learning community
DOUGLAS SARPY

THEIR FUTURE.

OUR FUTURE.

2018-2019 EVALUATION REPORT

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

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INTRODUCTION

This 2018-2019 Annual Report from the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties builds upon established patterns of academic success in our research-based programs. We're pleased to share the latest evaluation results with you. The collaborative work around this growing body of evidence is exciting. Sharing this knowledge helps Nebraska educators in communities of all sizes take a fresh look at proven opportunities for children and families.

THE 2-GEN DIFFERENCE

Research shows that a child's education connects directly to family well-being. That's why we actively promote a two-generation approach. In our community centers, this common-sense answer leads to new opportunities for strong and resilient children and families.

Our report also demonstrates how parents in Family Learning classes get engaged in education and connected to their local schools. It's no surprise to us that children from this program are ahead of their peers and top students in their local district. Our communities gain as children and families move forward with confidence and skills for the future.

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Our latest evaluation is a resource for Nebraska educators now sharing practical, proven practices to improve outcomes. One example comes from the highest poverty neighborhoods in Omaha where the classrooms of early childhood teaching teams rank high in national comparisons. Why? It starts with teacher-coaches embedded in classrooms. Take a look at the positive outcomes in school readiness, vocabulary and the essential executive function skills all children need.

You might also read about Jump Start to Kindergarten, and what makes this well-known program more effective. Does participation for just a few weeks make a measurable difference? Our report highlights a district initiative with teacher assessments from multiple school districts.

A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

The vast majority of Nebraska families rely on childcare. Improving quality care in smaller, home-based and community childcare centers is important for thousands of very young children. The directors of these centers often feel isolated, facing their own set of barriers. In our north Omaha pilot project, we see great potential for more systemic change. Once directors are engaged in quality practices, they voluntarily join Nebraska Step Up to Quality. It's rewarding to see local business owners qualify for state training and incentives, while children in their care thrive.

We all want better outcomes for the next generation of educated citizens and our future workforce. I'm confident that the Learning Community is connecting the dots to benefit children and families in Nebraska. I am always available to discuss any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

David Patton
Chief Executive Officer
Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
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Introduction

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties is an educational subdivision focused on outcomes and opportunities for children and families. Impact grows through a collaborative network of metropolitan area school districts and community organizations. Independent evaluations demonstrate consistently strong results in the implementation of quality early childhood education and family engagement programs. Improvements in teaching practices are embedded in programs.

Our Mission

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.

Our Vision

That all children within the Learning Community achieve academic success without regard to social or economic circumstance.

RATIONALE

The Learning Community implements strategies built on research based on one or more of the following principles: 1) students benefit from high quality classrooms, 2) reflective coaching adds value to the classroom, 3) family engagement is critical for a child's success in school, and 4) students' early childhood outcomes predict later school success.

NEED FOR QUALITY CLASSROOMS. Quality early childhood programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term, positive academic performance (Burchinal, et al., 2010; Barnett, 2008). Research shows that all children benefit from high-quality preschool, with low-income children and English learners benefiting the most Yoshiwaka, et al. (2013). High quality classroom organization is related to fewer student behavior problems and increased social competence (Rimm-Karufman, 2009).

COACHING ADDS VALUE TO THE CLASSROOM. Coaching teachers in instructional practices is proving to be an effective and feasible professional development method in improving teacher instruction. Meta-analysis of coaching studies indicated medium to large effect sizes on teacher instruction & small to medium effect sizes on student achievement (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018). Coaching methods that combine the elements of modeling, observation, and direct feedback have been found to increase teacher implementation of proactive strategies, particularly in regards to classroom management (Reinke et al., 2014, Kamps et al., 2015). The coaching relationship continues to be paramount in instructional coaching as research indicates that the most effective coaching models are those adapted to each individual's needs and situations (Bradshaw et al., 2013). The differentiation and individualization of coaching are effective for both new and veteran teachers alike (Reddy et al., 2013).

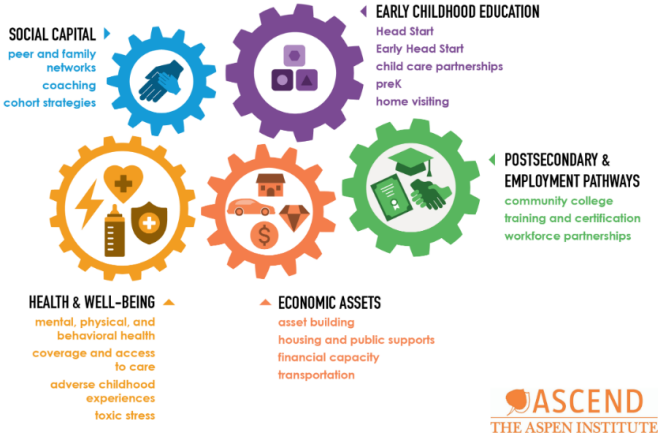
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION IS CRITICAL FOR STUDENTS' SUCCESS. Family engagement with their children and their schools is a key element for student school

success (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Partnerships between home and school are especially important for children who are socially and economically disadvantaged (Jeynes, 2005). Positive goal-directed relationships between families and program staff are key to engagement and children's school readiness (HHS/ACF/OHS/NCPFCE, 2018).

PRESCHOOL CHILD OUTCOMES PREDICT LATER SCHOOL SUCCESS. 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. These students typically have poorer school performance compared to their economically advantaged counterparts (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Students enrolled earlier and for a longer duration demonstrate better short and long-term results (Barnett, 2008). In studies of the longer term effects of preschool programs, the importance of quality teaching in early elementary grades is also important. Research found that investments in elementary schools influence the strength of ongoing preschool effects, researchers have found that the level of challenge provided by kindergarten teachers matters for later outcomes (Johnson & Jackson, 2017).

2GEN APPROACH

The Learning Community uses a two-generation (2Gen) approach in designing early childhood and family engagement programs at each of the Centers, Learning Community Center of South Omaha and Learning Community Center of North Omaha. This creates opportunities for and addresses the needs of both children and adults. Using the whole-family approach, programs focus equally and intentionally on children and parents.



The theory of change behind the 2Gen approach suggests aligning services for parents and children yields stronger and lasting results (ASCEND, 2018). Based on community needs, each Learning Community Center developed a comprehensive program to address the opportunity gap for children and families based on the unique characteristics of each community and their needs.

Key elements of the 2Gen approach include:

- Early Childhood Development
- Health & Well-being
- Post-secondary & Employment Pathways
- Economic Assets
- Social Capital

SCHOOL DISTRICT PILOT PROGRAMS

The Learning Community also supports pilot programs in nine school districts. School districts customize pilot programs to meet specific needs but all have the opportunity to benefit from sharing their successes and lessons learned.

- Jumpstart to Kindergarten provides low-income students the opportunity to experience a school setting. Most students have little or no experience in classroom environments.
- Extended Learning provides additional direct instruction for children to prevent summer learning loss and improve their chances of success.
- Instructional Coaching allows teachers to reflect on strategies and enhances instructional practice.

EVALUATION

A comprehensive evaluation process using a Utilization-Focused evaluation design (Patton, 2012) was conducted to monitor the implementation of the Learning Community programs and assess progress towards identified program outcomes. Data were used as a teaching tool throughout the year to support program improvement.

Based upon the evaluation plan, the evaluation employed multiple methods to describe and measure the quality of implementation, the nature of programming, and to report outcomes demonstrated by the programs funded by the Learning Community (LC). The evaluation report is structured to report in five areas: Implementation Strategies, Child and Family Demographics, Quality Instructional Practices, Child and Family Outcomes, and Community Practices and Use of Data. The findings will reflect the collective experiences of the child and family through participation in the program as well as other factors (e.g., school district efforts, other community services, and family support). The overarching evaluation questions were:

IMPLEMENTATION. What was the nature of the implementation strategies? Was there variation in implementation and if so, what factors contributed to that variation?

DEMOGRAPHICS. Who accessed and participated in the program or intervention?

QUALITY PRACTICES. To what extent are there quality practices in the center and classroom settings?

CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES. What were the outcomes related to academic achievement? Did family parenting skills improve? To what extent were parents engaged in their child's learning? Did parents' gain skills that would improve their ability to support their child in school?

COMMUNITY PRACTICES AND USE OF DATA. How did programs use their data? What changes occurred as a result of this continuous improvement process?

INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A STRATEGY IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

The answer to this question can be found by reviewing both the quantitative and qualitative data that are summarized in this report. Typically in this report, the quantitative data include scores between two groups (e.g., students who are English Language Learners compared to students whose native language is English) or scores of a group over time (e.g., students' language in the fall compared to their spring language results). Statistical analyses provide information to determine if there were significant changes in the outcomes (*p* value) and if those significant values were meaningful (*d* value or effect size). The effect size is the most helpful in determining "how well did the intervention work" (Coe, 2002). Qualitative data provide more detailed insight as to how the program is working and outcomes from key informants' perspectives. See Appendix A for more information.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTH OMAHA

The Learning Community Center of North Omaha provides innovative, demonstrative programming to improve educational outcomes for young students. Leadership and program staff work together to provide a comprehensive mix of research-based programs to the students and their caregivers in North Omaha. The center encompasses four primary programs: intensive early childhood partnership, Parent University, child care director training, and future teacher clinical training. Descriptions of each program and evaluation findings are summarized in this section.

Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

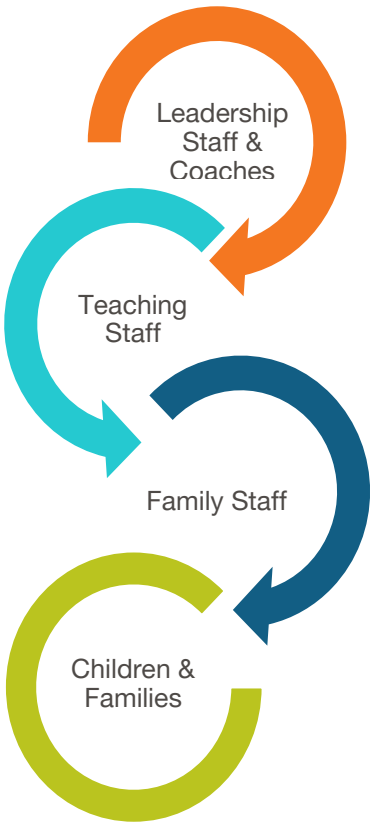
Intensive Early Childhood Partnership, a program that is in collaboration with Omaha Public Schools is based on evidence-based models (Yazejian & Bryant, 2012) that include four key components: intensive teaching teams, reflective coaching, professional development, and family engagement. The model was first introduced to eight inclusive preschool classrooms in Kellom and Conestoga Magnet in 2013. After two consecutive years of positive outcomes based on the model, it was expanded to two additional schools: Lothrop Magnet (3 classrooms) and Franklin (2 classrooms) and grades K through 1 at Kellom and Conestoga (13 classrooms). In 2018, the intensive early childhood partnership expanded to Minne Lusa (3 classrooms) and Skinner (4 classrooms). Evaluation will begin in 2019-2020 for Skinner and Minne Lusa.

INTENSIVE TEACHING TEAMS.

Intensive early childhood teams are integrated in each school building as a system of teachers, leadership, and family support staff that implement a combination of services and supports. The leadership team includes the principal, an early childhood coordinator, early childhood specialist and instructional coaches. Each classroom has a lead early childhood teacher, special education teacher

and paraprofessional staff. Using an inclusive model, these professionals work with all children and discuss effective teaching strategies using data for continuous improvement.

REFLECTIVE COACHING. Instructional coaches provide reflective consultation to the teaching staff both inside and outside of the classroom. They use a coaching approach adopted by Omaha Public Schools (i.e., Coaching with Powerful Interactions). A national consultant also provides ongoing reflective consultation to the coaches. Instructional coaches work to build teacher confidence and increase their active problem-solving skills. During one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools include classroom videotapes and photographs. Long-term positive student outcomes are predicted with the continuity of coaching now occurring in PreK through first grade in two schools.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Teaching teams benefit from 11 days of additional professional development (PD) throughout the school year. PD sessions focus on the implementation of Conscious Discipline, as well as literacy and language strategies to build the skills of teaching staff. The goal is to support child development outcomes related to social-emotional and language/literacy skills. The PD component is required for teachers at Kellom and Conestoga and elective for teachers at the expanded schools. Teachers across all preschool classrooms participated in the offered PD.

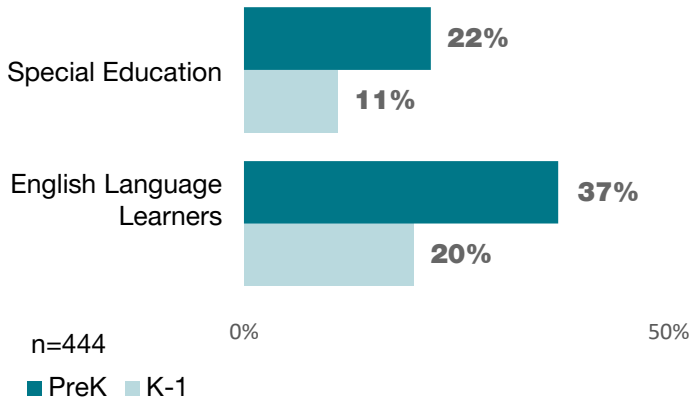
Implementing the Creative Curriculum is another key focus area. This curriculum targets the intentionality of vocabulary selection, repeated read-a-louds, selection of center materials, and alignment of literacy strategies (i.e. phonemic awareness and emergent writing).

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT. Family liaisons and support staff work together to enhance the educational experience of children and their parents. They promote school engagement and help families access needed services. In addition to full-day preschool and school-sponsored family engagement opportunities, membership in Parent University (discussed later in this section) is offered to families.

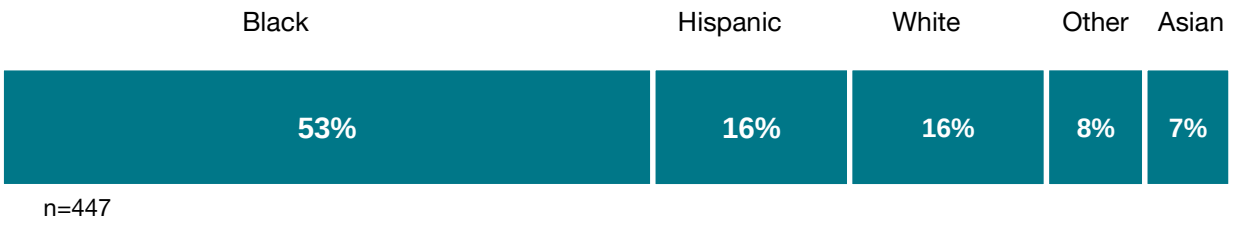
DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2018-2019, the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership served 447 PreK students and 307 K-1 students. A total of 202 PreK students and 242 kindergarten and first grade students participated in the evaluation. Demographic information was collected to help interpret the evaluation findings, including English Language Learners (ELL) and/or enrollment in special education services. The Intensive Early Childhood Partnership (PreK to 1st Grade) served a racially and ethnically diverse population of children. Across all PreK and K-1 classrooms, high percentages of the children were ELL. More special education students were served in PreK classrooms. There were similar numbers of females (47%) and males (53%) served across all grade levels. The median days of attendance were 141 days for preschool students and 144 days for students in kindergarten or first grade. The median number days students could attend is 155. The maximum days varied by when a child enrolled in the school. The results suggest students were consistently participating in the educational program.

INTENSIVE EARLY LEARNING CHILDHOOD CLASSES SERVED CHILDREN WITH A VARIETY OF RISK FACTORS.



THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.

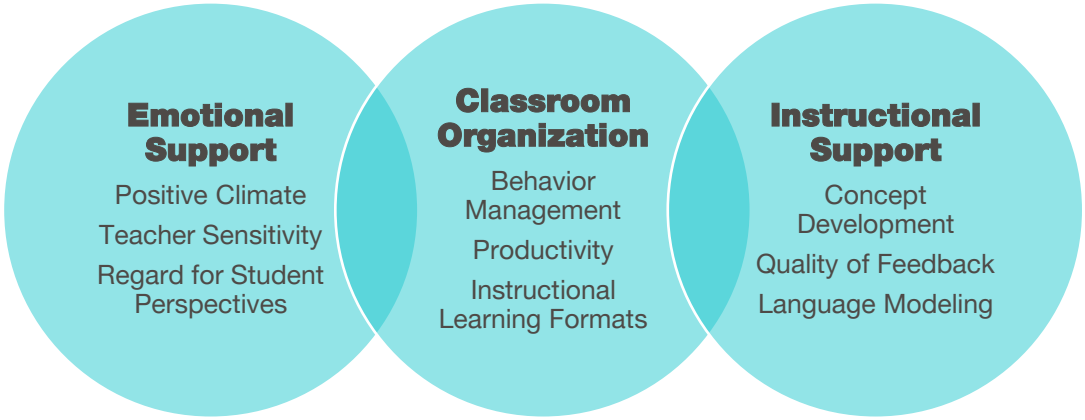


PROGRAM OUTCOMES

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was used to evaluate the quality of the 13 intensive early childhood preschool classrooms and 14 kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms. This year there were four new preschool teachers out of the 13 total teachers observed.

