through cutting-edge preschool research.

Full Implementation: The most intensive component of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan—the comprehensive cultivation and implementation of a School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3 approach—is underway in 12 elementary schools across six Learning Community districts. These districts include Bellevue, Douglas County West, Millard, Omaha, Ralston, and Westside. In total, the full implementation schools impact approximately 150 children from birth to age 3 who receive home visiting, 4,000 children and families across pre-K to Grade 3, and 500 educators.

In the months since the full implementation has been launched, notable milestones have been achieved. A first major milestone was the hiring and training of staff to put into place new forms of early childhood education and family engagement within the participating schools. Each participating site has hired a 0 – 3 home visitor and a preschool – Grade 3 family facilitator in collaboration with the Buffett Institute. The Buffett Institute has also brought on board a team of three highly experienced birth through Grade 3 specialists and five educational facilitators, along with a program manager, who work on-site at the schools to provide on-going guidance, professional development, and coaching. This means that a new cadre of 29 specialized staff members is now working actively in the schools to help build unprecedented learning opportunities for young children and families in greatest need.

A second major milestone of full implementation has been the delivery of in-depth professional development to bring a common foundation of new knowledge from the science of early learning and development to all full implementation school staff. 500 educators from the full implementation

schools participated in two-day professional development institutes in summer, 2015, to learn together and develop action plans for the full implementation of birth through Grade 3 within their schools and communities. As an outcome of the institutes, schools established birth – Grade 3 leadership teams and integrated specific birth through Grade 3 goals and strategies into their school improvement plans. Teachers forged new collaborative connections across age and grade levels, an essential starting place for providing comprehensive, aligned learning experiences for children from birth through Grade 3.

Since the kick-off institutes, the principals and preK – Grade 3 staff at each full implementation school have continued to engage in sustained on-site professional development tailored to each school's specific context and needs. The Buffett Institute team has provided twenty teacher workshops across the full implementation schools in the 3 months of fall, 2015, totaling over 35 hours of new professional learning. Areas of focus have included the influence of poverty on young children's learning and development; strategies to foster children's social-emotional skills; how to support language development and build vocabulary across the curriculum; and the use of project-based learning to elevate intellectual rigor and personal relevance for young children. These research-based areas of emphasis are all central to creating effective gap-closing practices in the early years of school.

Transforming full implementation schools into hubs for comprehensive early learning systems will take time. Yet, visible shifts are already evident at the 12 schools working to live out this vision. Home visitors are making weekly home visits to rapidly growing numbers of families with children from birth to age 3. Without the program, these families would receive little help in supporting the crucial brain development that occurs very early in their children's lives. Family facilitators are connecting with families of preschool children through new family literacy activities, book exchanges, and parent-child groups, strengthening family-school partnerships and sparking parents' confidence in their children's on-going educational success in the process. Teachers are reinvigorated as they try out new instructional possibilities that bring with them the promise of optimal learning for each and every young child.

Looking Ahead

All told, close to 20,000 children from birth through grade 3 will benefit from the 11 learning community districts' participation across the 3 levels of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. A rigorous evaluation will explore whether the research-based birth through grade 3 approach is being implemented well, as well as document changes taking place in school organization, classroom practices, family engagement and parenting, and children's learning. These findings will provide data-based guidance for improving the birth through grade 3 approach, leveraging resources in the most effective way, and creating policies that facilitate the goal of increasing young children's opportunity to learn and eliminating the achievement gap by the end of third grade.

Section III – Student Demographics

Section II and III prepared by David Moon, Learning Community Finance Director.

Section III – Student Demographics

This section of the report provides general enrollment information, as well as data associated with student eligibility for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) and ELL (English Language Learner) services for the 2014-2015 school year. Comparative data from previous years are also presented. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) provided the data included in this section. Enrollment data are submitted to NDE by each school district and reflect counts as of the last Friday of September 2014. The NDE refers to these data as the Fall Membership[1]

Demographic Information by Subcouncil

Nebraska Statute establishes six Achievement Subcouncils within the two-county area of the Learning Community, dividing the population among the Subcouncils as equally as feasible. In 2011, the Subcouncil boundaries were changed because population shifts had affected proportional representation on the Learning Community Coordinating Council. Therefore, comparisons among the Subcouncils across years can only be made for the past four school years (2011-2012 through 2013-2014) since Subcouncils were composed of different schools in previous years.

Table II.1 (p.2) presents demographic data for each Subcouncil for the 2014-2015 school year, including the total number of enrolled students, percent eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL), and percent of English Language Learners (ELL).

[1] The Fall Membership counts are used rather than end-of-year counts for consistency across years. For that reason, the numbers in this report may differ from those appearing in the NDE State of the Schools Report.

Table II.1: 2014-2015 Total Enrollment, Free and Reduced Lunch, and ELL by Subcouncil

	SC	Total Enrollment	Number FRL	Percent FRL	Number ELL	Percent ELL
K-6	1	8,377	3,446	41.1%	410	4.9%
7-12	1	7,112	3,802	53.5%	213	3.0%
Subcouncil Total	**1**	**15,489**	**7,248**	**46.8%**	**623**	**4.0%**
K-6	2	8,983	8,206	91.4%	1,654	18.4%
7-12	2	6,884	4,701	68.3%	390	5.7%
Subcouncil Total	**2**	**15,867**	**12,907**	**81.3%**	**2,044**	**12.9%**
K-6	3	9,562	5,398	56.5%	1,420	14.9%
7-12	3	6,026	2,986	49.6%	243	4.0%
Subcouncil Total	**3**	**15,588**	**8,384**	**53.8%**	**1,663**	**10.7%**
K-6	4	12,230	2,427	19.8%	295	2.4%
7-12	4	10,783	1,741	16.1%	44	0.4%
Subcouncil Total	**4**	**23,013**	**4,168**	**18.1%**	**339**	**1.5%**
K-6	5	12,444	8,436	67.8%	3,342	26.9%
7-12	5	10,456	6,524	62.4%	559	5.3%
Subcouncil Total	**5**	**22,900**	**14,960**	**65.3%**	**3,901**	**17.0%**
K-6	6	13,449	2,384	17.7%	186	1.4%
7-12	6	10,580	1,723	16.3%	39	0.4%
Subcouncil Total	**6**	**24,029**	**4,107**	**17.1%**	**225**	**0.9%**
K-6	All LC	65,045	30,297	46.6%	7,307	11.2%
7-12	All LC	51,841	21,477	41.4%	1,488	2.9%
Learning Comm. Total	**All LC**	**116,886**	**51,774**	**44.3%**	**8,795**	**7.5%**

- Student enrollment in the six Subcouncils ranges from 15,489 in Subcouncil 1 to 24,029 in Subcouncil 6.