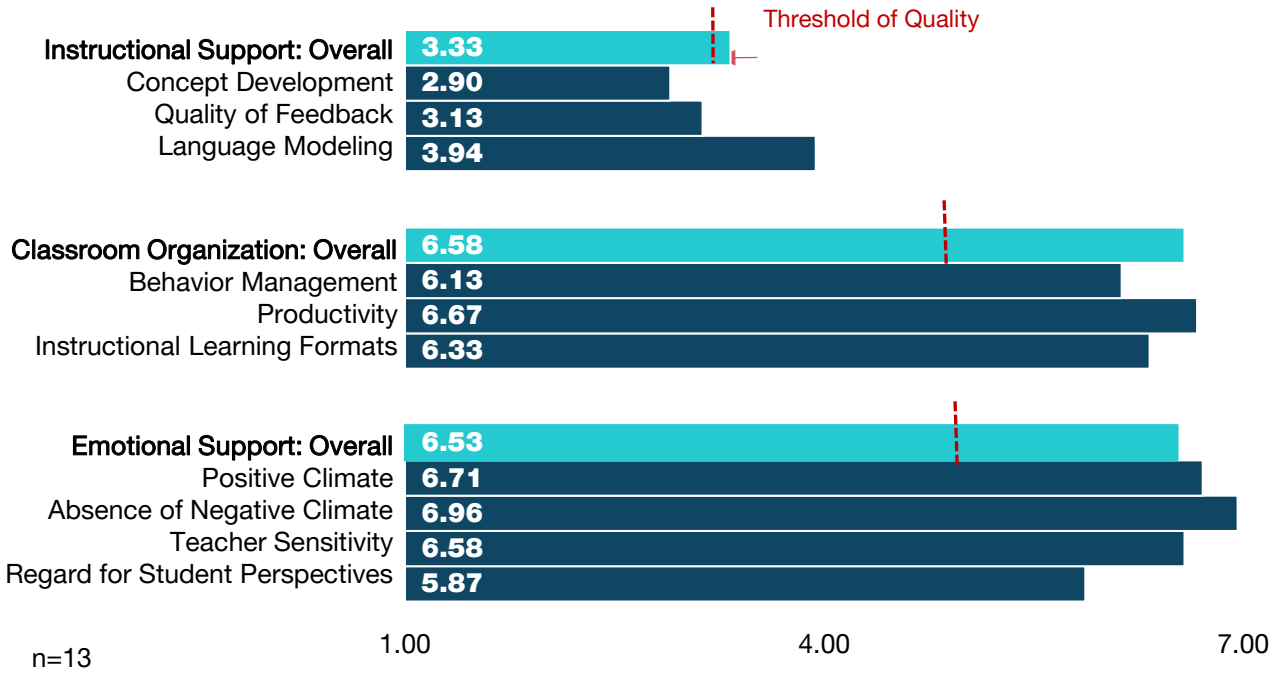
CLASS has three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organizational, and Instructional Support. Nationally, Instructional Support tends to be the domain with the most opportunity for improvement as it challenges teachers to effectively extend language, to model advanced language, and to promote higher-order thinking skills. Research on the CLASS indicates 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, are the minimum threshold necessary to have impacts on student achievement (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010).



FINDINGS. The scores for the preschool classrooms exceeded research reported thresholds necessary to have an effect on student achievement. The following figure provides the overall scores for each area and the dimension scores that are related to each overall score. Emotional Support and Classroom Organization were within the high-quality range. Instructional Support was within the mid-range of quality, with Language Modeling as an area of strength. Concept Development and Quality of Feedback had the lowest scores.

PREK CLASSROOOMS' STRENGTHS WERE IN THE AREAS OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION.

Preschool classrooms met the threshold of quality across all areas.



During the 2017-2018 program year, the Office of Head Start (OHS) used the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) during its on-site reviews of grantees. Data from this report, (https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/data-ongoing-monitoring/article/national-overview-grantee-class-scores-2018), was compared to the results of the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership data. Preschool teachers demonstrated classroom practices that were at or above the top 10% of all Head Start (HS) classrooms nationally in Classroom Organization (HS=6.28) and Emotional Support (HS=6.45). They were slightly lower in Instructional Support (HS=3.71).

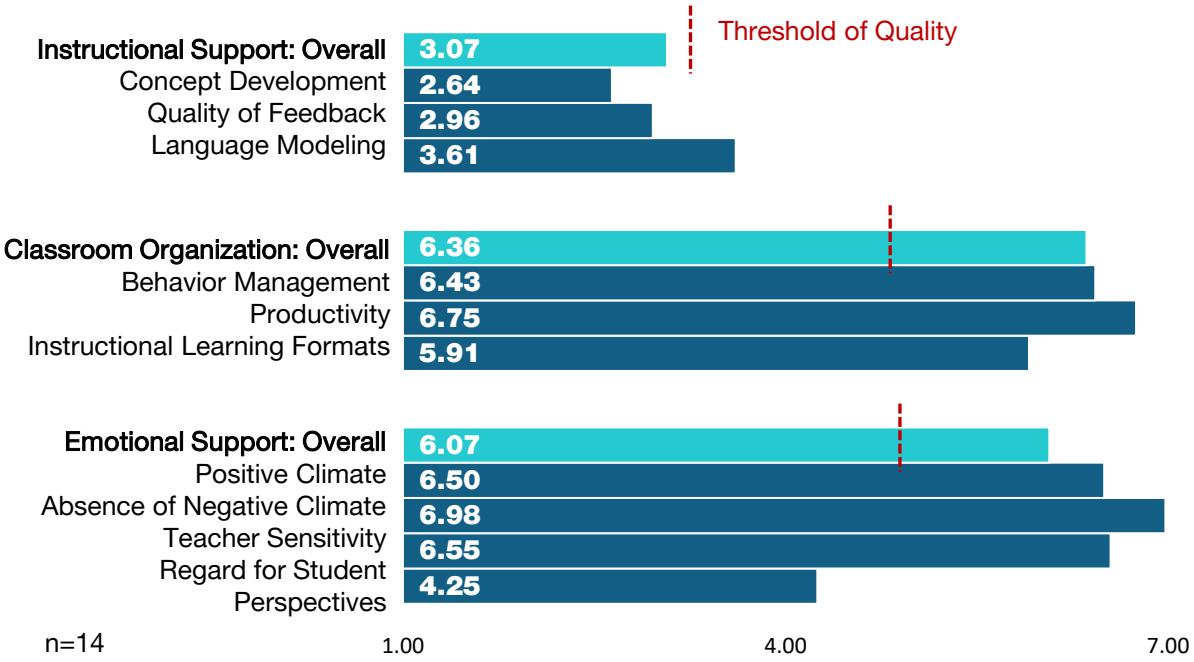
PreK teachers demonstrated classroom practices that were at or above the top 10% of all Head Start Classrooms nationally in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization.

This is the second year of collecting CLASS data for Grades K-1 classrooms. The scores for Grades K-1 classrooms exceeded research reported thresholds necessary to have an effect on student achievement in the areas of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. These scores were within the high-quality range. For these scales, strengths were in Productivity, Behavior Management, Absence of Negative Climate and

Regard for Student Perspectives. Instructional Support was within the moderate-range of quality. In the area of Instructional Support, strengths were in Language Modeling with Concept Development rated as the lowest area. A comparison of last year's CLASS scores over the last two years was completed through an independent paired t-test. The results indicated that teachers' scores improved significantly in 2019 in the areas of Classroom Organization [t(12)=1.980, p=.045; d=0.549] and Instructional Support [t(12)=3.706, p=.003; d=1.027]. The most gains were made in the area that was rated lowest last year, Instructional Support. The effect size suggests moderate to large meaningful change.

After two years of coaching, K-1 teachers demonstrated significant improvements in their instructional practices.

GRADE K-1 CLASSROOOMS' STRENGTHS WERE IN THE AREAS OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION.
Language Modeling was a strength in the area of Instructional Support.



CHILD OUTCOMES

PRESCHOOL VOCABULARY SKILLS

METHOD. Vocabulary is an important factor in how students progress through school. Students who have limited vocabularies at a very young age are likely to fall behind their peers. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test–IV (PPVT-IV), a direct child assessment measuring vocabulary in English, was administrated in the fall and spring to all preschool children. There were 171 fall/spring assessments completed across schools.

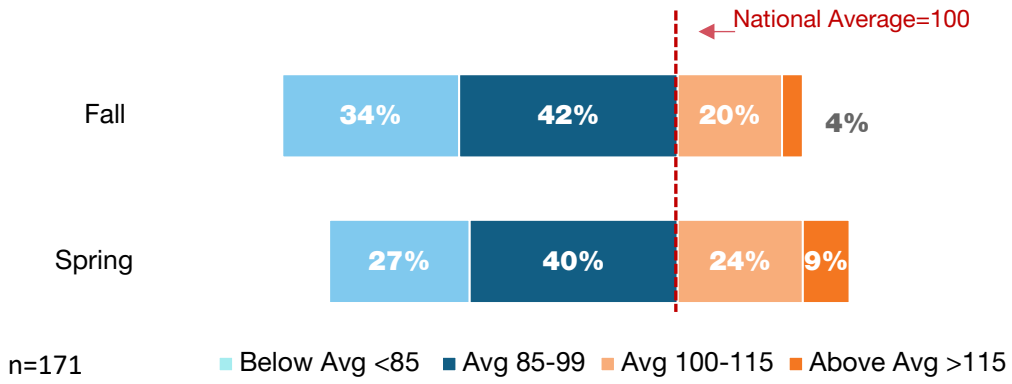
FINDINGS. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses was completed to determine if there was change in student scores over time and if any demographic variables predicted vocabulary outcomes. Approximately 5% of the variability in PPVT receptive language scores was due to the classroom, indicating that there was minimal variability in scores across classrooms. A significant change over time was found in children's PPVT scores when controlling for family home language and gender ($p<.01$). Family home language was a significant predictor of PPVT scores. Children with a home language that was not English scored significantly lower than children whose home language was English ($p < .001$). They scored 15.38 points lower on average than children whose primary home language was English. Gender was not a significant predictor of children's PPVT scores. Supporting children's language and literacy skills was a focus of professional development for the past two years.

Students' vocabulary skills improved significantly from fall to spring.

By spring, 73% of the students' vocabulary skills were within the average range or higher. Nine percent more children were at the midpoint of average or higher and seven percent fewer were below average.

BY SPRING, MORE CHILDREN HAD ENGLISH VOCABULARY SKILLS WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE OR ABOVE.

A third of the children scored at or above the national average.



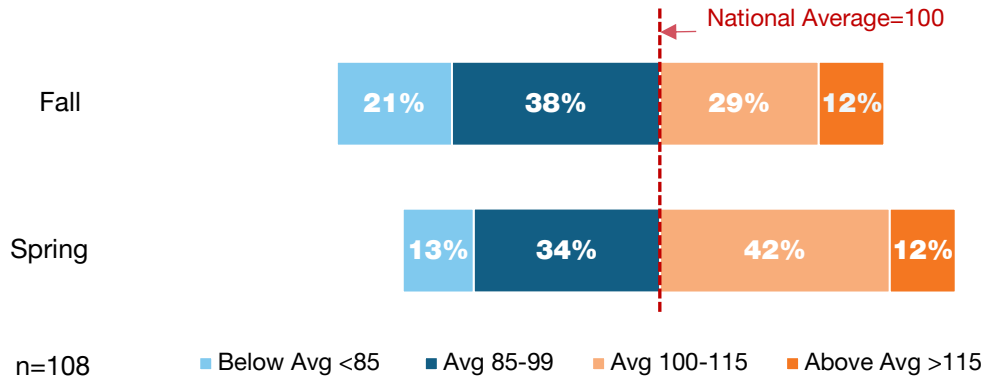
PRESCHOOL SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

METHOD. The social-emotional development of preschool students was assessed using the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). This questionnaire assesses young students' social-emotional development by identifying total protective factors overall and in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior. The DECA was completed on 108 students across two schools.

FINDINGS. By spring, the majority (87%) of the students were in the average range or above. More children (13%) were scoring at the mid-point of average in the spring than in the fall and fewer children (8%) were scoring below average. By spring, over half of the children were above the national average.

BY SPRING, MORE CHILDREN HAD SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE PROGRAM GOAL.

By spring, over half of the children were above the national average.



A paired samples t-test was completed to assess students' skills over time. The results found that students' social-emotional skills improved significantly from fall to spring [$t(103)=-3.083$; $p<.001$; $d=0.447$]. The effect size suggest moderate meaningful change.

Students' social-emotional skills improved significantly from fall to spring.

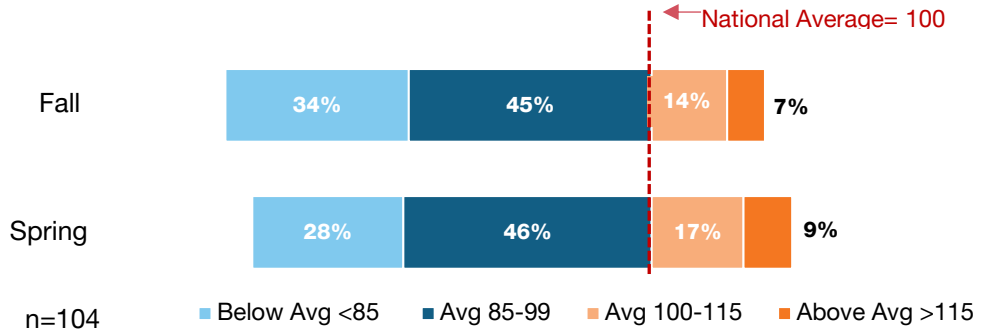
PRESCHOOL SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

METHOD. School readiness is determined by a combination of factors that contribute to school success in grade school. The importance of concept development, particularly for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in numerous research studies (Neuman, 2006; Panter and Bracken, 2009). The assessment selected to measure preschool students' academic school readiness was the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA). The BSRA measures the academic readiness skills of young students in the areas of colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, comparisons, and shapes. The BSRA was completed with 104 children from two schools.

FINDINGS. By the spring, 72% of the children were within the average range. The majority of the students scored below the mid-point of the national average. There were 6% fewer children scoring below average in the spring.

BY SPRING, MORE CHILDREN HAD SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE AVERAGE RANGE.

Slightly more children met the national average in the spring.



Students significantly improved their school readiness skills.

A paired samples t-test was completed to assess students' skills over time. The results found that students' school readiness skills improved significantly from fall to spring [t(103)=-3.133; p=002; d=0.307]. The effect size suggest small meaningful change.

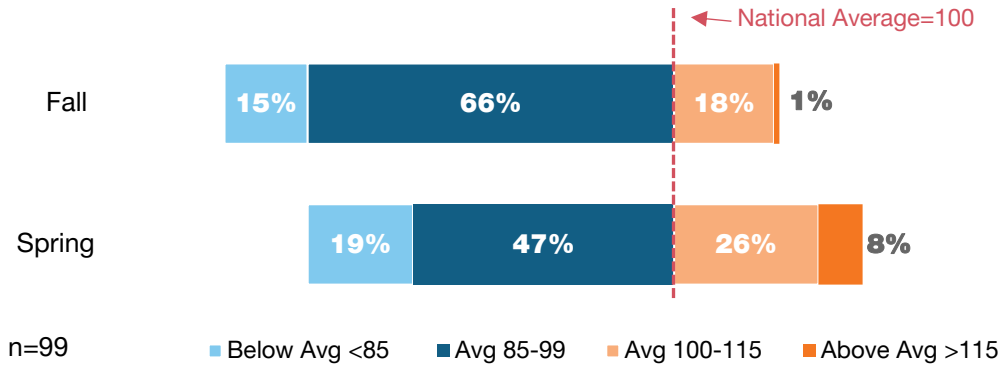
PRESCHOOL EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

METHOD. In recent years the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Blair & Razza, 2007). Executive functioning is defined as a student's ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. Researchers correlate a relationship between executive

functioning and a preschooler's ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et. al., 2013). The Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS), an online assessment for children two and older, was used in the fall and the spring. This assessment was completed with 99 children from two schools.

FINDINGS. By spring, 81% of the children scored within the average range or above. Although slightly more children (4%) scored below average in the spring,15% more children scored within the mid-point of average or above.

BY SPRING, MORE CHILDREN HAD EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE OR ABOVE.
15% more children scored at the mid-point of average or above.



A paired samples t-test was completed to assess students' skills over time. The results found that students' executive functioning skills improved significantly from fall to spring [t(98)=-2.159; *p*=033; *d*=0.217]. The effect size suggests small meaningful change.

PreK students demonstrated significantly improved executive functioning skills.

Did parent participation in Parent University influence child outcomes?

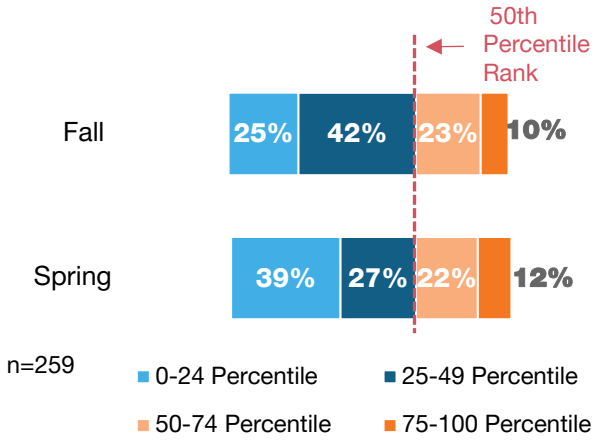
At all of the schools, parents had the opportunity to participate in Parent University. Twenty-two percent of the parents (n=44) engaged in Parent University courses and activities across the four schools. An analysis of covariance was completed to compare the language, social-emotional, executive functioning and school readiness outcomes of children whose parents participated in Parent University to those who did not, while controlling for ELL and IEP status. Children whose parents participated in Parent University did not score significantly higher than other children in the classroom. These results should be interpreted with caution given the small numbers used in the analyses. It is recommended that strategies be identified that can integrate the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership and Parent University by increasing the number of parents in the targeted schools that participate in Parent University activities.

GRADES K-1 STUDENTS READING AND MATH SKILLS

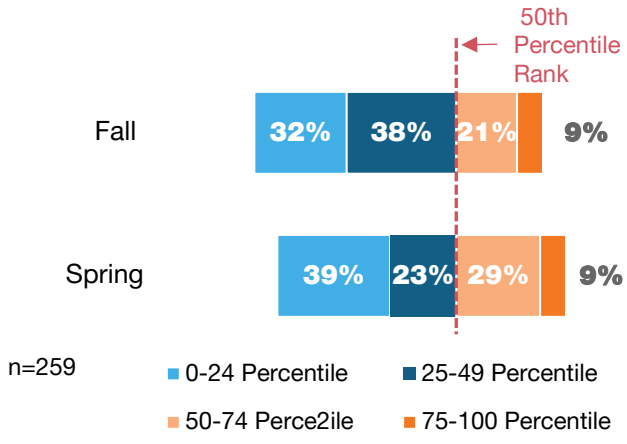
METHOD. In order to assess the academic outcomes of the children whose teachers received coaching in Grades K-1, the school district assessment, the MAP® Growth™ was used. The MAP® Growth™ assessment provides data on student academic growth in the areas of reading and math and monitors change over time. The MAP® Growth™ assessment was completed on 259 children across two schools.

FINDINGS. A descriptive analysis was completed. The results for MAP Reading Assessment using national percentile ranks found that by spring 34% of the children scored at or above the 50th percentile rank, a 1% increase from fall. MAP math results found the 38% of the students were above the 50th percentile in the spring, an 8% increase from fall. Statistical analyses using an ANOVA found that English-speaking children scored significantly higher in both math ($F(258)=8.295$; $p=.004$) and reading ($F(258)=8.103$; $p=.005$) than their English Language Learner peers. English speaking students made more gains from fall to spring both in Math (8%) and Reading (10%). This was an improvement over the previous year in which the percentages decreased in the spring. Additional analyses was completed which found that student attendance did not predict math or reading outcomes.

BY SPRING, SIMILAR NUMBERS OF STUDENTS HAD **READING** SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE 50TH PERCENTILE RANK.

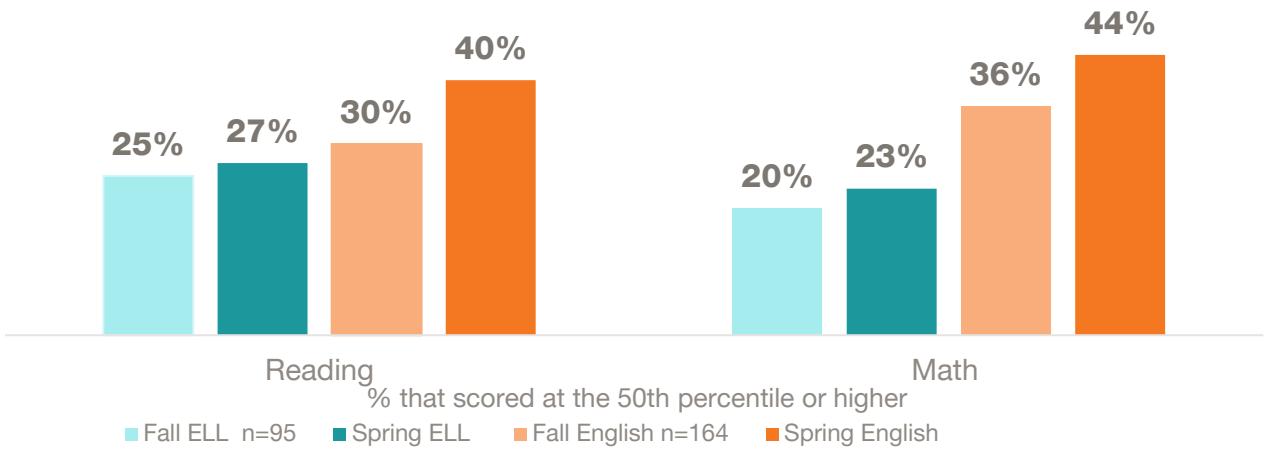


BY SPRING, MORE STUDENTS HAD **MATH** SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE 50TH PERCENTILE RANK.



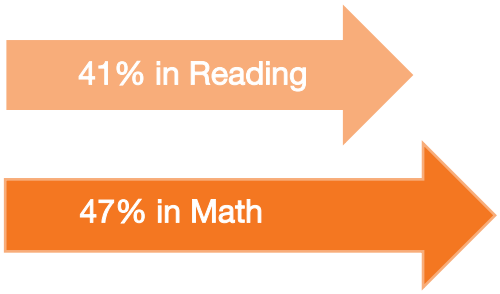
MORE ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILDREN SCORED AT THE 50TH PERCENTILE OR ABOVE THAN THEIR PEERS WHO WERE ELL.

By spring, English speaking students scored higher in Math.



The second analysis examined students' expected growth. The results found that 41% (n=99) of the students met their expected growth in Reading and in 47% (n=114) in Math.

Many K-1 students are meeting or exceeding their expected growth.



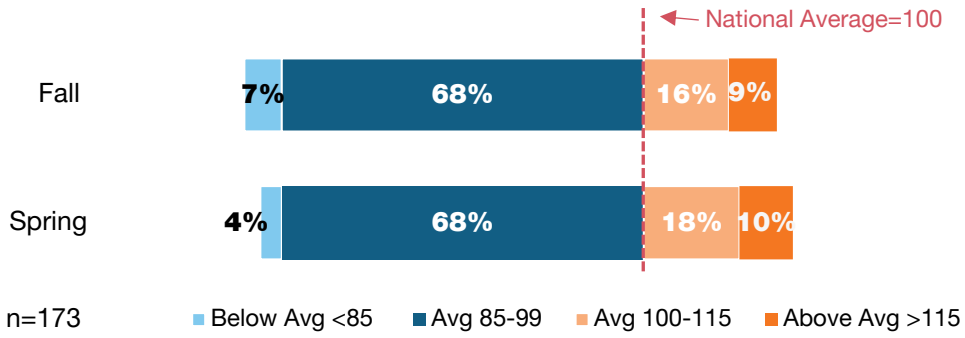
K-1 STUDENT EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

METHOD. The Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS), was completed in the fall and the spring to assess 173 students from two schools.

FINDINGS. By spring, 86% of the children scored within the average range. There were slightly fewer children (3%) scoring below average in the spring. There were 3% more children scoring within the mid-point of average.

K-1 students demonstrated significantly improved executive functioning skills.

BY SPRING, SLIGHTLY MORE STUDENTS HAD EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE OR ABOVE.



A paired samples t-test was completed to assess students' skills over time. The results found that students' executive functioning skills improved significantly from fall to spring [t(171)=-2.116; *p*=036; *d*=.161]. The effect size suggests small meaningful change.

USE OF DATA

Upon completion of the classroom observations and child assessments, evaluation staff met with teachers and leadership staff at each school. Using a continuous quality improvement model, strengths, as well as areas for improvement, were discussed with each teaching team. These data were used for personalized instruction for students and to improve classroom practices. Information from the data also informed coaching sessions. Team meetings were held to review cross-classroom data to address system-level improvements. Teams used data to: 1) discuss how to improve practices in the classroom, 2) inform how coaching and professional development could be improved to support teachers, and 3) discuss implications for program planning for specific children.

SUMMARY

High quality classrooms were demonstrated across all grade levels. Many supports were in place to support teaching staff including professional development opportunities (focusing on literacy and Conscious Discipline) and coaching, in addition to the dedication of the staff to implement change. Continued support to facilitate quality in the area of instructional support is recommended. Preschool children demonstrated significantly improved skills in social-emotional, executive functioning, school readiness, and vocabulary skills. K-1 students demonstrated significant improvements in executive functioning skills. Results also found differentiated outcomes based on demographics. PreK students who were ELL scored lower on vocabulary skills. English speaking students in Grades K-1 scored higher on reading than math skills. Continue to work with the teachers to identify ways to align curriculum and instructional practices across preschool to Grade 1 to maximize student learning.

Parent University

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Parent University is a comprehensive, two-generational family engagement program based on research and best practices that began in February 2015 at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha. A two-generational approach allows the program to focus on the whole family while creating opportunities for addressing needs of both children and the adults in their lives simultaneously. Parent University provides individualized and center-based supports and services to families whose children are eligible to participate in the intensive early childhood partnership and families who have a child six or younger who reside in the following six elementary school attendance areas: Kellom, Conestoga, Franklin, Lothrop, Minne Lusa, and Skinner.

KEY COMPONENTS

INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES. Every parent who participates in Parent University goes through a thorough intake and assessment process and is assigned his or her own personal coach, an Educational Navigator or Family Liaison, to assist in personalizing the program to best achieve the family's identified goals and needs. The following individualized services are implemented based on need of the family.

NAVIGATOR SERVICES. Educational Navigators serve as personal parent advocates, helping parents gain better understanding of the public school system, community resources, child development and learning strategies. Navigators build strong relationships with participants to ensure individualized education and support using a research-based home visitation/parenting curriculum. In addition to monthly home visits, the navigators attend courses with parents to be able to assist them in transitioning the concepts learned during center-based learning to opportunities in the home.

LIAISON SERVICES. Families who need more than monthly home visitation due to multiple risk factors such as, but not limited to homelessness, history of trauma, lack of support system and knowledge of community resources can be assigned a Family Liaison through a partnership with Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc. Family Liaisons offer additional case management to families and serve as a liaison between Parent University, the child's school, and the family. Family Liaisons have the capacity to meet with families weekly until the immediate needs are met.

HOME VISITATIONS & GOAL SETTING. Navigators and Family Liaisons visit participants' homes to communicate with parents, conduct formal and informal needs

assessments, connect parents with resources, model supportive learning activities, coach parenting skills, and attend to specific needs. Growing Great Kids® curriculum is utilized during home visitations as appropriate. On average, navigators' home visits occur approximately once every 30 days while liaisons' home visits occur weekly. Each participant works with their designated staff member to set personal and familial goals. All goals have strategies and are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Goals and strategies are reviewed during home visitations to ensure they remain relevant to the families' needs.

CENTER-BASED LEARNING. Parents have access to an onsite Parent Resource Room with access to library services through a partnership with the Omaha Public Library. In addition, parents can select to attend a variety of Parent University courses at the center based on the family needs. Courses fit into four primary majors which were developed based on identified family needs:

PARENTING. Parents learn effective ways to parent their child(ren) and ways to support child development and learning through a series of courses designed to strengthen the parent-child bond and interactions.

LIFE SKILLS AND WELLNESS. Parent University partner organizations provide courses to strengthen family self-sufficiency in areas like adult basic education, ESL, and employment skills. This major contributes to stability so that families can support their students.

SCHOOL SUCCESS. In order to become full partners in their child's education, courses and workshops emphasize the importance of the parents' roles, responsibilities, and engagement opportunities.

LEADERSHIP. Courses empower parents to take on more active roles in their child's school and their community.

While parents attend courses, Parent University offers year-round child learning activities for the children focusing on the domains of early childhood development within two child learning rooms onsite.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 244 parents were enrolled in Parent University, which was an increase of 26 participants from the previous year. There were more females (67%) than males (33%). The majority (93%) of the parents represent racial and ethnic diversity. Most of the parents were African American (52%) or Hispanic (31%). Most of the parents (61%) were employed either part (11%) or full time (50%). Slightly more than half of the parents had either less than a high school degree (44%) or a high school diploma (21%). The remainder of the parents had some college

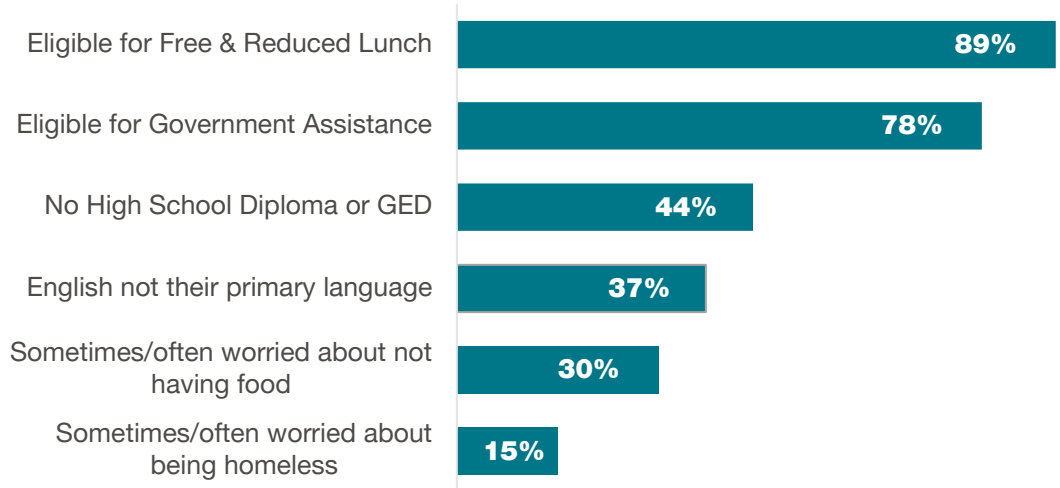
(23%) or a college degree (10%). The families had 459 children of which 257 were within the target age range (early childhood age range) for the program.

THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.

n=236

Parents in the program reported facing a number of challenges. Many parents (78%) accessed some type of government assistance (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, TANF, and Title XX). Food insecurity (worried about having adequate food for the family) or homelessness were of concern for many families. Over a third (37%) of the parents' home language was not English. Many (44%) did not have a high school diploma. In most of these categories, the percentages were higher than the previous year. The challenges that many families face point to the complexity of the lives of the parents in Parent University and provide a context for interpreting the results of this report.

PARENTS FACE MANY CHALLENGES.



n=169

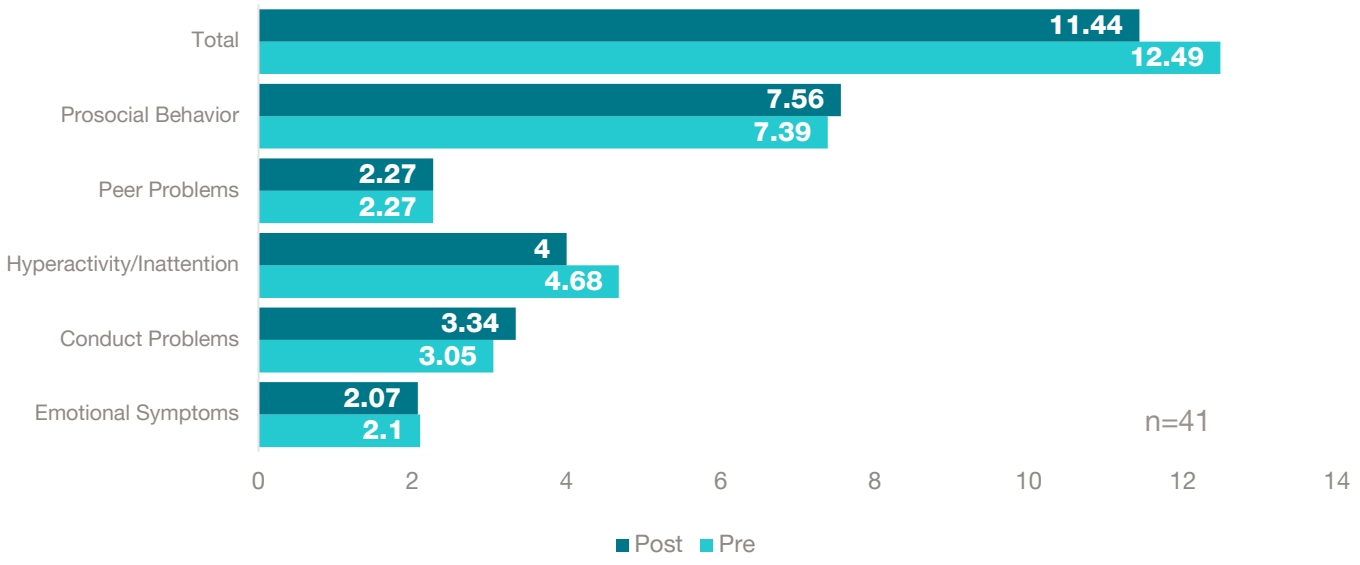
How did Parent University support families facing a number of challenges?

Families needing additional support were provided the support of a family liaison. They work with families to set and achieve goals identified by the family. A total of 155 received this support and developed a service plan to assist the family in gaining stability while supporting the child's academic success. The 367 goals reflected on service plans were related to the majors within Parent University: School Success (28%), Life Skills and Wellness (48%), Parenting (20%) and Leadership (34%). High percentages of parents were continuing to work towards their goals with 31% having made progress towards goals or having improved or achieved their goal (15%).

A total of 94 families with 104 children participated in services with Lutheran Family Services. Service plans were developed for all families to establish goals. By the end of the year, 43% of goals were met, 23% were either maintaining or improving and 25% had not been met. Of the families enrolled, 58% were able to close their case while 42% were still active with LFS. The *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (Goodman et al., 2000) (a brief behavioral screen for children ages 3-16) was administered to measure pre and post changes. Only those with pre and post scores were included in the analysis (N=41).

Paired sample t-tests were conducted on the pre and post scores. No significant differences were found.