- The percentage of students who qualify for FRL varies greatly among the Subcouncils, from approximately 17% and 18% in Subcouncils 6 and 4, respectively, to 81% in Subcouncil 2. Subcouncils 1, 3, and 5 also have higher percentages of FRL than the Learning Community total of 44.3%.

- At 17.0%, Subcouncil 5 has the highest percentage of English Language Learners. Subcouncils 2 and 3, with 12.9% and 10.7%, also have a higher percentage than that of the in Learning Community as a whole, which is 7.5%.

Demographic Comparisons Across Years

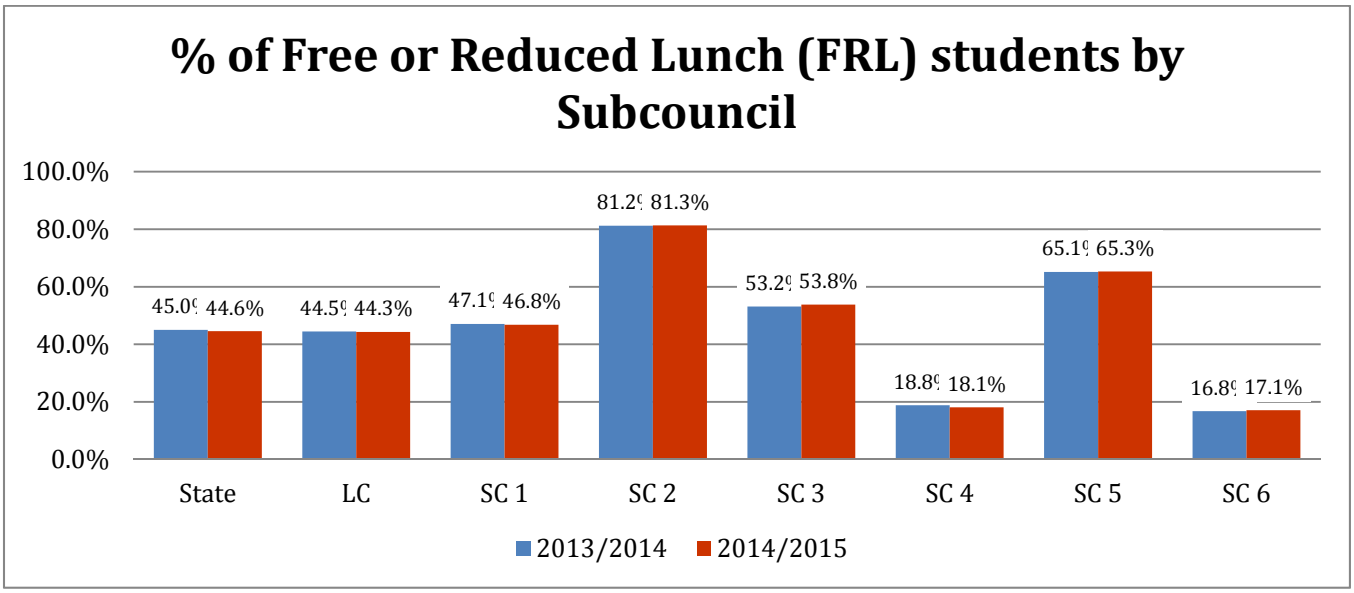
Table II.2 compares enrollments for the past three years, and Figures II.1 and II.2 (p. 4) compare FRL and ELL numbers in 2014-2015 with 2012-2013.

Table II.2: 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2014-2015 Enrollment by Subcouncil

	2012-2013 Enrollment	2013-2014 Enrollment	2014-2015 Enrollment	1 Year Percent Change	2 Year Percent Change
Subcouncil 1	14,988	15,186	15,489	2.00%	3.34%
Subcouncil 2	15,917	15,774	15,867	0.59%	-0.31%
Subcouncil 3	15,013	15,450	15,588	0.89%	3.83%
Subcouncil 4	22,676	22,853	23,013	0.70%	1.49%
Subcouncil 5	22,254	22,589	22,900	1.38%	2.90%
Subcouncil 6	21,650	22,847	24,029	5.17%	10.99%
Total	**112,498**	**114,699**	**116,886**	**1.91%**	**3.90%**

- Enrollment in the Learning Community increased by approximately 2% over the previous year (approximately 2,200 students). Between 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 the increase was 3.90%
- The enrollment in all Subcouncils has increased from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. Subcouncil 2, which covers the northeastern part of Omaha Public Schools, has declined by 0.31% over the three-year period.
- The increase in Subcouncil 6 (10.99%) is considerably greater than any other Subcouncil. Subcouncil 6 is comprised of the districts in the southwest portion of the Learning Community: Papillion-La Vista, Elkhorn, Gretna, Douglas County West and Springfield Platteview.

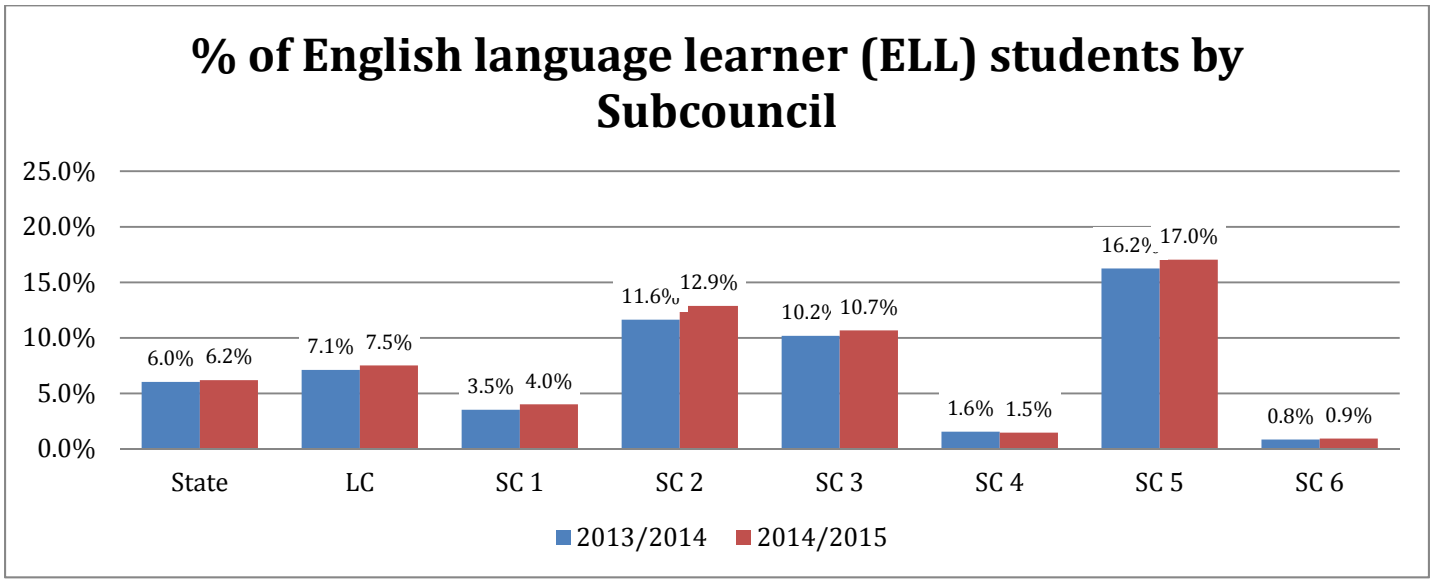
Figure II.1: 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 Free and Reduced Lunch by Subcouncil