FAMILIES WORKING WITH LFS HAD NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM PRE TO POST ON THE SDQ.
Hyperactivity/Inattention decreased as families worked with family liaisons.



FAMILY OUTCOMES

FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

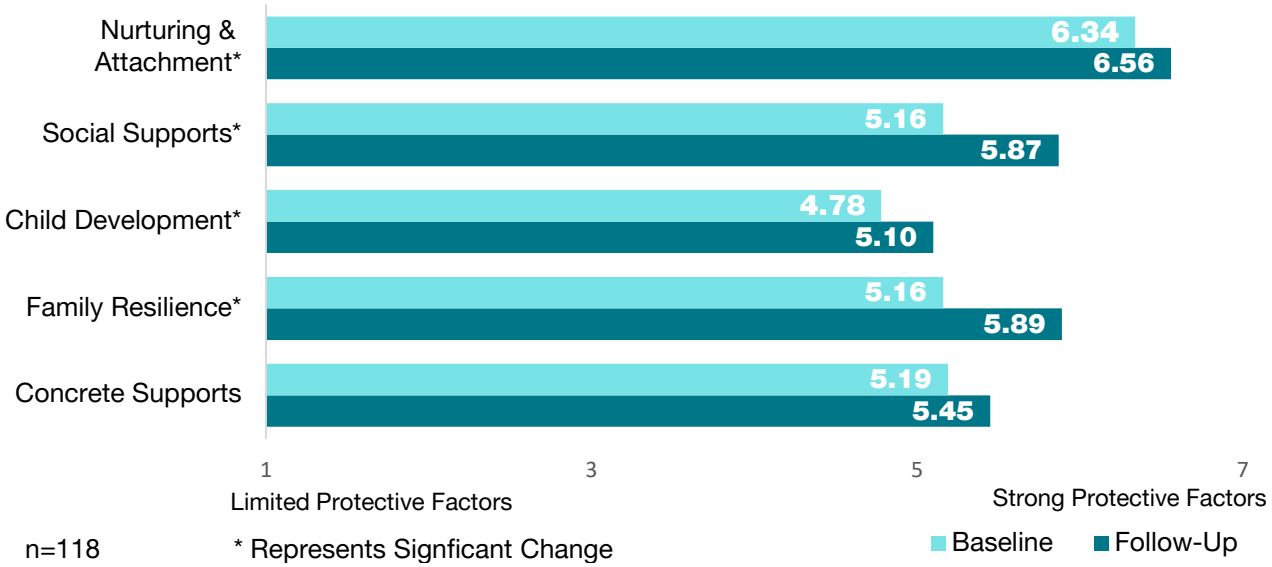
Proctective factors are strengths that help buffer and support families at risk. These attributes mitigate risk and promote healthy development and well-being.

METHOD. The adoption of a strengths-based prevention model embracing protective factors is considered an important approach to prevent child abuse (Langford, J., & Harper-Browne, C., in press). In order to assess family protective factors, participants completed the FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (PFS), a broad measure of family well-being, at intake and every six months thereafter during home visits with assigned Educational Navigators. The survey assesses five areas: Family Resiliency, Social Supports, Concrete Supports, Child Development Knowledge, and Nurturing and Attachment. Seventy-nine families completed the PFS at baseline and follow-up. The PFS is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating strong protective factors.

FINDINGS. The results found that parents' attachment skills were the highest rated area. Other areas that were in the strengths range were Social Supports, Family Resilience (e.g., ability to openly share experience to solve and manage problems) and Social Support. All of the areas were in the strong protective factors range. Paired t-test analyses were completed to determine if there were significant changes over time. There was a significant improvement in parents' Family Resilience over time [t(116)= -7.284; p=.001, d=0.674)]; Social Supports [t(117)=-4.813; p=.001, d=0.443)]; Nurturing and Attachment [t(115)= -2.780;p=.006, d=0.258)]; and Child Development [t(116)=-4.800; p=.001, d=0.444)]; with the effect size suggesting small to large meaningful change in these areas.

PARENTS DEMONSTRATED STRONG PROTECTIVE FACTORS ACROSS THE MAJORITY OF THE AREAS.

There were significant improvements in all Protective Factors areas except for Concrete Supports.



n=118

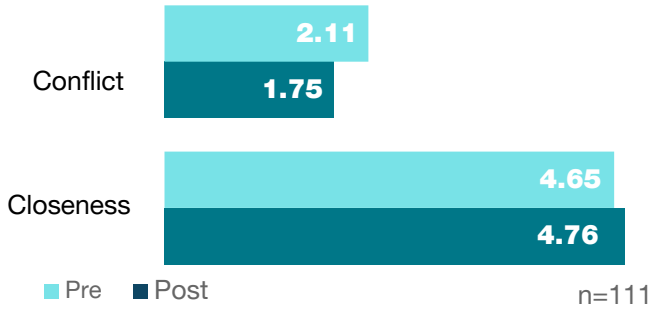
* Represents Signficant Change

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between a parent and a child is critical to a child's overall health and well-being

METHOD. The Child Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS) measures the degree that parents report a positive close relationship with their child and the degree of conflict in their interactions. Scores are reported on a 5-point scale with 5 representing high closeness or conflict. A total of 111 families had baseline and follow-up surveys administered during home visits.

PARENTS DEMONSTRATED SIGNIFICANT CLOSENESS WITH THEIR CHILDREN.
Parents reported significantly lower levels of conflict.



FINDINGS. Based on the paired-samples t-test, there were significant increases in parent ratings of closeness with their children [t(110)=-2.493; p<.014; d=0.237] and a significant decrease of conflict [t(110)=4.172; p<.001; d=0.398]. The effect size suggests small meaningful change for closeness and moderate change for conflict. These results suggest parents improved relationships with their children.

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

Healthy day-to-day interactions between parents and children lay the foundation for better social and academic skills.

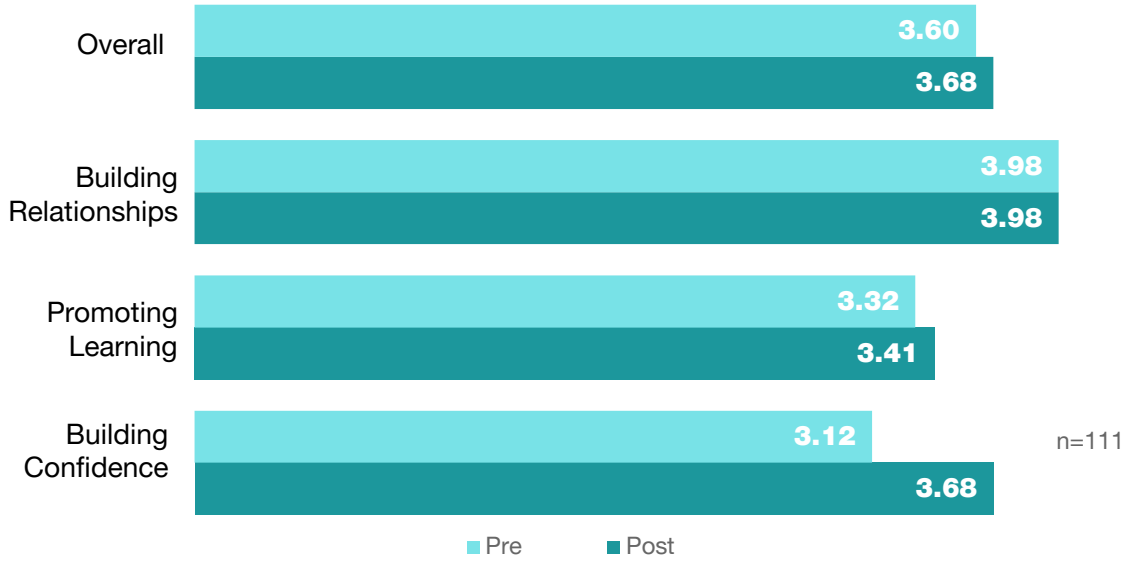
METHOD. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) measures parenting behaviors overall and across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are reported on a 5-point scale with 5 being high quality. There was a total of 11 KIPS assessments with 45 parents had baseline and follow-up KIPS.

FINDINGS. Parent University families demonstrated parent-child interaction skills in the moderate range of quality. A paired t-test analysis found that there were not significant changes in interactional skills across time, suggesting skills were stable over time. The strength of the parents' skills was in Building Relationships. There were slight improvements both in parents supporting their child's confidence and promoting their learning. The most improvement was in the area of Supporting Confidence (e.g., providing encouragement to their child).

A goal of a rating of 3.5 was established by the program and evaluation team. After participating in Parent University, 10% more parents met the program goal in their overall interaction with their children. The overall average scores for each subscale was above the program goal in all areas except Promoting Learning.

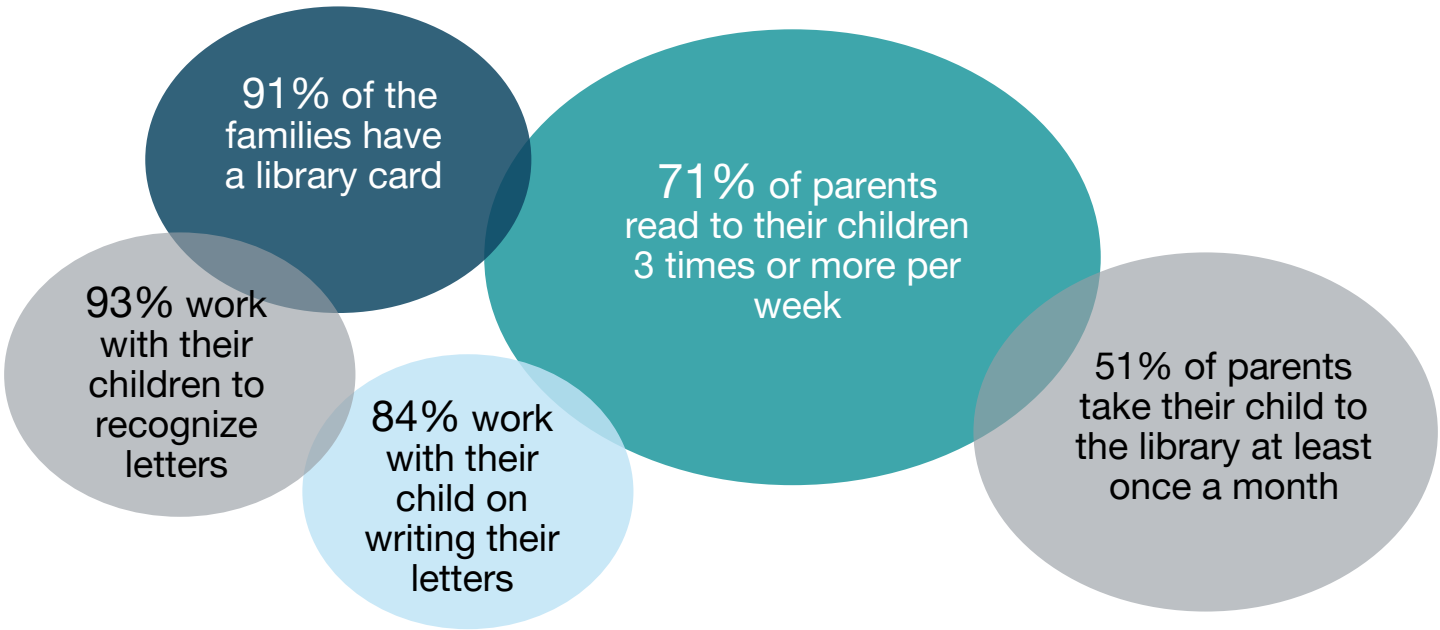
PARENTS DEMONSTRATED SLIGHT IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR CHILDREN.

Families made the most growth in supporting their child's confidence.



How did parents support their child's literacy skills?

Parents (n=167) reported many positive ways that they interacted with their child to support learning. Data was analyzed by reporting parents' activities after they had been in the program for six months or longer. The results found that 71% of parents read to their children at least three times a week and participated in a variety of other literacy promoting activities with their children.



FAMILY EDUCATION

What are the educational hopes for their children?

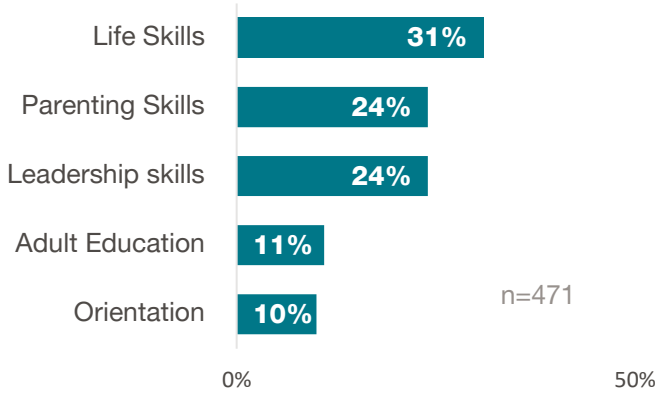
Parents were interviewed to determine their hopes for their child's future education. At the follow-up assessment, the majority of the parents reported that they expected their child to obtain a bachelor's or graduate degree. Only 7% reported their child would only receive a high school diploma. This data suggest that parents who participate in the Parent University have high aspirations for their children.

PARENTS HAVE A RANGE OF GOALS FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE.
Most parents hope their child obtains a bachelor's or graduate degree.

COURSE PARTICIPATION

Program staff tracked parents' participation in the 54 courses that were offered this past year with many being offered more than one time. These courses represented different topics, each of which was aligned with four primary majors of Parent University and an orientation course. Life Skills and Wellness courses had the highest enrollment. This year more parents enrolled in leadership courses than in previous years. Throughout the year, many parents enrolled in more than one course. Across the 54 courses, 471 participants (duplicated count) were enrolled in courses. The courses with the highest participation were GED, ELL classes, Just Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World, Circle of Security-Parenting, and Prime Time Reading.

MOST PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN COURSES RELATED TO LIFE SKILLS AND PARENTING.
Few participated in courses related to Leadership.



COMMON SENSE PARENTING (CSP)

One Common Sense Parenting (CSP) session was conducted during the past year. A total of 11 parents participated and all completed the course.

Common Sense Parenting is a parent-training course developed by Boys Town for parents of school-aged children. Parents attend six, weekly two-hour sessions. Customized content is delivered via structured learning activities including direct skill instruction, modeled examples of skills, discussion of videotaped scenes depicting correct and incorrect application of skills, and guided skills practice/role play. Homework activities encourage parents to practice the skills at home. It is important to note this class is personalized specifically for the participating families.

METHOD. *Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale (PARCA)* was completed by parents as a pre-test and post-test. This 19-item assessment evaluates parents' skills in supporting good behavior, setting limits, and being proactive in their parenting. The second assessment used was the *Parental Stress Scale (PSS),* which is a self-report scale that contains 18 items. This scale assesses parental stress. Respondents are asked to agree or disagree with items regarding their typical relationship with their child or children and to rate each item on a five-point scale: strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5). Higher scores on the scale indicate greater stress.

FINDINGS. Eleven parents completed the PARCA. The results found that parents improved their parenting skills over time in setting limits (p=.049; d=0.80) and proactive parenting (p=.034. d=1.08). The effect size suggests that parents significantly improved their skills after participation in the course, demonstrating large meaningful change.

CIRCLE OF SECURITY™-PARENTING (COS-P)

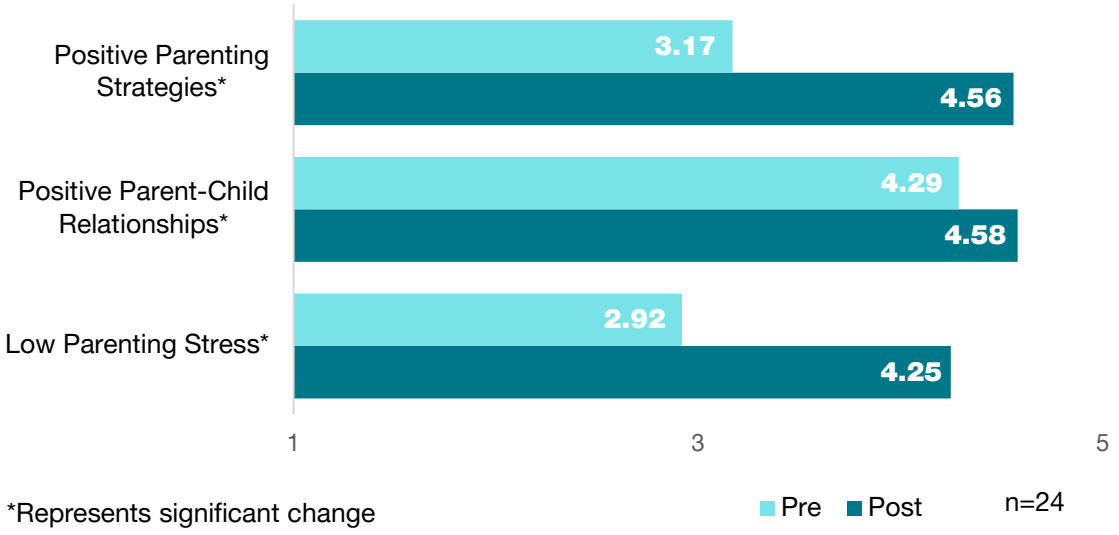
COS-P was another core parenting course provided at Parent University. A total of 31 participants enrolled across the three COS-P courses. One of the courses was offered in Spanish.

METHOD. Participants were asked to rate a series of questions about caregiver stress, their relationship with their children, and confidence in their parenting skills. Twenty-four individuals completed the survey.

Circle of Security™-Parenting is an 8-week parenting program based on years of research about how to build strong attachment relationships between parent and child. It is designed to help parents learn how to respond to child needs in a way that enhances the attachment between parent and child. It is important to note this course is personalized to meet the needs of participating families.

FINDINGS. A descriptive analysis was completed to evaluate participants' perception by the end of the COS-P series across the program identified outcomes. There were positive differences found between scores at the beginning of the group and scores at the groups' conclusion in all three areas including parenting skills, low stress, and positive relationships with their children. The greatest gains were in the area of parenting skills.

PARENTS DEMONSTRATED **SIGNIFICANT** IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR PARENTING STRATEGIES, THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR CHILDREN, AND LOWERED PARENTING STRESS.



*Represents significant change

How did Parent University benefit parents' own education?

Parents were provided with opportunities to enroll in either English as a Second Language courses (ESL) or GED courses. Fifty-six parents participated in one of these two options, ELL (34) and GED (22). These numbers more than doubled the number of parents that were in formal education classes last year. The BEST assessment was used to assess their English proficiency. Most ESL students increased one or more levels on the BEST assessment, suggesting improvement of English skills. About one-third (31%) of the parents at post-testing met criteria to successfully graduate out of the ESL and enroll into GED.

The Test of Adult Basic Education was used to assess parents' math and reading skills who were enrolled in GED. The majority of parents tested passed one or more levels and one parent was able to obtain her GED diploma; becoming the second parent in Parent University to obtain their diploma through the program.

STUDENTS IN ESL CLASSES ARE GAINING ENGLISH SKILLS BY INCREASING AT LEAST ONE LEVEL.

ESL n=18

MAJORITY OF STUDENTS IN GED CLASSES PASSED ONE OR MORE LEVELS.

n=11 Reading n =12 Math

How did participation in Parent University support parents' financial literacy?

Parents were provided the opportunity to participate in the Omaha Bridges Out of Poverty 10-week course, Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting-By World. This course helps parents to build financial, emotional, and social resources by exploring the impact of poverty in participants' lives. The goal is to support parents to gain valuable relationships and living-wage jobs within their reach.

Twelve parents participated in the 10-week course offered at Parent University. Twelve months after graduation from the course, parents reported a number of positive outcomes including:

- An average 43% decrease in debt to income ratio
- An average increase in income of $769
- An average decrease in bill reduction of $1,222 per month

Many parents reported increased stability in multiple areas. These included housing (33%), budgeting (58%), wages (25%), safety of home and neighborhood (42%), transportation (42%), and social connections (33%). These results suggest improved economic and social stability for their families.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE USE OF DATA

Data were used from multiple sources to support the review of the course implementation strategies. Parent satisfaction surveys were reviewed by staff after each class to identify areas for improvement. Systems for ongoing data collection of parent outcomes were established and reviewed semi-annually with program staff as part of a continuous improvement process. Parent focus group data were used to get their input on all components of Parent University.

What were parents' experiences in Parent University?

A total of 16 parents who were enrolled in the English classes participated in the focus group to gather their input on how Parent University was working for them and to identify their recommendations for improvement. Their primary home language was Spanish.

KEY FINDINGS

PARENTS REPORTED AN INCREASE IN THEIR PARENTING SKILLS. Parents reported that participation in courses helped them "be a better parent." Having the library as a resource was very helpful to the parents. The librarian has helped the parents find books that their children liked to read and that they can read with them at home. They suggested that more books in Spanish would be helpful. Several indicated that they were better able to help their children with their homework. Others indicated that they were able to apply what they learned in parenting classes at home. The classes helped them to understand what their children needed.

PARENTS REPORTED THAT PARENT UNIVERSITY HELPED THEM TO COMMUNICATE ACROSS SETTINGS. "It has helped us to communicate with our children and to have better communication with our community and companions." Several reported specifically that it helped them communicate with their child's teachers at school. "I can communicate with more confidence….less embarrassment."

RESOURCES AT PARENT UNIVERSITY WERE A GREAT BENEFIT. Parents described how they set goals for themselves as part of the program. They reported that the Educational Navigator helped them to reach their goals. They described them as being very accessible to everyone. The parent reported that the Navigator always asks, "What do you need? How can I help you?"

"Before I started coming here, my son would come to me with his homework and say, "Mama, I don't understand this. Help me." I would say, "I don't understand it. Ask your teacher." And now I can tell him, "Let's look at it together."

- Parent at LCCNO

Having child care was critical for the parents to be able to attend the courses. The childcare support was highly valued by the parents. Parents shared that the childcare worker currently is great. "She treats our children very well. She give them activities and they seem very happy. This gives us comfort and we can focus in our class."

PARENTS IDENTIFIED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT. Although the responses regarding Parent University were overwhelmingly positive, parents did identify a few areas for improvement. The parents would like to have available additional ESL classes, with some options in the evenings. They recommended providing courses again on cooking, finances, and social media as it relates to their children and computer classes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parent University has successfully implemented individualized and center-based supports and services that have resulted in improved parenting and life skills. Parents reported Parent University has made a difference in their lives, providing them with more confidence and skills. Parents are now requesting more support in adding Spanish classes and other courses that would continue to help them improve their skills.

Childcare Director Training

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

In partnership with the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, the Learning Community Center of North Omaha offers training and coaching services to center directors. The goal of the Child Care Director Training program is to work closely with home- and center-based child care directors to enhance their skills, provide a sustainable professional development system for staff and ultimately improve the quality of care and education for the children. The program is a relationship and strength-based approach which uses reflective practices based on the National Center of Quality Teaching and Learning Model.

The intensive training is also designed to support directors through the first two phases of Step Up to Quality (SU2Q), the state of Nebraska initiative which promotes improvements in the quality of early childhood education. Participating providers can then receive additional coaching services and incentives to strengthen their businesses. Eight of the nine participating directors have enrolled in SU2Q.

The program provides an opportunity for directors to meet every two weeks throughout the school year for training. After the training, each director receives coaching to assist in implementing best practices covered in training. Each director identifies a teacher that the director would be responsible for coaching. The second two-year cohort began in the fall of 2018. A total of 15 training opportunities were provided for directors. On average, directors attended a total of 9 trainings (max attended=13, min attended= 8). In addition to group training sessions, directors have the opportunity to meet with their coaches one-on-one for a maximum total of 20 direct coaching hours. Directors received an average of 5 direct coaching hours (min hours received= 3, max hours received=8) provided by their assigned coach over the course of the 2018-2019 school year.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Nine community child care directors participated in this project during the 2018-2019 school year. Over half of the directors have some college, with two directors having a Bachelor's degree (Business and Early Childhood Education, and two directors with graduate degrees (Education and Criminal Justice). Most serve infants through school age children. These nine centers serve, on average, 76 children with 84% of children served participating in the Nebraska Child Care Subsidy Program. The highest percentage of children served was children birth to age 3 (37%), followed by preschool (31%), and school-aged children (31%).

OUTCOMES

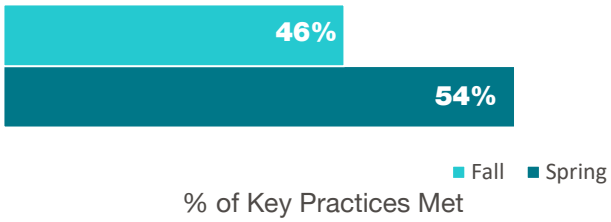
QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. Each center director identified one classroom that received training and coaching as part of this program and served as an evaluation source for the program. The *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool Research Edition (TPOT-R)* was used to measure the quality of the classroom instruction at two points in time. These tools were developed to measure the implementation of Pyramid Model strategies and focus on four areas of teacher practices: nurturing responsive relationships, creating supportive environments, providing targeted social-emotional supports, and utilizing individualized interventions. Practices measured in the Key Practices scale include building warm relationships with children, utilizing preventative strategies such as posting a picture schedule and structuring transitions, teaching social-emotional skills, and individualizing strategies for children with behavior challenges. Red flags measure negative practices such as chaotic transitions, children not engaged in the classroom activities, children running through open spaces, and harsh voice tone.

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

FINDINGS. Seven classrooms had pre-post assessments, evaluated by trained raters. Results found that classrooms demonstrated improvement over the course of the year. At the baseline observation, the preschool classrooms had on average 46% of Key Practices in place, which improved to 54% by spring. There was also a decrease in red flags evident in the classroom. At baseline, there were on average four red flags in place, which decreased to three in the spring.

TEACHERS USED MORE KEY PRACTICES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS AFTER PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.



% of Key Practices Met

n=7

TEACHERS DECREASED THE NUMBER OF RED FLAGS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS.

n=7 # of Red Flags

CHILD CARE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

METHOD. Staff at each child care center were asked to complete an environmental survey that reflected the climate of their child care center. The survey's key environmental components include: human resources (e.g., promotions, salaries); relationships (e.g., trust morale); climate (e.g., well-organized, encouraged to be creative); and infrastructure (e.g., common vision; agreement on educational objectives). The key components were rated on a five point scale, ranging from Never (0) to Always (5). This survey was completed in the fall and spring.

The majority of the childcare teachers rated the workplace environment at their center positively.

FINDINGS. The results of the survey found that by the follow-up assessment, the staff rated workplace environment positively with 4.09 (n=43) as the average score across centers. Results from the pre/post survey found the ratings were similar across time (fall: n=53, mean=3.88). Staff described their centers as being friendly, loving, and warm. Identified strengths included: diversity, teamwork, and the creation of a family-like environment. The directors and other team members were viewed as valuable resources within centers. Areas that they saw as needing improvement were to increase center staff communication, provide more opportunities for team building, and to increase the amount of available resources-classroom materials, teaching/support staff, and education/training.

What did child care directors and coaches think about the Child Care Director Training program?

All of the program stakeholders were asked to participate in focus groups to capture their experience with the training and coaching process. The following represents the key findings from the feedback from all three groups of stakeholders (i.e., teachers, coaches, and directors).

THE TRAINING PROGRAM PROVIDED MULTIPLE AVENUES OF SUPPORT AND INFORMATION. Directors commented on the supportive nature of the group training and one-on-one coaching sessions. "The program is interactive. You get opinions from other centers and other coaches." Each director mentioned the value of support from all of the coaches, noting the benefits of having coaches with different backgrounds and skill sets. The coaches also reported the importance of support for centers. "The impact of the training is you don't feel alone. Having that support system, a life preserver. We all need that."

"I have never been in a setting with others who understand center issues...the other people in the room get it because I am in a room with my peers who understand what I am going through."

-childcare director

COACHING MADE A DIFFERENCE AT THE CENTERS. Coaches described that the first step to the coaching process was to build relationships with the directors. The hands-on approach to training helped build the relationship between the director and coach which provided an opportunity to model a positive coaching relationship which directors can use with their staff. Teachers reported that the relationship between directors/teachers have improved as a result of participating in the program "Our relationship is better…the director has learned to talk better, and I've learned to to talk better with her."

The hands-on opportunites also helped to engage directors which increased attendance and participation. Coaches reported that directors made an effort to come to training sessions because they want to be there. Teachers appreciated when directors shared the information and resources gained from the training/coaching sessions and felt the information made a difference in how they worked with children.

TEACHERS AND DIRECTORS GAINED COMPETENCIES THEY APPLIED IN THEIR CENTERS AND CLASSROOMS. Coaches reported directors having a greater awareness of the importance of quality in instructional practices. Directors were seeing that people are invested in quality in early childhood programs. Teachers' instructional practices became more intentional and focused as a result of coaching. The resources provided help facilitate discussions between directors and teachers, which supported teachers in adopting best practices.

CHILD CARE CENTERS' STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES VARY. Directors understand the model may need to be adapted to fit their center, but they find some information difficult to relate to or adapt to their center. The environment of each center is different, ratios vary, and some have mixed age groups which created difficulties in understanding how to relay information to staff and adjust appropriately for use in their center. Directors found it helpful when coaches helped adapt and disseminate training information to their staff.

THE CHILD CARE PROJECT HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW TEACHERS WORK WITH THEIR CLASSROOMS. Teachers reported that coaching sessions with their director helped provide guidance on how to work with more difficult children and understand the 'why' behind children's behavior. Feedback from directors regarding classroom transitions, how to use information from evaluation/observation, and tools to use in the classroom were viewed as most useful. Teachers would like to have more coaching sessions with their directors as "every time we meet we learn something new."

"I have noticed my kids are retaining more information from me because of the knowledge I am getting from my director."

-childcare teacher

How were child care directors proceeding with Step Up to Quality (SU2Q)?

One of the goals of the project was to have directors enrolled in SU2Q, a statewide quality rating and improvement system that supports the quality of child care programs in Nebraska. Eight of the nine centers signed up for SU2Q. At enrollment most centers will start at STEP 1, which provides centers a core set of training. At the end of this first year of participation, 55% of the centers are at Step 1, 22% at Step 2 and 11% at Step 4. One center (12%) did not sign up for SU2Q. The project will continue to support the center's involvement in this initiative as another resource to improve quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall recommendation was to increase the degree of individualization and support to make the training program objectives more applicable and to better meet the needs of participating centers. Expanding focus to include infants and toddlers, in addition to the preschool age group may be beneficial. Coaches recommended reducing the amount of information provided in folders and continuing the hands-on, easily implemented activities and suggestions. It is recommended that strategies be identified that would increase attendance at trainings and increase the number of coaching sessions onsite.

Future Teacher Clinical Training

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Metropolitan Community College (MCC) in partnership with the Learning Community and Educare developed a new approach to pre-service education to better prepare college students to teach in high poverty, early childhood and preschool classrooms. With guidance from experienced faculty, college students work directly with teaching teams at Educare, Kellom, and Conestoga. The Educare classroom is linked to the MCC classroom at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha (LCCNO) via robotic cameras and audio, giving students a unique opportunity to learn while receiving real-time feedback from their instructors and classmates. These strategies resulted in students receiving immediate feedback from instructors as they employed newly learned teaching techniques.

A goal of the program is to increase the number of early childhood teachers to address the shortage in the field. An additional goal is to provide a curriculum that supports teachers to gain skills in working with diverse populations of children and families.

A partnership between MCC, the Learning Community, and Creighton University is providing an opportunity for students (called A + B) to obtain a cost-effective path to a teaching degree with an Early Childhood endorsement. Qualifying MCC early childhood students can enter Creighton as full-fledged juniors and graduate in two years.

DEMOGRAPHICS

During the 2018-2019 school year, MCC had a total of 63 students that were enrolled in 11 early childhood courses. Of the 57 (2016-2018) graduates, 83.3% are currently working in the Early Childhood Education field.

OUTCOMES

METHOD. Evaluation of this strategy included tracking graduates' short- and long-term education outcomes and focus groups with students enrolled in MCC Early Childhood classes at LCCNO.

FINDINGS. A goal of the program is to increase the number of early childhood teachers to address the shortage in the field. An additional goal is to provide a curriculum that supports teachers to gain skills in working with diverse populations of children and families. MCC Early

Childhood program addressed the shortage of teachers by graduating 14 students with Early Childhood associate's degrees and 7 students with Early Childhood Certificates.

MCC tracks the students who graduate from the Early Childhood associate's degree program to determine the number that continue their education at a 4-year institution. There were 12 students since graduating in 2016-2018 that have enrolled in a 4-year institution. The majority of those have enrolled at University of Nebraska at Kearney (33%), Bellevue University (25%) or University of Nebraska at Omaha (25%). Other schools have included Mid-Plains Community College (8%) and Creighton Universtity (8%).

What did students enrolled in MCC Early Childhood classes at LCCNO think about the classroom technology at the center?

Students enrolled in classes in MCC Early Childhood classes at LCCNO were asked to participate in focus groups to capture their experience with the technology and instruction at LCCNO. The following represents the key findings from the feedback from both groups of students enrolled in classes at LCCNO.

TECHNOLOGY PROVIDED REAL WORLD AND REAL-TIME APPLICATIONS OF TEXTBOOK CONCEPTS.

Students attending early childhood classes at LCCNO appreciate the opportunity to observe real-time classroom interactions with instructor direction. Instructors encourage students to look for particular concepts and are able to facilitate discussion about the observations. Gaining an overall picture of classroom layout and interactions in the moment provides a different perspective than what a textbook or PowerPoint lecture provides.

FINANCES ARE A BARRIER TO CONTINUING EDUCATION.

Many students were unaware of the A+B program, but expressed concern with the cost of continuing education in general. A few students were just beginning their MCC program and were not ready to explore options past their current program. Passing the Praxis exam is a barrier for many students wishing to continue their studies in education. A Praxis tutoring program was developed to support students and provides tutoring twice a week. Some students indicated that funding opportunities and the cost breakdown will be important factors in determining if and where they will continue their education. "I don't want to be held back from what I want to do, but money is the issue. I would love to do the program. If I had the resources, I would go today."

RECOMMENDATIONS

MCC and LCCNO have implemented an innovative clinical approach for student training that was viewed favorably by students. Long-term outcomes are needed to determine if these experiences increase the number of students who both feel more prepared to work with children in poverty, as well as work in early childhood settings in the areas surrounding LCCNO and LCCSO. Students would benefit from more information regarding continuing education through the A+B program.

FAMILY LEARNING

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA

Family Learning Program

The Family Learning program at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha (LCCSO) is a comprehensive program based on national models and best practices from the two-generational learning approach. The center-based program originated in 2012 as a collaborative effort between the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and OneWorld Community Health Centers. In 2015, three consecutive years of strong outcomes led to a partnership with Omaha Public Schools. The goal was to replicate the community center-based program concept into the daily routine of Gateway Elementary, the largest elementary school in the state of Nebraska.