- The percentage of Learning Community students who qualify for free or reduced priced lunch decreased by two-tenths of a percent (.2%), while the State (including the Learning Community), decreased .4%.

- Economic diversity does not show any indication of movement toward geographic equalization.
  - Subcouncils 2, 3, 5, and 6 had an increase.
  - The increase in Subcouncils 2, 3, 5, and 6 was less than one percent.
  - Subcouncil 3, which has the third highest percentage of FRL (53.8%), had the greatest percentage increase, 0.6%.

Figure II.2: 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 ELL by Subcouncil



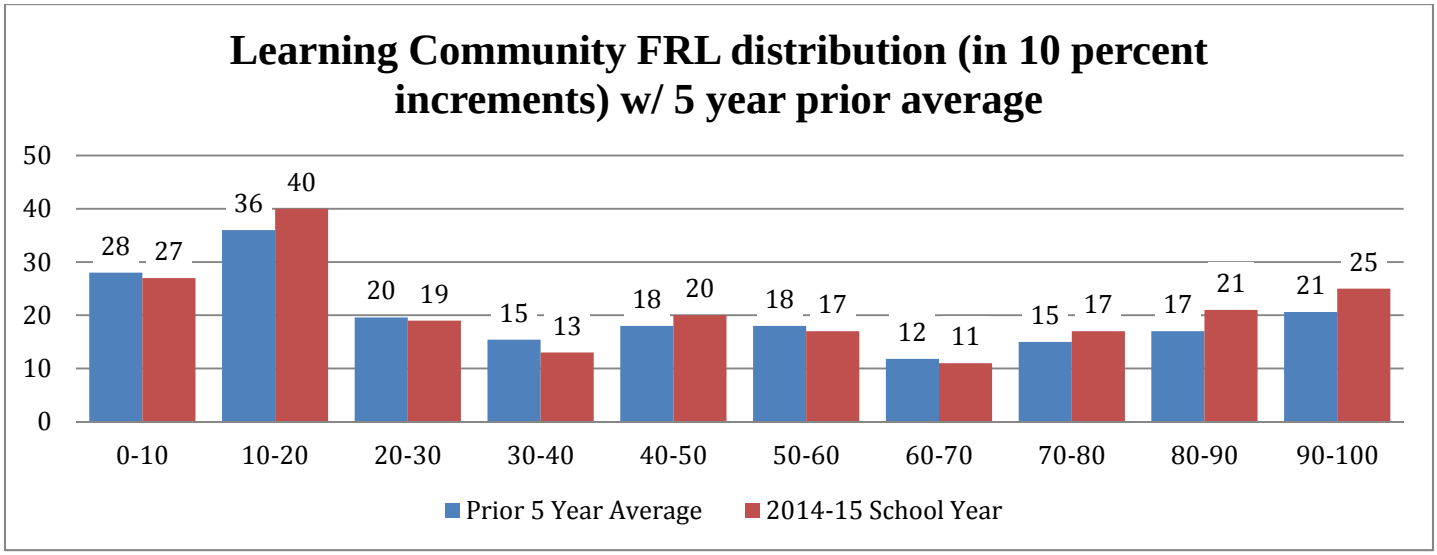
- The percentage of ELL increased slightly in the Learning Community for the 2014-2015 school year.

- Subcouncil 2 experienced an increase of 1.2%, while the change in all other Subcouncils was less than one percent.

Free and Reduced Lunch Concentration

Figure II.3 (p. 5) provides additional information about the concentration of poverty within the Learning Community. The graph shows the number of schools that have FRL percentages within ranges of 10%. The first bar in each set represents the average number of schools in each interval in the previous five years and the second bar shows the number in the 2014-2015 school year.[2]

Figure II.3: Number of Learning Community Schools in FRL Intervals of 10% Comparing 2014-2015 with the Previous Five-Year Average



A primary goal of Open Enrollment is to improve the economic diversity of Learning Community schools. Progress toward this goal would be illustrated by an increase in the number of schools in the middle ranges of the graph and a decline in the number on each end; however, that trend is not occurring. Generally, the number of low poverty schools is decreasing; the number of high poverty schools is increasing; and the number of schools in the middle ranges has remained fairly constant. The exception is the number of schools in the 10% to 20% range. In that range the number has increased, indicating that schools previously in the closest two ranges (0 to 10% & 20 to 30%) have likely moved into the 10% to 20% range along with general growth in the community at large.

[2] Over the five -year period, the number of schools increased. A total of 200 schools are included in the five-year average. In 2014-2015 the Learning Community included 210 schools.

- In 2014-2015, more than half (53.8%) of the schools in the Learning Community could be described as economically segregated. Sixty-Seven (67) schools have FRL percentages of 20% or less and 46 have 80% or more. The five-year average in these high and low ranges is 51% (102 of the 200 schools).

- There are more high and low poverty schools now than in the past. Comparing the five-year average with 2014-2015, three more schools had FRL percentages of 20% or less, and eight more schools fell in the 80% and above range.

- The proportion of schools in the middle ranges (30 to 70 percent) is slightly lower in 2014-2015 than in the five-year average. The previous five-year average number of schools within that range is 65 (32.5% of the 200 schools). In 2014-2015, 62 schools (30.2% of 205 schools) fell in the 30% to 70% range. The greatest increases are in the 20% to 30% and the 90% to 100% ranges.

Figures II.4 (below) and II.5 (p. 7) provide a comparison of Learning Community schools with other Nebraska schools. Figure II.4 shows the percentage of schools in Nebraska (excluding Learning Community schools) in each of the 10% ranges of FRL and Figure II.5 shows the percentages in the Learning Community.