In both locations, families participated an average of seven hours per week during the academic school year and throughout much of the summer. Families enrolled in the program participated in its six components:

ADULT EDUCATION FOR PARENTS

ENGLISH FOR PARENTS. Parents attend English for Parents classes during two half-days per week in order to improve their literacy and language levels. A primary goal is to help parents become more confident in talking to teachers and asking questions about their child's progress. An English for Parents class might show parents how to use computers to access school information, practice communication with teachers, and practice reading and learning activities that help make the home a better learning environment.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & GED. A parent's level of educational attainment is a strong predictor of a child's educational success. The goal of Adult Education for parents is to increase a parent's literacy in ways that will have positive effects on a family's economic well-being. During this past year, in partnership with Metro Community College, the program offered Workforce Development courses for parents in the program who spoke high levels of English. This offering included up to four certificates including Basic Computer Skills, Work Ethics Proficiency, National Career Readiness and Customer Service, as well as interview skill-building and resume development. Additionally, one cohort of parents was also able to participate in GED classes at the center for six hours each week. A bilingual ESL instructor provided language supports to parents as needed.

EDUCATIONAL NAVIGATORS & HOME VISITS. The center employs navigators who serve as personal parent advocates. They help families gain better understandings of the public school system, community resources, child development and learning strategies. Building strong relationships with participants is key. This ensures effective individualized education and support using a research-based home visiting/parenting curriculum, Growing Great Kids/Growing Great Families®.

In addition to home visits, navigators facilitate parent workshops. Topics include dialogic reading, math at home, prevention of summer learning loss and setting up routines and schedules for children.

The home visitation program is a critical link for family success. As a trusted advisor, navigators work with parents to set personal and family goals. Ideally, visits occur once every month.

NAVIGATOR HOME VISITATION

- Conduct informal needs assessments
- Connect parents with resources
- Model supportive learning activities
- Coach parenting skills
- Respond to specific needs and concerns

PARENT WORKSHOPS. The program offers parenting classes and family-focused workshops to strengthen a parent's ability as the first and most important teacher for their children. Parents learn effective strategies to support child development and education. Class time is designed to strengthen the parent-child bond and promote positive interaction with offerings designed around family needs and requests.

Sample Parent Classes and Workshops

Facilitated by Partners

- Circle of Security® (Child Saving Institute)
- Money Management (First National Bank)
- Family Strengthening (Latino Center of the Midlands)
- Domestic Violence Prevention (Women's Center for Advancement)

Facilitated by Staff

- Growing Great Kids®
- Love and Logic®
- Summer Learning Loss Prevention
- Math at Home

The parent workshop component, offered twice a month during the academic year, focuses on healthy parent/child relationships and social-emotional competence in students. Program staff collaborates with various community organizations to provide a wide variety of offerings. Courses include Circle of Security®, Money Management, Domestic Violence Prevention, Love and Logic® and Nutritious Cooking®. All workshops teach proactive parenting skills and techniques for healthy family relationships that foster learning and well-being at home.

INTERACTIVE PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES. Interactive parent/child activities allow parents opportunities to practice new parenting strategies while learning together with their children. This, in turn, promotes positive parent/child interactions. Family-focused activities are planned and implemented either by program staff or partner organizations.

Some interactive parent/child activities include a field trip. Entire families might visit a museum, the state capitol, or the library. On non-school days for students, the teaching staff in the program will typically develop lesson plans for entire families on themes like STEM learning, music, art, or literacy.

Parents also participate in College Preparation for Families (offered in collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Education Department and Service Learning Academy). The goal is for children and families to gain a better understanding of college systems in the United States and to teach families how they can plan for the future. Other enrichment programs include: Prime Time Family Reading Time®, String Sprouts® (Omaha Conservatory of Music), and Opera Omaha's family programming.

CHILD LEARNING ACTIVITIES. While parents attend classes, the Learning Community Center of South Omaha offers year-round learning activities for young children. The focus is social skills and cognitive concepts to support school readiness in a safe environment. The child learning rooms partner with many organizations for enhanced offerings including: Littles Lab (Do Space), Story Time (Omaha Public Library), nutrition classes for children (Center for Reducing Health Disparities), and gardening programming (City Sprouts and The Big Garden).

In addition to the primary components, support services were provided for families struggling with significant needs through a partnership with Lutheran Family Services. A Family Liaison offered crisis intervention and helped families resolve challenges, access free or affordable community resources, and ensure that basic needs are met. They also work with families one-on-one to move forward with educational and vocational goals.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2018-2019, the Family Learning Program served 318 families and 900 students (478 target students, birth to 8). The Learning Community Center of South Omaha had the highest number of family participants, followed by the program located at Gateway Elementary.

Of the families attending the Family Learning Program, 63% needed child care to attend programming, 89% reported that their students qualified for free-reduced lunch, and 38% have been attending programming for 2 years or longer.

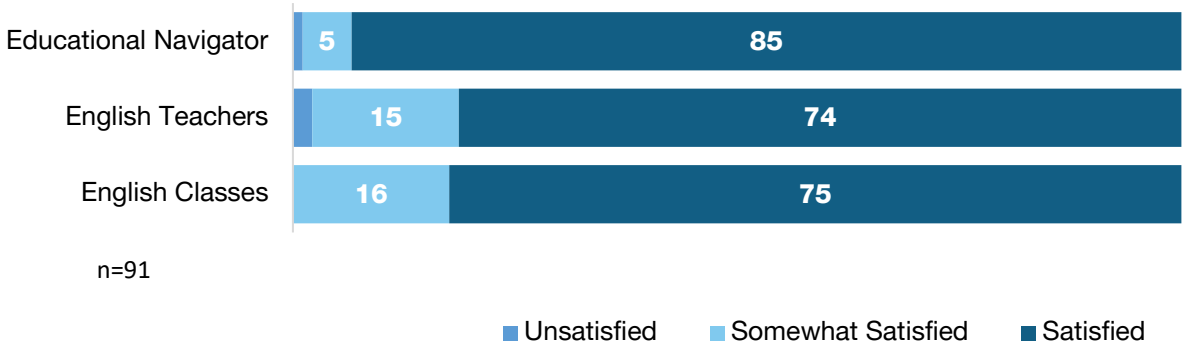
OUTCOMES
QUALITY OF PROGRAMMING

METHOD. 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 GROUP RESULTS. Multiple focus groups were conducted in 2019 to allow participants (N=91) 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.

SATISFACTION RESULTS. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with all components of the programming. All of the participants reported being at least somewhat satisfied with English classes. Less than one percent of the participants reported being unsatisfied with the services provided by an Educational Navigator and the teachers. Overall, participants were pleased with the programming offered. A number of participants echoed the sentiment expressed by one of them, **"I feel very satisfied. When I arrived here at the center, I started with basic classes, but I feel like I have really advanced and overall to help my children. I continue to work on it, but the teachers have really helped us."**

PARTICIPANTS ARE HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRAMMING PROVIDED AT THE SOUTH OMAHA CENTER.



English classes were viewed as necessary in learning the basics to communicate with the school and the community. Multiple parents mentioned knowing minimal to no English when beginning the program and how they've progressed due to the English classes and teachers. One parent commented, "Before I could only understand very little. Now I am able to understand more. **Even though the pronunciation is difficult, I comprehend a lot more**." As far as improvements, multiple participants inquired about adding homework, bringing back volunteers to practice conversations and additional literacy classes even for more advanced students. A few students mentioned the need for additional resources and to be able to practice conversations more frequently.

Educational Navigators provided a valued service for families. Parents reported positive relationships with the navigators with many examples given of navigators working with families on a number of issues outside of the center. One participant shared about her experience with a navigator**, "If it was not for her, I do not know what I would have done. Whatever I need, I know I can go to her and she is always responsive."** Educational Navigators were reported to be trustworthy, responsive, and resourceful. Parents reported using them for health, mental health, and educational issues in which they needed assistance and/or additional resources for themselves or their family.

The program continued to have impact on families at home, with their children, with school, and within the community. Working with the educational navigators, learning English and attending the many class offerings from the center have led to participants feeling confident and more competent. Many participants discussed how their child(ren) has been more prepared for school, how they, as parents, feel more confident and prepared to help and encourage school, and how the English classes have led to more communication with teachers and school in general.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

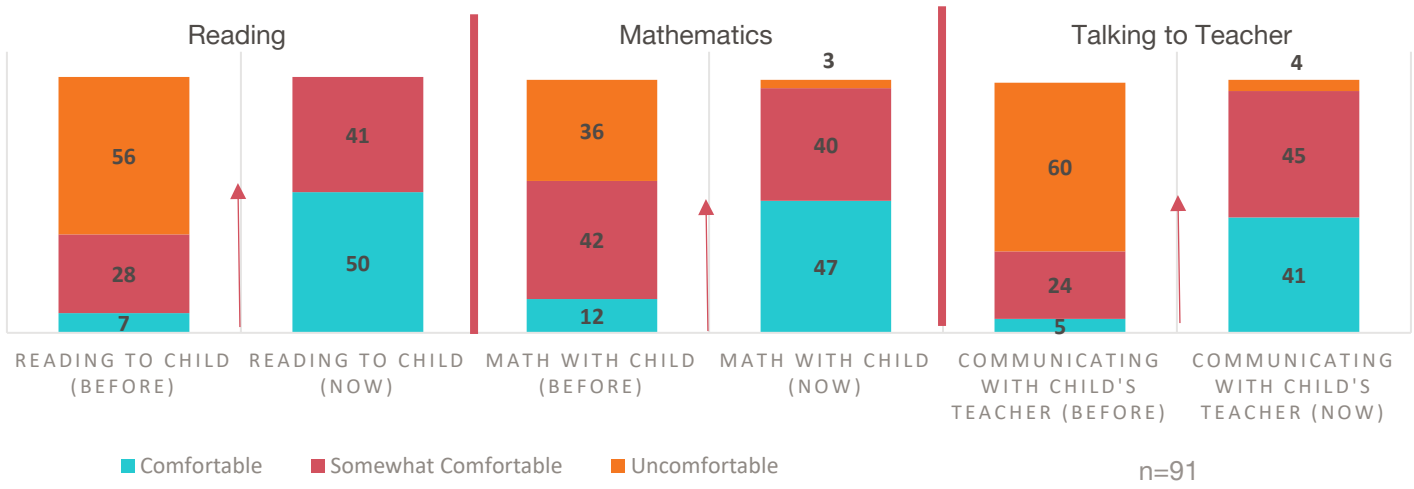
Parents showed marked increases in their levels of feeling comfortable engaging their children with reading and math from entrance into the program to the present. The percent of participants feeling comfortable increased from 8% to 55% (+47% increase) for reading and 13% to 52% (+39% increase) for math. At the time of the focus group, zero parents reported feeling uncomfortable reading with their child(ren). Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child's teacher and the school, from 5% comfortable to 45% comfortable (+40% increase). The results of the 2017-18 focus groups are consistent with those from 2016-17 in that families feel more comfortable and confident in multiple aspects and attribute the increased confidence and comfort levels to the programming offered at LCCSO.

"Now it is like, ah what a relief, now I can talk to the teacher and do not always need an interpreter."

"It has helped my husband become more involved with our kids and helped my kids receive therapy. A lot has changed for the better."

-parents at LCCSO

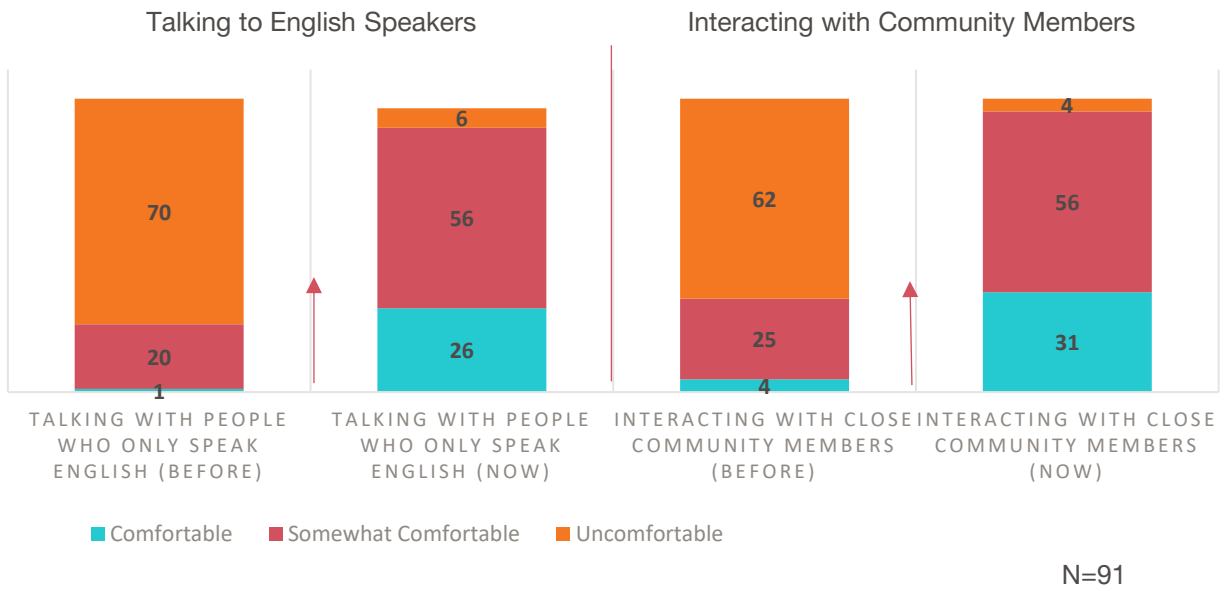
PARENTS FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE HELPING THEIR CHILD WITH ACADEMICS AND INTERACTING WITH THE SCHOOL AFTER ATTENDING CLASSES.



Participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. Participants reported more interactions both within their communities and with English-only speakers. The percentage of participants feeling comfortable talking with people who only speak English increased from 1% to 29% (+28%) while the percentage of participants who felt comfortable interacting with community members increased by 30% (from 4% to 34%).

The pattern of responses remained consistent with those reported in the previous two years. As participants remain in the program and gain English language skills, comfort levels working on academics, engagement with the school, and community engagement all increase.

PARTICIPANTS INTERACT MORE WITH ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND THE COMMUNITY AS THEY GAIN ENGLISH SKILLS.



N=91

Suggestions for Future Programming

Feedback was solicited on potential improvements for the program. Participants provided suggestions on all aspects of the programming: English classes, Educational Navigators, parenting, activities, additional classes, and logistics.

Participants mentioned wanting additional opportunities to learn and practice their English skills. Requests for future programming included practice conversations with volunteers, longer time in class and/or additional classes, and advanced literacy classes. Other suggestions included more resources and adding homework pieces.

Interest was shown in pursuing GED classes by many of the focus group participants. Many participants viewed GED classes and other classes offered very positively. They would like to see more classes on finances, technology, and parenting (i.e. Boys Town, Circle of Security, learning about children with disabilities).

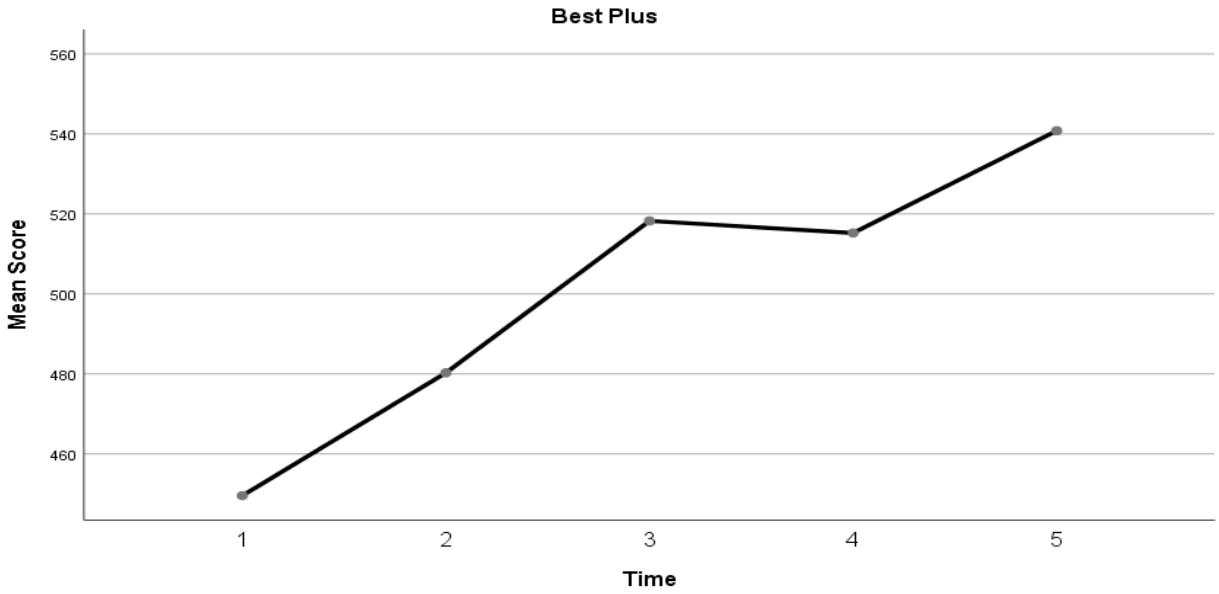
Parents valued the home visits and services provided by the Educational Navigators. Few suggestions for improvements were made but included being able to meet at places other than homes, more time with their navigators and/or increasing the frequency of the visits.

PARENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

METHOD. English acquisition was assessed using the BEST Plus. This assessment was administered by UNMC program evaluators after a specified number of hours of English instruction. Eighty participants had enough scores to be included in the analysis.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT RESULTS



FINDINGS. All participants in the comprehensive programming gained at least one level on the BEST Plus assessment.

A repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhous-Geisser correction determined that Best Plus scores differed significantly between time points (F(3.175, 250.86)=34.489, p<0.001). Post hoc tests using the Bonferonni correction revealed Best Plus scores significantly improved from Time 1 to Time 5 (449.55 ± 125.42 vs 540.79 ± 109.19, p<0.001). However, scores did not significantly differ or increase from Time 3 to Time 4 (518.25 ± 101.98 vs 515.23 ± 106.30, p=1.00).

Time	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Time 1	449.55	125.42	80
Time 2	480.28	112.30	80
Time 3	518.25	101.98	80
Time 4	515.23	106.30	80
Time 5	540.79	109.19	80

On average, participants started the program knowing some basic phrases and understanding social conversations with some difficulty. At this beginning level, participants may need repetition of new vocabulary and phrasing. With the English classes provided by the program, many participants are reaching the Advanced ESL level (BEST Plus Scores of 507-540) within two-three years of programming. At this level, participants can function independently to meet

survival needs and to navigate routine social and work situations. They have basic fluency speaking the language and can participate in most conversations. They may still need occasional repetitions or explanations of new concepts or vocabulary.

PARENTING PRACTICES

METHOD. Navigators provided video observations of parents and their children to the evaluation team. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) was used to provide feedback to parents and help navigators determine which skills to focus on with parents. Feedback is provided in the following areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, Supporting Confidence, and Overall score. Educational Navigators receive a written report with scores and recommendations to use with families.

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION RESULTS

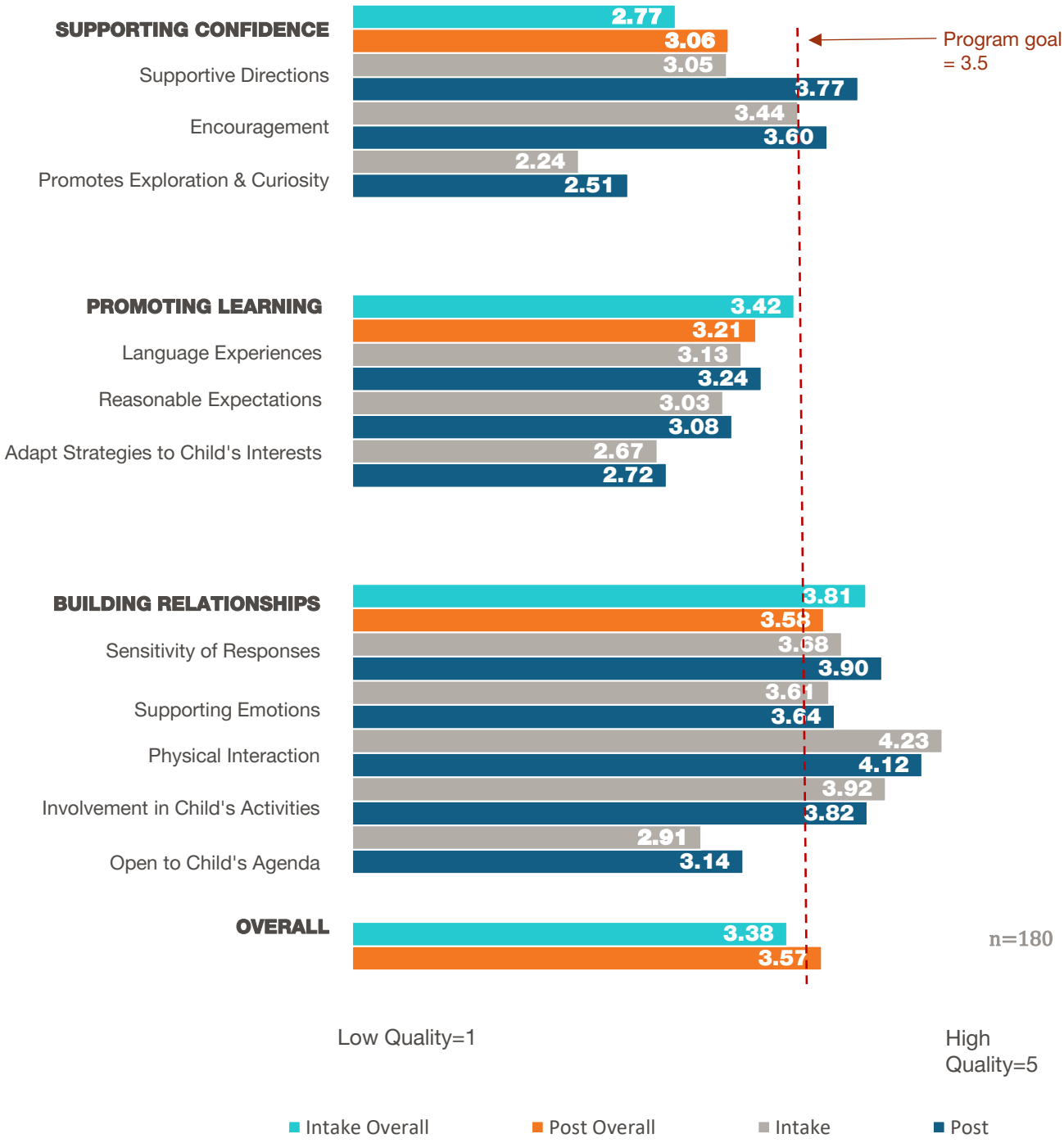
FINDINGS. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale with 5 being high quality. A program goal is scores of 3.5 or above.

Due to parents having a varied number of KIPS assessments, only participants with at least one KIPS score within the last year and at least two within their time in the Family Learning program were included in the analysis. The overall score on the KIPS improved from pre to post and was significant ($F(180)=3.979$, $p=.02$). Additionally the post score (M=3.57) exceeded the program goal of 3.5. While multiple other areas improved from pre to post, Sensitivity of Responses showed significant increase from pre to post ($F(180)=5.769$, $p<.01$) as did Supportive Directions ($F(180)=3.688$, $p=.043$).

Areas of strength for the parents using this observation tool were: Supportive Directions, Encouragement, Sensitivity of Responses, Supporting Emotions, Physical Interaction, and Involvement in Child's Activities. The domain of Building Relationships met the program goal both in the pre and post assessment indicating parents have the skills needed to develop positive, nurturing relationships with their children.

PARENTS MADE GAINS IN MOST AREAS FROM PRE TO POST ASSESSMENT.

Parents met the program goal overall on the post assessment and across multiple areas.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A partnership was established with Metro Community College to provide work readiness classes for participants at LCCSO. Several work certification program opportunities were offered during the past year with multiple parents attending and completing the programs.

FINDINGS. Participants were asked to take a pre-post self-assessment examining work readiness skills and confidence. Of the 12 items on the survey, 11 showed growth from pre to post. Sixty-three participants started the work readiness program with 46 finishing and earning at least one certificate.

The following is a list of additional work certificates and the numbers of participants completing each one.

1. Customer Service (15)

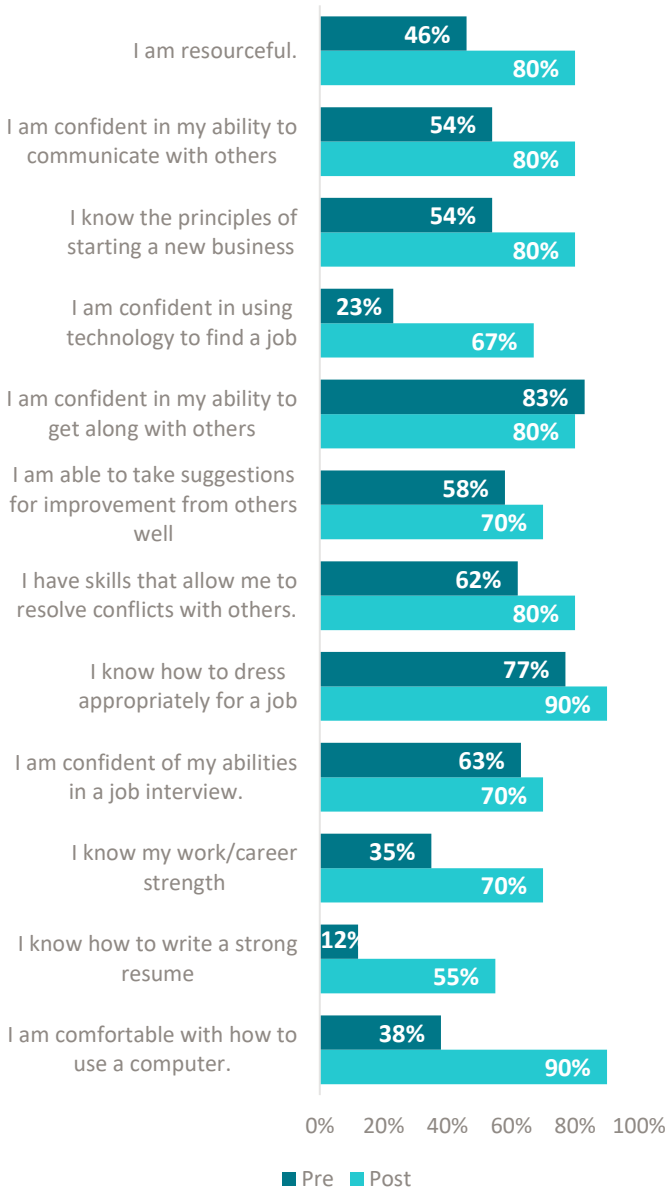
2. National Career Readiness (38)

3. Work Ethics Proficiency (41)

4. Basic Computer Skills (46)

Finally, 19 participants enrolled in the GED class with Metro Community College. Of those 19 participants, 37% gained three or four grade levels.

WORK READINESS COHORTS EXPRESSED MORE KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE IN THEIR WORK SKILLS.

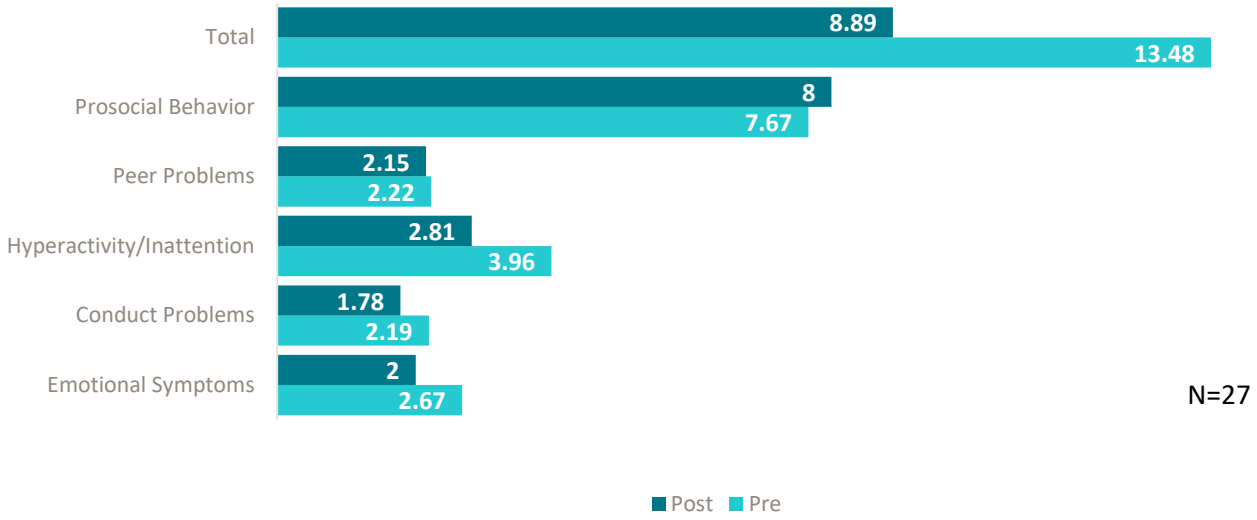


WRAP AROUND SERVICE OUTCOMES

METHOD. Data were collected from parents who received additional services and resources from Lutheran Family Services. Liaisons from Lutheran Family Services work with families to develop goals and action plans based on what the families' immediate needs and short-term goals are. As part of the process families complete pre and post measures on child behavior. Goals are progress monitored throughout the process.

FINDINGS. A total of 32 families with 63 children participated in services with Lutheran Family Services. Service plans were developed for all families with to establish goals. By the end of the year, 47% of goals were achieved, 30% were either maintaining or improving and 7% had not been met. Of the families enrolled, 50% were able to close their case while 50% were still active with LFS. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman et al., 2000) (a brief behavioral screen for children ages 3-16) was administered to measure pre and post changes. Only those with both pre and post scores were included in the analysis (N=27).

FAMILIES WORKING WITH LFS SAW SIGNIFICANT DECREASES IN TOTAL PROBLEM BEHAVIORS AND HYPERACTIVITY/INATTENTION.
Prosocial Behaviors had a slight but not significant increase.



With intervention, the desired outcome would be decreased scoreds for every scale with the exception of prosocial behavior. Paired sample t-tests were conducted on the scores from the SDQ. Significant decrease occurred for Hyperactivity/Inattention (t=-2.908, p<.01) and for the Total Index (t=-3.638, p=<.01). The effect sizes for both indicated meaningful change. The total is a combined score for emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, and peer problems. All of the scales trended in the desired direction with peer problems, conduct problems and emotional symptoms all decreasing and prosocial behaviors increasing.

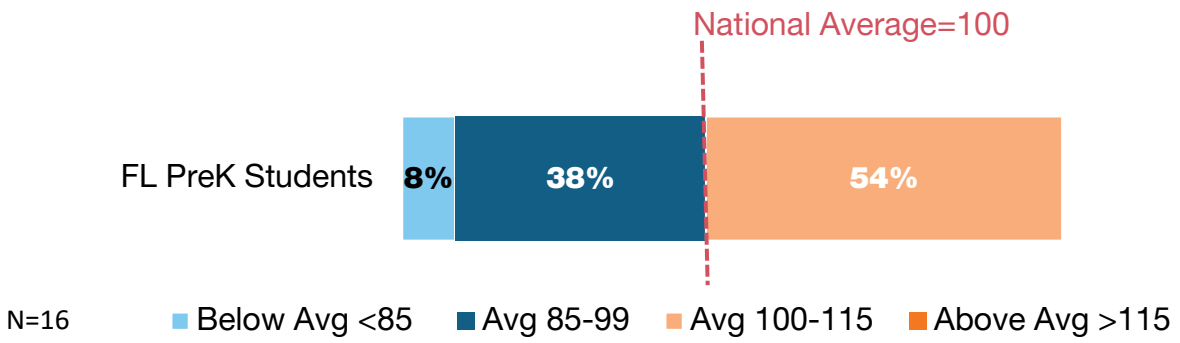
STUDENT OUTCOMES

METHOD. Student data was collected to measure students' executive function skills, academic achievement and growth from fall to spring and proficiency levels on the state assessments (NSCAS). Executive function data was obtained by individually administering the Minnesota Executive Function Scale to students at LCCSO. This online direct assessment was administered by the UNMC evaluation team and given in Spanish or English depending on the student's strongest language. Academic achievement and growth data was provided by Omaha Public Schools for students whose parents attended programming. Academic achievement and growth is measured using the NWEA-MAP™ for reading and math both in the fall and spring. Finally, grade level proficiency is based upon the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) state assessments from English Language (ELA) and mathematics.

FINDINGS

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

Students entering kindergarten in the 2019-20 school year were given the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS™) as an assessment of executive functioning skills. The MEFS is a broad indicator of self-regulation, memory, and flexibility.