Figure II.4: 2014-2015 Percentage of Nebraska Schools in FRL Intervals of 10% (Excluding Learning Community)

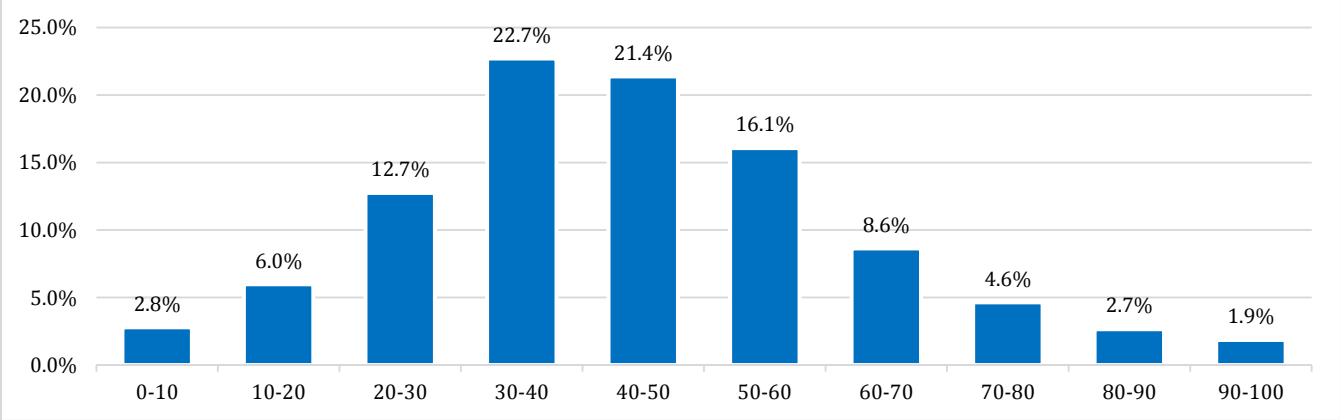


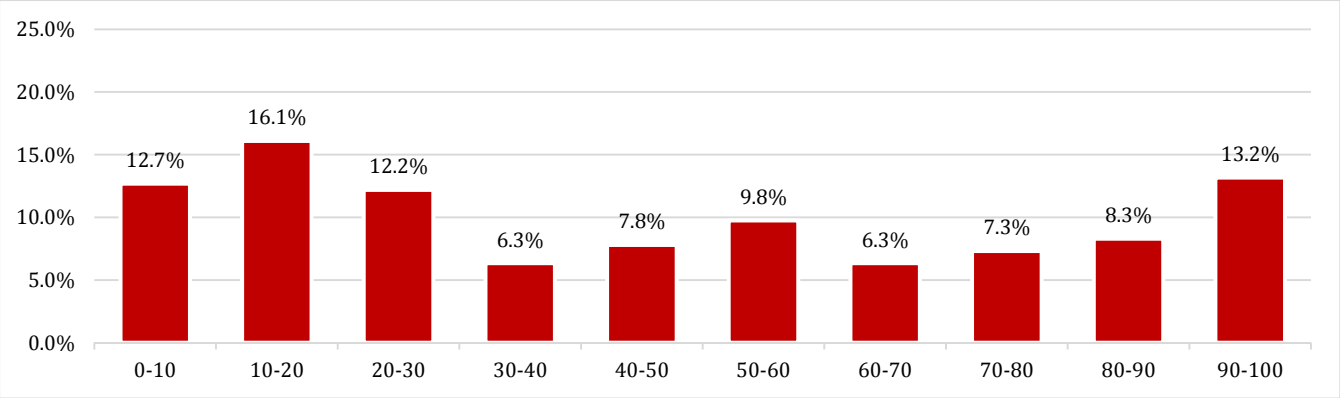
Figure II.4 illustrates that most Nebraska schools fall in the middle ranges of free and reduced lunch concentrations, and few schools fall in the very low and very high ranges.

- More than a 42% of all Nebraska schools outside the Learning Community fall in the 30% to 50% FRL ranges, and more than three-fourths of the schools (75.9%) have FRL percentages between 20% and 60%. These percentages are similar to the previous year.

- Only 4.5% of the Nebraska schools outside the Learning Community have FRL percentages of more than 80%, and only 8% of the schools have FRL percentages of 20% or less, again similar to the previous year.

Figure II.5 shows the distribution of schools within the Learning Community. The contrast in the two graphs is dramatic. In the Learning Community, a far greater proportion of schools fall in the very high and very low ranges, while fewer schools are in the middle ranges.

Figure II.5: 2014-2015 Percentage of Learning Community Schools in FRL Intervals of 10%



- Only 15.7% of the Learning Community schools fall in the 30% to 50% FRL range, approximately 27% less than in the rest of the State.
- Expanding the range results in similar discrepancies between the Learning Community and the State. In the Learning Community less than half (46.2%) of Learning Community students fall between the 20% to 80% FRL range, while in the rest of the State 87.5% are within the same FRL range.
- In the Learning Community 31.9% of the schools have 20% or fewer students who qualify for FRL, while in the rest of the State only 8.0% fall in this range.
- Similarly, in 21.9% of the Learning Community schools, more than 80% of the students qualify for FRL, while in the rest of the state only 4.5% of the schools fall within that high poverty range.

These data demonstrate the dramatic difference in the economic diversity of Learning Community schools in comparison to all other schools in Nebraska. The majority of schools in Nebraska are relatively diverse economically, while the majority of schools in the Learning Community are segregated economically into schools with relatively low and relatively high concentrations of poverty. Students outside the Learning Community are more likely to be enrolled in an economically diverse school, while students in the Learning Community are more likely to be enrolled in an economically segregated school. These comparisons were almost identical to those made in the 2013 & 2014 Evaluation Report. It does not appear that there is much progress toward greater diversity in Learning Community schools. There has been little change in the number of schools in the middle ranges and at the extremes. The majority of schools in the Learning Community continue to be economically segregated.

Section IV – Open Enrollment

Section IV – Open Enrollment

This section of the report describes the status of Open Enrollment. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) provided enrollment data, and Learning Community school districts provided information about the number of Open Enrollment applications and their approval. Before presenting the Open Enrollment data, it is important to have a common understanding of application procedures and the difference between *Open* Enrollment and *Option* Enrollment.

Application Process

Each year applications are available in November and must be submitted to the requested districts by March 15th. Applications may be submitted to multiple districts and may list as many as three schools of choice in each district. The applications include self-reported eligibility for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) based on federal guidelines provided with the application. School districts approve or deny an application based on available capacity and following the priority sequence outlined in the Learning Community Diversity Plan:[3]

1) First priority goes to students who have a sibling who currently attends, and will also be attending, the requested school the year the Open Enrollment applicant first attends.

2) Second preference goes to students who contribute to the socioeconomic diversity of the school. In schools with a percentage of students qualifying for FRL that is greater than the total of all schools in the Learning Community (approximately 44.3% in 2014-2015), the priority goes to students who **do not** qualify for FRL, and in schools that have a lower percentage of FRL-eligible students than the Learning Community total, the priority goes to students who **do** qualify for FRL.

3) After approving all applicants in the first and second priority categories, all other applications become eligible. At each level of priority, if there is not capacity to accept all applications in that category, a lottery is conducted.

Districts must notify applicants of approval or denial by April 5th, and applicants must notify the districts of their acceptance by April 25th. Although families may apply to multiple school districts, they may accept Open Enrollment in only one district. As required by Nebraska Statute, the number of applications received and approved is submitted to the Learning Community by member school districts in September of each year.

[3] Available capacity at each grade, in each school, is determined through a systematic process jointly developed by school district and Learning Community Coordinating Council representatives. Each year school districts submit documentation of capacity to the Learning Community's Chief Executive Officer.

Open and Option Enrollment

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, school districts' reports to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) included identifying students as *open* enrolled or *option* enrolled.

- *Open Enrollment* refers to students who transfer to another school or school district through the Learning Community's Open Enrollment process, which went into effect in the 2010-2011 school year.

- *Option Enrollment* designates students who transferred between school districts prior to the 2010-2011 school year through a process that was implemented Statewide in 1993. Students who reside outside the Learning Community two-county area, and transfer to a Learning Community school, continue to be classified as Option Enrollment.

An important difference between Option and Open Enrollment is the application of the priority sequence described above. Under Option Enrollment districts were not required to give priority to students who could potentially improve the diversity of a school.

Learning Community schools may currently have both Open Enrollment and Option Enrollment students. All students who transferred among Learning Community districts, beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, are classified as Open Enrollment students. Those who transferred prior to the 2010-2011 school year are, for the most part, still classified as Option Enrollment students, although districts report that some students who previously were classified as Option Enrollment have changed their status to Open Enrollment by going through the Open Enrollment process. One other variation is noteworthy. Some districts use the Open Enrollment process for some students who request transfers to another school within their resident district, while others do not.

The Status of Open Enrollment

Table III.1 (p. 10) shows the number of new Open Enrollment students and the percent qualifying for FRL in each of the five years of Open Enrollment. These numbers reflect each year's enrollment as reported in the Nebraska Department of Education Fall Membership. The total represents the number of students who have accessed Open Enrollment and who, at one point in time, were enrolled as Open Enrollment students. It does not represent the *total* number enrolled each year.

Table III.1 Number of Students Open Enrolled for the First Time in 2010-2011 through 2014-2015 and Percent FRL

YEAR	NUMBER NEW OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT NEW OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS WHO QUALIFY FOR FRL	LEARNING COMMUNITY PERCENT FRL
2010-2011	2,563	41.98%	41.86%
2011-2012	2,463	44.62%	43.48%
2012-2013	2,315	42.33%	43.96%
2013-2014	2,168	43.91%	44.47%
2014-2015	1,859	47.71%	44.29%
Total	11,368		

- The number of new students who open enroll has remained fairly constant, with a slight decline year over year.
- Each year, the percentage of new Open Enrollment students who qualify for FRL has been similar to that of the Learning Community as a whole; although, in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, the percentage was slightly lower than the Learning Community, while in the first two years it was slightly more than that of the Learning Community. In 2014-2015 Open Enrollment students who qualify for FRL once again exceeded the Learning Community average as a whole.

Table III.2 shows the total number of Open Enrollment students in each year of the program. The total each year includes the new students reported in Table III.1 and the number of Open Enrollment students from previous years who continued as Open Enrollment students.

Table III.2 Total Number of Open-Enrolled Students and FRL Percentages for 2010-2011 through 2014-2015

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF TOTAL OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS WHO QUALIFY FOR FRL	LEARNING COMMUNITY PERCENT FRL
2010-2011	2,563	41.98%	41.86%
2011-2012	4,334	42.52%	43.48%
2012-2013	5,769	40.65%	43.96%
2013-2014	6,535	41.68%	44.47%
2014-2015	7,244	41.01%	44.29%

The total number of current Open Enrollment students (7,244) is 4,124 less than the total number of new Open Enrollment students across the five years of the program (11,368). These 4,124 students were, at one time, open-enrolled and in 2014-2015 are no longer classified as Open Enrollment students. In 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, a total of 1,137 Open Enrollment students were seniors. In addition to their graduation, a number of factors might account for the drop-off.

- Moving out of the Learning Community
- Moving into the Open Enrollment district, therefore becoming a resident student
- Moving to a different school district within the Learning Community and choosing to attend a school in that district
- Returning to their resident school and district

Each year, as shown in Table III.1 (p. 10), the percentage of newly enrolled FRL Open Enrollment students has been similar to that of the Learning Community. However, in the past four years, the total percentage of currently enrolled Open Enrollment students is somewhat less than that of the Learning Community total: 40.25% in 2011-2012, 40.65% in 2012-2013, 41.68% in 2013-2014 and 41.01% in 2014-2015, approximately 3% less than the total in the Learning Community. This means a higher percentage of FRL Open Enrollment students than Non-FRL students have been among those who were once classified as Open Enrollment and are no longer. This may be related to the fact that families with lower incomes tend to change residences more frequently than higher income families. Many of the explanations for a student's change in classification from Open Enrollment to resident (described above) involve moving to a new residence.

Table III.3b (p.13) shows the number of Open Enrollment students in each grade, in all five years of the program and the degree of change (increases or decreases) from year to year. The numbers in the 2014-2015 column are cumulative. They include students who enrolled for the first time in the 2014-2015 school year, as well as those who enrolled in the three previous school years and continued to be open enrolled in the 2014-2015 school year. The number at a particular grade reflects students who newly enrolled at that grade level and those who were one grade below that grade in 2012-2013. For example, the 2014-2015 third grade enrollment of 614 includes 2010-2011 kindergartners, 2011-2012 first graders, and 2012-2013 second graders who continued as third grade Open Enrollment students in 2014-2015 and any third grade students who were newly enrolled in 2014-2015. This cohort of students is highlighted in yellow on Table III.3a (p.12).

Table III.3a: Number of Open Enrollment Students by Grade

GRADE LEVEL	2010-11 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2011-12 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2012-13 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2013-14 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2014-15 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP
KG	512	605	583	572	480
1	165	576	645	587	598
2	182	260	639	661	619
3	150	283	313	614	694
4	150	250	374	353	615
5	124	234	324	368	427
6	118	258	311	379	402
7	219	273	371	410	464
8	105	286	349	420	461
9	387	385	482	562	566
10	152	386	485	530	647
11	167	287	480	538	636
12	132	251	413	541	635
Total	**2,563**	**4,334**	**5,769**	**6,535**	**7,244**

- In general the number of Open Enrollment students in a cohort increases as it moves through the grades. For example, the 2010-2011 the first grade cohort increased by 95 students (from 165 to 260) in second grade, by 53 in third grade, and by 40 in fourth grade. This increase occurs in each cohort of students with few exceptions.
- Following the increases in the cohort of 2010-2011 grade nine students is of particular interest. In 2010 there were 387 9th grade Open Enrollment students. In 2011 this cohort (10th grade) remained, essentially, the same. However, in the next two years (11th and 12th grade), the enrollment in this cohort increased by 94 and 61 students, respectively. Therefore, at least 94 students enrolled as Open Enrollment students, for the first time, in their junior year of high school and 61 students, in their senior year. It is important to understand, however, that some of these students had undoubtedly attended the same school previously as residents and became Open Enrollment students as a means of staying in that school after moving to another school district.

Table III.3b: Percent Change by Year of Open Enrollment Students by Grade

GRADE LEVEL	PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2010-11 TO 2011-12	PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2011-12 TO 2012-13	PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2012-13 TO 2014-15	PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2014-15 TO 2015-16
KG	18.16%	-3.64%	-1.89%	-16.08%
1	249.09%	11.98%	-8.99%	1.87%
2	42.86%	145.77%	3.44%	-6.35%
3	88.67%	10.60%	96.17%	13.03%
4	66.67%	49.60%	-5.61%	74.22%
5	88.71%	38.46%	13.58%	16.03%
6	118.64%	20.54%	21.86%	6.07%
7	24.66%	35.90%	10.51%	13.17%
8	172.38%	22.03%	20.34%	9.76%
9	-0.52%	25.19%	16.60%	0.71%
10	153.95%	25.65%	9.28%	22.08%
11	71.86%	67.25%	12.08%	18.22%
12	90.15%	64.54%	30.99%	17.38%
Total	**69.10%**	**33.11%**	**13.28%**	**10.85%**

- These four columns of the table show the percentage of change at each grade level from year to year. The percentage of increase at each grade level was understandably greatest between the first and second year of the program (approximately 69%). The growth continued into 2012-2013 (approximately 33%). By 2013-2014 growth had more or less stabilized (approximately 13%). At some point, as increasingly larger numbers of Open Enrollment students progress through the grades, the number will become more consistent from year to year. That is, at some point, Open Enrollment will reach its maximum capacity and remain at approximately the same number from year to year. If the current trend continues this stability will likely occur within the next year or two.

Open Enrollment and Diversity

As previously described, Open Enrollment potentially contributes to a school's economic diversity in two ways:

1) Students who qualify for FRL enroll in schools with relatively lower percentages of FRL students.

2) Students who do not qualify for FRL enroll in schools with relatively higher percentages of FRL students.

Table III.4 (p. 14) shows the number of FRL-eligible Open Enrollment students who are enrolled in schools that are below the percentage of the total Learning Community (44.3%) and the number of students who do not qualify for FRL enrolled in schools that have FRL percentages above that of the total Learning Community. It is important to understand, that we cannot say the general diversity of the schools has actually changed to the degree the table might imply. Open-enrolled students' resident school is not known. The FRL-eligible student who transfers to a school with a relatively low

percentage of FRL students, but whose resident school also has a relatively low concentration of FRL, has not positively affected diversity. The school she or he left is potentially less diverse because of the transfer. The same is true of the Non-FRL student who enrolls in a school with a large proportion of FRL. If that student's resident school is also a high FRL school, diversity has likely not been improved. Although they may positively affect the diversity of the school in which they open- enroll, their transfer potentially has a negative effect on the diversity of the school they left.

Table III.4 FRL Open Enrollment Students in Schools with Lower Concentrations of FRL than the Learning Community Total and Non-FRL Open Enrollment Students Enrolled in Higher FRL Schools

YEAR	Total Open Enrollment	Number FRL in Schools with FRL Percentage < LC Total	Percent FRL in Schools with FRL Percentage < LC Total	Number Non- FRL in Schools with FRL Percentage > LC Total	Percent Non- FRL in Schools with FRL Percentage > LC Total
2010-2011	2,563	647	25.24%	233	9.09%
2011-2012	4,334	908	20.95%	267	6.16%
2012-2013	5,769	1,500	26.00%	548	9.50%
2013-2014	6,535	1,659	25.39%	630	9.64%
2014-2015	7,244	1,789	24.70%	729	10.06%

Approximately 35% of the Open Enrollment students are enrolled in schools that follow the intention of the Learning Community Diversity Plan. Nearly a quarter (24.79%) of the Open Enrollment students who qualify for FRL are enrolled in schools with relatively lower percentages of FRL, and 10.06% of the students who do not qualify for FRL are enrolled schools with relatively higher percentages of FRL. Whether they are contributing to diversity, however, is not known. To determine the effect on school diversity would require knowing the FRL percentage of their resident school, as well as the FRL percentage in the school in which they open-enrolled.

District Participation in Open Enrollment

This section provides Open Enrollment information for each of the 11 member school districts, including the number of applications received and approved and the number of students designated as Open Enrollment students.

As required by Nebraska Statute, application information was submitted to the Learning Community by each school district. Enrollment data were supplied by NDE and reflect Fall Enrollment Membership (counts on the last Friday of September). Table III.5 shows the number of Open Enrollment applications received and approved and the number enrolled in the 2014-2015 school year. It is important to be aware of differences in the reporting dates for the application-related information to the Learning Community and enrollment information to NDE for Fall Membership. School districts are required, by statute, to report their application and approval data to the Learning Community by September 1 of each year. For consistency, and to accommodate the September 1 deadline, districts use their counts the third Friday in August, approximately one

week after the start of the school year. Districts report fall enrollment data to NDE, as of the last Friday in September, approximately six weeks after the September I report to the Learning Community. This six-week time lapse may account for differences between the number of applications approved and the number enrolled.

Some districts, in certain situations, use the Open Enrollment process for transfers from one school to another within the district, while other districts do not.[4] This distinction is made in the tables that follow.

Table III.5 New Applications Received and Approved and Number Enrolled for the 2014-2015 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AND APPROVED FOR 2014-15					2014-15 NEW OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS		
	NON-RESIDENT APPLICANTS	RESIDENT APPLICANTS	TOTAL APPLICANTS	TOTAL APPROVED	PERCENT APPROVED	ENROLLED NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS	ENROLLED RESIDENT STUDENTS	TOTAL ENROLLED
OPS	270	232	502	429	85.5%	216	4	220
Elkhorn	81	5	86	15	17.4%	11	14	25
DC West	46	0	46	45	97.8%	66	7	73
Millard	684	34	718	537	74.8%	390	165	555
Ralston	272	0	272	270	99.3%	188	3	191
Bennington	40	0	40	2	5.0%	1	0	1
Westside	705	0	705	226	32.1%	176	2	178
Bellevue	473	0	473	443	93.7%	350	20	370
Pap-LV	569	7	576	335	58.2%	207	7	214
Gretna	25	0	25	9	36.0%	10	1	11
Springfield	70	0	70	70	100.0%	18	3	21
Total	**3,235**	**278**	**3,513**	**2,381**	**67.8%**	**1,633**	**226**	**1,859**

The differences in the percentage of accepted applications across districts are caused by differences in the capacity to accept students from other districts at the grade level and in the school requested. Some districts are growing rapidly, and schools may already be crowded, while other districts have greater capacity to add students.

- Overall, 67.8% of the applications were approved. This percentage is approximately 15% less than previous years.

- One of the two smallest school districts, Springfield Platteview, approved all applications. The DC West, as well as the Bellevue school district, approved more than 90% of received applications.

- The most rapidly growing districts, Elkhorn, Bennington, and Gretna, understandably had some of the lowest approval rates.

- The number of approved applications (2,381) is 522 more than the number enrolled. This is, in part, due to the fact that families can apply to multiple school districts; 2,381 represents the

[4] Districts may give school transfer priority to resident students who request the transfer before February 15.

number of *applications* approved, not the number of *students* approved. Multiple school districts may have approved the same student's application. The difference between the number of applications and the number of students who actually enrolled can be attributed to a number of other factors as well, such as moving between the time of the approval and the start of the school year or deciding to stay in their resident school.

Table III.6 shows the number of Open Enrollment students who are enrolled in a school, which is not within their home districts' boundaries. It excludes those who transferred to a school within their resident district through Open Enrollment. It also shows the proportion of non-resident Open Enrollment students in each district's total enrollment. These data are also from the NDE Fall Membership.

Table III.6: Percent of Non-Resident Open Enrollment Students in School Districts' Total Enrollment in the 2014-2015 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	2012-2013 NON-RESIDENT OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2013-2014 NON-RESIDENT OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2014-2015 NON-RESIDENT OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2012-2013 PERCENT OF NON-RESIDENT OPEN ENROLLED STUDENTS IN TOTAL ENROLLMENT	2013-2014 PERCENT OF NON-RESIDENT OPEN ENROLLED STUDENTS IN TOTAL ENROLLMENT	2014-2015 PERCENT OF NON-RESIDENT OPEN ENROLLED STUDENTS IN TOTAL ENROLLMENT
OPS	551	585	652	1.15%	1.21%	1.32%
Elkhorn	36	45	48	0.57%	0.66%	0.65%
DC West	50	105	137	7.41%	14.56%	17.56%
Millard	1,589	1,844	2,026	7.01%	8.07%	8.80%
Ralston	375	580	650	13.04%	19.69%	21.72%
Bennington	14	7	8	0.90%	0.40%	0.42%
Westside	866	1,177	1,214	14.47%	19.31%	20.23%
Bellevue	1,000	1,020	1,103	10.34%	10.52%	11.43%
Pap-LV	620	814	834	5.97%	7.57%	7.57%
Gretna	24	29	38	0.72%	0.82%	1.00%
Springfield	81	113	125	8.40%	11.11%	11.61%
Total	**5,206**	**6,319**	**6,835**	**4.63%**	**5.51%**	**5.85%**

- After four years of the Open Enrollment program, 6,835 students are classified as Open Enrollment and are enrolled in a school outside their resident district. However, the proportion of total enrollment that number represents (5.85%) is relatively small.

- Millard has the largest number of non-resident, open-enrolled students, representing 8.80% of its total enrollment.

- Ralston and Westside have the largest *proportion* of non-resident Open Enrollment students, with 21.72% and 20.23%, respectively.

Open Enrollment – Option Enrollment Comparisons

As described at the beginning of Section III, Open Enrollment has been in existence in the Learning Community since 2010-2011. Prior to 2010, the State Option Enrollment system was used by all Nebraska school districts, including Learning Community districts, for the transfer of students across district boundaries. This year, for the first time, the annual report provides data comparing the two programs. The Nebraska Department of Education provided Option Enrollment information

for Learning Community districts for the three school years prior to the implementation of Open Enrollment (2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10).

Table III.7 shows the number and percentage of Option Enrollment and Open Enrollment students by year for kindergarten, first, second and third grade. Only these grades are reported because the 2013-14 third grade cohort entered kindergarten in the fall of 2010, the first year of Open Enrollment. In 2010-2011, and in the next four years, all students who transferred from one Learning Community district to another did so under the Open Enrollment program, rather than Option Enrollment. In grades four through twelve, the new transfers are classified as Open Enrollment, but those grades also contain students who transferred among Learning Community districts prior to 2010, under Option Enrollment, and most of those students continue to be classified as such.

Table III.7 Number and Percent of Option Enrollment and Open Enrollment Students by Year

GRADE LEVEL	2007-08 OPTION ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2008-09 OPTION ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2009-10 OPTION ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2010-11 OPTION AND OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2011-12 OPTION AND OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2012-13 OPTION AND OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2013-14 OPTION AND OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2014-15 OPTION AND OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP
KG	445	441	494	528	622	605	595	480
1	416	476	490	611	595	661	609	598
2	471	468	523	590	636	663	676	619
3	451	494	542	607	649	625	635	694
Total	**1,783**	**1,879**	**2,049**	**2,336**	**2,502**	**2,554**	**2,515**	**2,391**
Percent of Total Enrollment at Included Grades	**5.35%**	**5.50%**	**5.82%**	**6.50%**	**6.83%**	**7.00%**	**6.79%**	**6.36%**

In the column headed “2010-11 Option and Open Enrollment Students in Fall Membership” the only kindergarten students who are classified as Option Enrollment are those who transferred from a District that is not part of the Learning Community. The same is true of kindergarten and first grade in 2011-12; kindergarten, first and second grade in 2012-13 and kindergarten through grade three in 2013-14. The bottom row in the table shows the percentage of the total enrollment in these four grades that are classified as Option or Open Enrollment. For example 1,783 kindergarten through third grade 2007-08 Option Enrollment students represent 5.35% of the total Learning Community enrollment in those four grades that year. In the first year of Open Enrollment (2010-11), the 2,336 Option *and* Open Enrollment students represent 6.5% of the total Learning Community enrollment in those grades.

It is also important to know that all students in the Option Enrollment columns (the first three columns in Table III.7) are students who transferred to a school that is not in their resident district. As explained earlier, because some districts have used Open Enrollment for transfers among schools within their districts, the numbers in the last four columns (Option *and Open* Enrollment) include some students who are attending a school within their resident district’s boundaries. This is not the case in the Option Enrollment columns.

Not shown in the table, but important to understand, is the fact that only 16 of the 528 kindergarten students in the 2010-11 column are Option Enrollment students, meaning that 16 students transferred to a Learning Community school district from a district that was not within the

Learning Community. In each of the other grades in the 2010-11 column, approximately 70% to 75% of the students are Option enrollment, students who transferred prior to the implementation of Open Enrollment. In the 2013-14 column, when all students in kindergarten through third grade who transferred among Learning Community districts are classified as Open Enrolled, and only those who transferred from districts outside the Learning Community are classified as Option, approximately 97% of the 2,515 transfer students are Open Enrollment students.

The implementation of Open Enrollment in 2010-11 does not appear to have increased the incidence of student transfer across district boundaries. The proportion of the total enrollment represented by Option and Open Enrollment students ranges from 5.35% in 2007-08, when all were Option Enrollment, to 7.00% in 2012-2013 when most were Open Enrollment.

- Each year until 2013-14, the proportion Option Enrollment, and the combined proportion of Option and Open enrollment, increased slightly (less than 1%). In both 2013-14 & 2014-15 when almost all the students were classified as Open Enrollment the percentage went down slightly.
- Although the table shows a slightly larger proportion of student transfers after the implementation of Open Enrollment, the increase between 2009-10 and 2010-11 is only slightly larger than the increase in previous year. This difference could be attributed to the fact that Open Enrollment numbers include some students attending a school within their resident district.

Table III.8 (p. 19) compares the percentage of FRL-eligible Option and Open Enrollment students over the past eight years. In the first three years, there were only Option Enrollment students, while from 2010-2011 through 2014-2015 the Learning Community districts had both Option and Open Enrollment students.

Table III.8 Number and Percent of FRL-Eligible Option and Open Enrollment Students Compared to the Total Learning Community Percentage of FRL

YEAR	Total Number of Option Enrollment	Number of Option Enrollment Qualifying for FRL	Percent of Option Enrollment Qualifying for FRL	Total Number of Open Enrollment	Number of Open Enrollment Qualifying for FRL	Percent of Open Enrollment Qualifying for FRL	Learning Community FRL Percentage
2007-2008	6,788	1,434	21.13%	N/A	N/A	N/A	36.46%
2008-2009	7,051	1,562	22.15%	N/A	N/A	N/A	36.76%
2009-2010	7,552	1,899	25.15%	N/A	N/A	N/A	40.08%
2010-2011	6,007	1,500	24.97%	2,563	1,076	41.98%	41.86%
2011-2012	4,755	1,152	24.23%	4,334	1,843	42.52%	43.48%
2012-2013	3,717	799	21.50%	5,769	2,345	40.65%	43.96%
2013-2014	3,001	643	21.43%	6,535	2,724	41.68%	44.47%
2014-2015	2,452	506	20.64%	7,244	2,971	41.01%	44.29%

The data in the Table III.8 illustrate a rather dramatic difference in the percentages of Option Enrollment and Open Enrollment students who qualify for FRL.

- In 2007-08 through 2009-10, when only the Option Enrollment program existed, the percentage of FRL-eligible Option Enrollment students ranged from 21.13% to 25.15%, approximately 15% lower than the total percentage in the Learning Community in those years.
- As described earlier in this section, the percentage of FRL-eligible Open Enrollment students is similar to the Learning Community as a whole with differences each year ranging from less than 1% to approximately 3%.
- Open Enrollment has contributed to a nearly 20% increase in a higher percentage of FRL enrolled students than Option Enrollment over the 5 year period of Open Enrollment. Option enrollment FRL student percentage is 22.65% since 2007-2008, while Open Enrollment has a percentage of 41.57% over 5 years.
- Since the implementation of Open Enrollment, Option Enrollment students who qualify for FRL has remained relatively low. The lower percentage among Option Enrollment students in more recent years could be somewhat affected by the fact that, proportionately, more high school students are included in those numbers and a lower percentage of high school students, than elementary and middle school, apply for FRL. However, this fact alone would likely account for only a small proportion of the difference.

In summary, it appears that the proportion of students who open-enroll is similar to the proportion that option-enrolled in the past, but there is a greater proportion of students who qualify for FRL among

the Open Enrollment students than among Option Enrollment students. Further, the percentage of Open Enrollment students who qualify for FRL is similar to the percentage of the Learning Community districts as a whole, while the percentage of Option Enrollment students who qualify for FRL is considerably less than the Learning Community total, both in the past and currently.

Student Performance and Open Enrollment

In prior years, this report to the Education Committee included a section in which we provided an analysis of the impact of the implementation of the Open Enrollment policy on student performance on the Nebraska State Assessments. After three years of analysis and reporting of these data, we are discontinuing the report section on student performance because it is clear that no valid conclusions can be reached from the analysis, and it may be misleading to continue to report data thereby leaving the impression that some findings or conclusions will be possible.

Even though it is our observation that Learning Community school districts have faithfully implemented the Open Enrollment policy, valid conclusions are not possible. Neither a causal, nor even a correlational, relationship between the implementation of the Open Enrollment policy and student performance on Nebraska Assessments can be shown for the following reasons:

- An inherent assumption of the Open Enrollment policy might be that students in high poverty schools would benefit from moving to lower poverty schools, perhaps benefitting from the higher expectations or other supposed advantages of a low poverty school. There is no evidence of any significant movement of students from high poverty schools to low poverty schools or the reverse. Therefore it is impossible to conclude that such movement resulted in significant impact to overall student performance.
- There are too many intervening variables that cannot be controlled to offer any conclusions as to the academic benefits of Open Enrollment. The largest of these variables is the fact that those parents who seek open enrollment constitute a "voluntary sample" of parents who make the choice to undertake the Open Enrollment process. Perhaps if there were waiting lists with significant numbers of similarly, highly motivated parents, we could compare the results of the two groups to determine if the performance of the open enrolled students was better than that of the students who remained on a waiting list, but this is not the case.

Therefore, we conclude that further analyses of these data would be meaningless and, possibly, misleading. The existent data provided in the State of the Schools Reports on the NDE website provide sufficient information and analyses about the performance of Learning Community students.