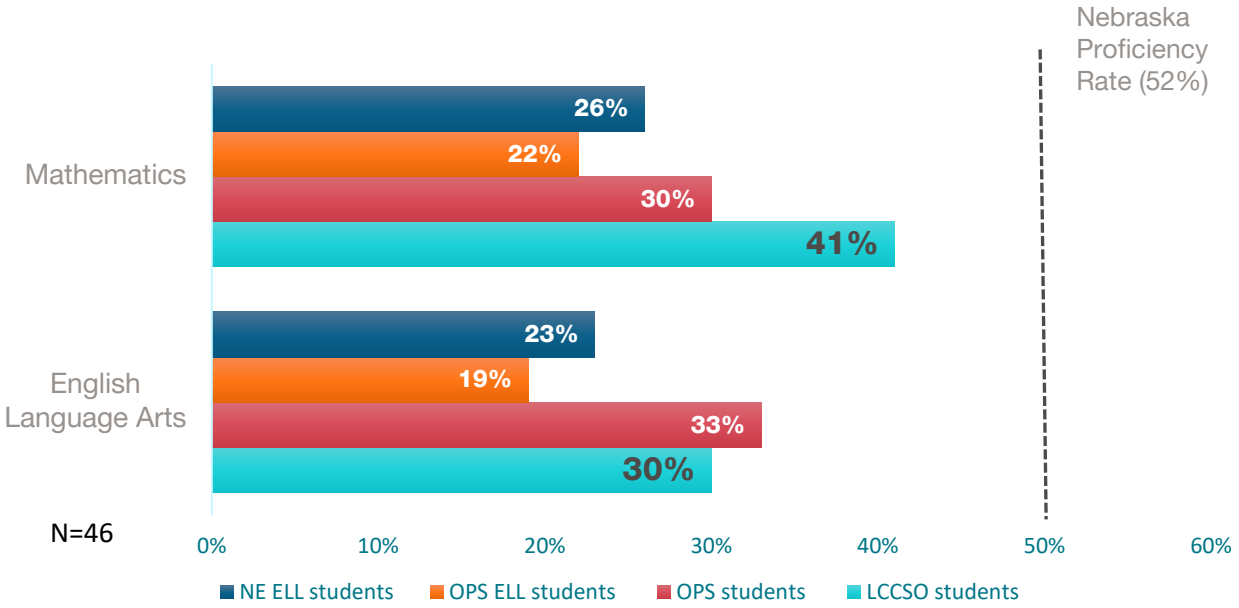


Most of the students entering kindergarten demonstrated skills within the broad average range (92%) with 54% of the students scoring at/above a standard score of 100. Students with average executive function scores would likely have more school readiness skills than students with less than average skills.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

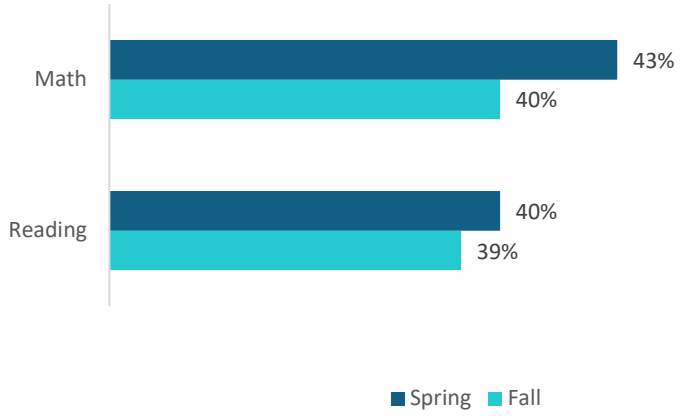
LCCSO STUDENTS HAD HIGHER RATES OF PROFICIENCY THAN OTHER COMPARABLE STUDENTS ON THE NSCAS STATE ACHIEVEMENT TESTS.

Proficiency rates for mathematics were higher than the district average.



Proficiency rates on the Nebraska Student Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) tests showed promise for the students whose parents participated in programming at LCCSO. Third and fourth grade students of LCCSO parents had higher proficiency rates on the NSCAS-Mathematics assessment than the district proficiency average, the Nebraska English Learner proficiency rate and the proficiency rate for English Learners in Omaha Public Schools. On the NSCAS-ELA assessment, the proficiency rate for the students of LCCSO parents was higher than the proficiency rate for OPS English Learners and Nebraska English Learners and was close to the district proficiency rate.

MORE STUDENTS SCORED ABOVE THE 50TH PERCENTILE IN THE SPRING ON BOTH NWEA-MAP™ READING AND MATH.



NWEA-MAP™ was administered fall and spring to students in grades K-4 for reading and mathematics.

For both reading and mathematics, more students scored above the 50th national percentile in the spring compared to the fall scores. In addition, 41% of students met their growth goal for reading and 43% met their growth goal for math.

Students scoring at/above the 50th percentile varied greatly by grade level with incoming kindergarten students having more scores above the 50th percentile.

Grade	Fall Reading	Spring Reading	Fall Math	Spring Math
K	57%	49%	62%	56%
1	42%	39%	41%	28%
2	35%	40%	35%	35%
3	22%	37%	22%	52%

School Attendance data was collected on students of school-age. For those students with parents attending programming **82% missed fewer than 10 days of school**. The average number of days missed by students were 6.82 days. The attendance data for 2018-19 is consistent with data from the previous two years.

In summary, students of parents at LCCSO are entering school with skills and family support needed to succeed. They have high rates of attendance, enter school with average executive function skills and are outperforming comparable students on the state achievement tests.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: USE OF DATA

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha focuses on being both family-centered and data-informed. The management team meets regularly with the evaluator to discuss the evaluation, examine data, and to revisit the logic model.

Staff at the center use the data gathered for the evaluation on an ongoing basis. Based on the evaluation results from the previous year, family navigators were more intentional in their practices, home visits and goals with families. Additionally, a new curriculum was selected for the English classes. Data also indicated the need for a certain level of English skills needed to be successful in GED classes. Finally, the evaluation team along with Learning Community management team and the OneWorld team began to examine the data in terms of total dosage and the impact of breaks taken by participants. Examining the data as a team led to changes in definitions and practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Family Learning service continued the pattern of producing positive results across the program components offered. Continuation of a strengths-based approach for families and their children is recommended as families report feeling valued and scaffolded to be successful. Families continue to need the supports provided by the center including on-site child care and transportation.

Continue developing and offering two generation programming as both the work readiness program and the GED class with Metro Community College have had multiple participants and interest from potential participants.

Continue to refine the home visting and parenting component of the program. Parents continue to be positive about their relationships with the family navigators. Additional classes for parenting were requested by the focus groups, particulary in the area of students who may be struggling either with a disability or behaviors.

SCHOOL DISTRICT PILOT PROGRAMS

Instructional Coaching

The Learning Community supported three school district pilot programs: Instructional Coaching, Extended Learning, and Jump Start to Kindergarten. The descriptions of each program and a summary of their outcome data are found in this section.

Instructional Coaching has been an ongoing pilot program since 2012-2013 and has grown to include four Learning Community school districts (Bellevue Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools). Each district uses a different coaching model, and the focus for that model varies.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

While each district has different implementation models of Instructional Coaching, some of the components are consistent across all four districts. Coaches work with teachers to provide consultation, modeling, data analysis, co-teaching, and lesson planning support. All districts emphasize supporting new teachers and helping teachers implement new curricula.

BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Bellevue Public School combined Jim Knight's coaching framework with Charlotte Danielson's teacher evaluation model to provide coaching across seven elementary buildings using six instructional coaches. Coaching cycles were used once teachers enrolled in the coaching process. Coaching activities included observations, modeling, individual student problem solving, data analysis and utilization, teacher feedback, and guidance with new curriculum. Instructional Coaches served 104 teachers and approximately 1647 students.

RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Instructional Coach primarily serves two higher poverty buildings with academic data that showed high needs through a blend of the Jim Knight and Diane Sweeney student-centered coaching framework. The coach also assists with the mentoring program to support new elementary teachers and developing peer coaches across the district. Fifty-four teachers and 813 students were impacted by coaching.

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Coaches receive multiple professional development days designed to hone skills in teaching and coaching reading instruction. The focus for the OPS instructional coaches was reading instruction (both large and small group). Approximately 90 teachers and 1991 students were impacted in 2018-19.

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Cognitive coaching served as the base for the Instructional Coaching provided to two buildings in Westside. Coaches provided multiple opportunities for K-6 staff with coaching cycles required for new teachers (those within their first three years). Coaching activities included modeling, co-teaching, planning, videotaped observations with feedback, grade level planning and training in large groups. Coaches also provided guidance in lesson planning and support to Professional Learning Communities at the building level. Thirty-two teachers and 659 students were impacted by Instructional Coaching.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2018-2019, approximately 280 teachers and potentially 5110 students were served across the four participating districts by 15 Instructional Coaches. All of the schools funded by the Learning Community for Instructional Coaching were elementary buildings.

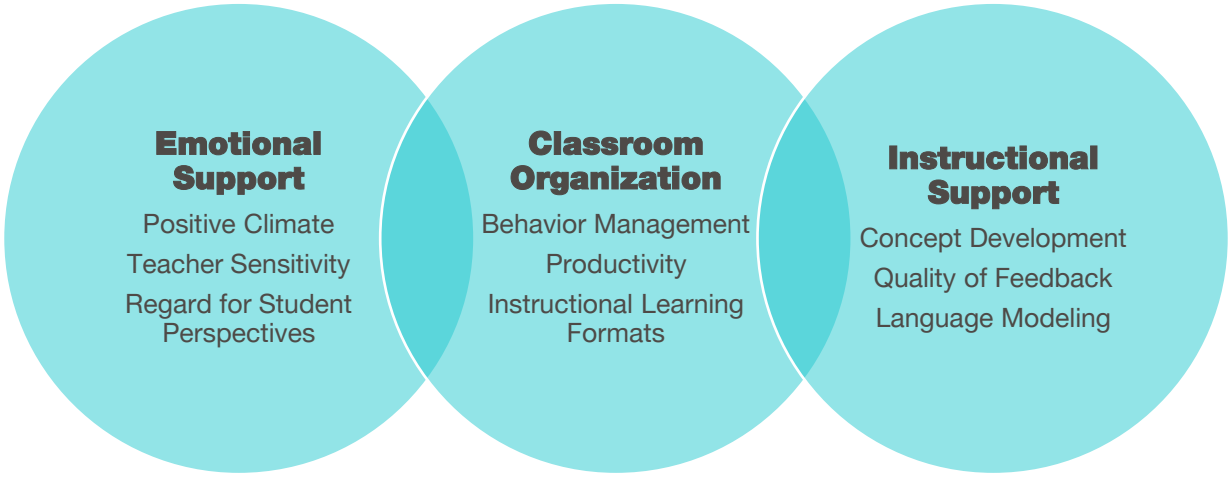
OUTCOMES

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was used to measure the quality of classroom instruction at two points in time. Each district submitted videos of selected teachers in the fall and spring for a sample of the teachers (n=51) participating in coaching.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Results

CLASS scoring was based on a two-hour videotape of classroom interactions. Scoring is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating highest quality. The K-3 CLASS has three main domains while the Upper Elementary tool has four. Dimensions include Emotional, Organizational, and Instructional Support. 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. For classrooms above 3rd grade, a fourth area, Student Engagement, is scored as a domain.

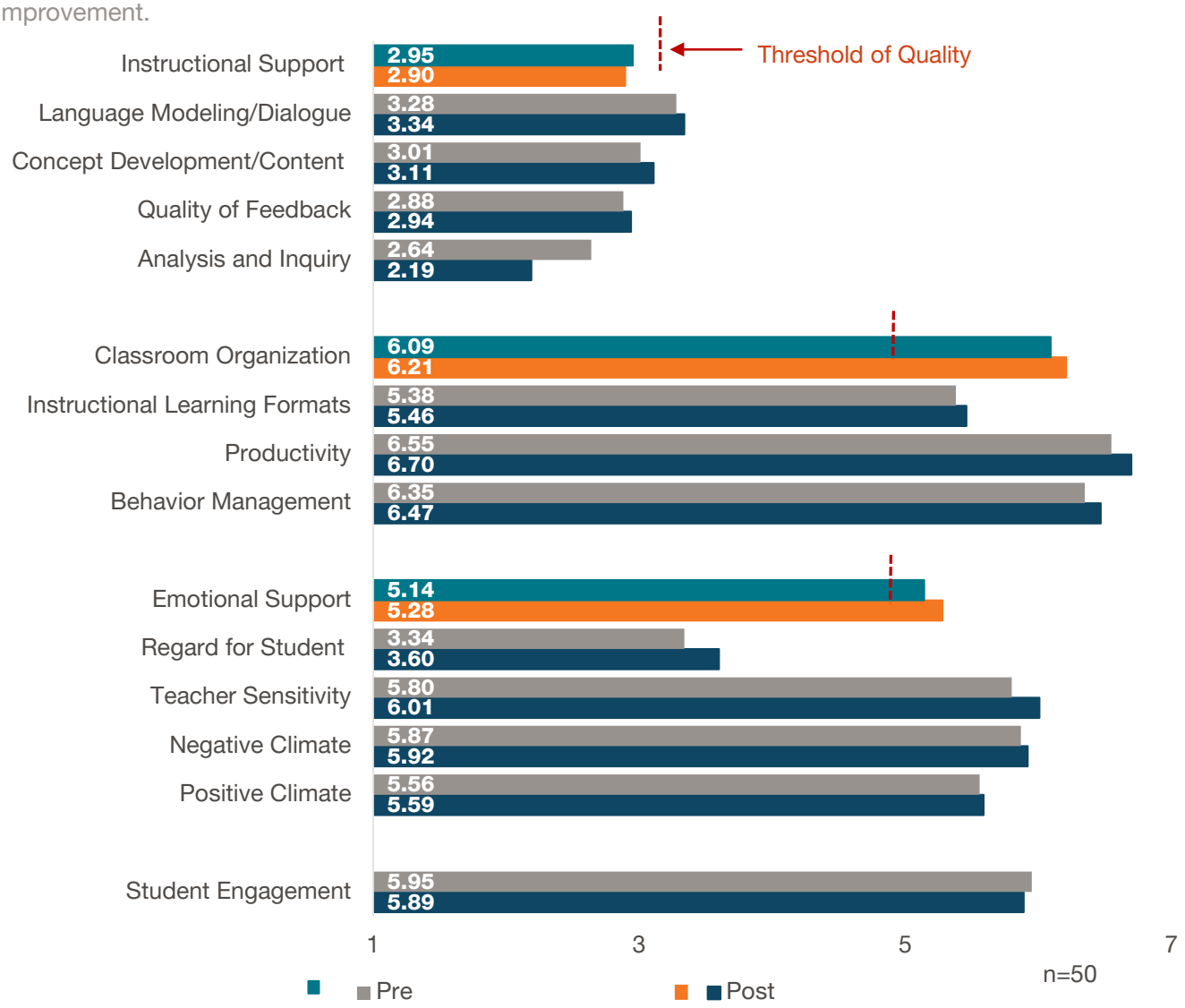


Research on the CLASS supports ratings of 5 or higher within the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and 3.25 or higher within the domain of Instructional Support, as being necessary to have impacts on student achievement (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010).

Individual teacher reports were produced for fall and spring. These reports were shared with both the teacher and the instructional coach. The reports are for coaching processes and for this evaluation only. The CLASS reports were not shared with building principals.

TEACHERS DEMONSTRATED STRONG SKILLS IN CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION, EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT.

Multiple areas showed improvement from pre to post. Instructional Support continues to be an area for improvement.



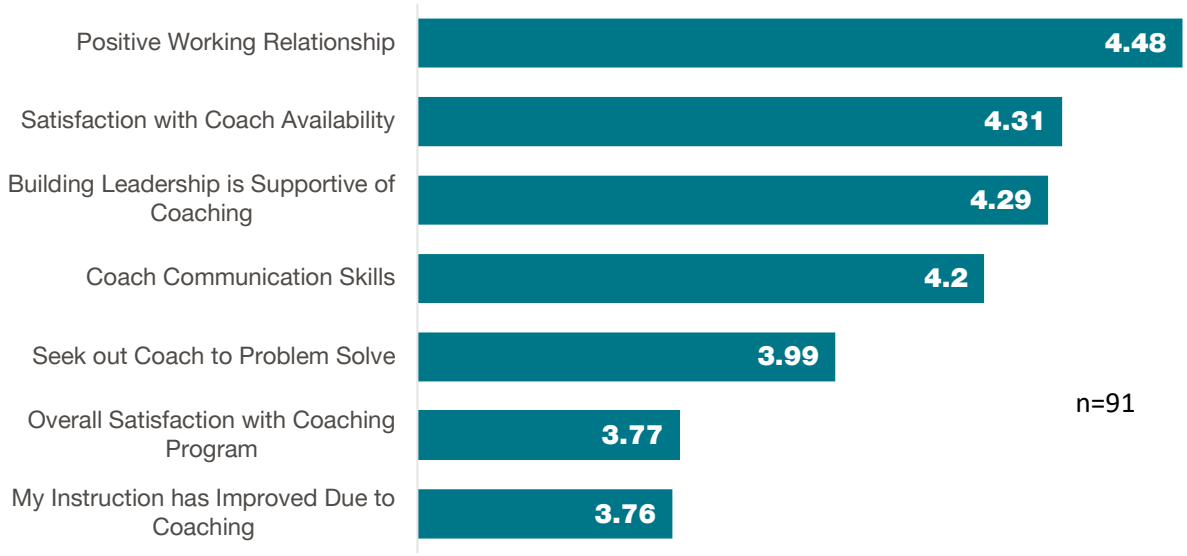
Teachers demonstrated skills in the high range in several areas including Classroom Organization, productivity, behavior management, and teacher sensitivity. Paired sample t-tests did not indicate significant improvement or decrease in any area. The domain of Instructional Support continue to show a need for improvement.

COACH AND TEACHER FEEDBACK ON INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

METHOD. A combination of teacher surveys and instructional coach surveys were used to gather information on how both teachers and coaches perceived the instructional coaching programs across the four participating districts. Ninety-one teachers completed the teacher survey about the coaching practices within their respective districts and 6 instructional coaches from 3 districts completed the instructional coach survey.

FINDINGS. Of the teachers completing the survey, 22% were in their first three years of teaching, 27% were in years 4-10 and the remaining 51% had 10 years or more of teaching experience. Sixty-seven percent indicated that their district had implemented a new curriculum within the past two years. Forty percent of respondents indicated they had worked with their instructional coach at least weekly over the year while 21% indicated they worked with the coach on a quarterly or less basis.

TEACHERS AND COACHES HAVE POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS.
Teachers varied in their overall satisfaction levels of the coaching program in their district.



Teachers rated the coaching model in their respective districts very favorably as indicated by the mean survey item scores (*1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree*). Teachers valued the relationship with their coach, most indicated they were satisfied with the availability of their coach, and most felt that the building leadership was supportive of the coaching model.

When asked to rate the utility of coaching activities, responses varied not only in terms of years of teaching experience but also by district. Overall, coaching activities were rated to be in the moderately useful to very useful categories. Small group instruction (*M*=3.68), professional

development (*M*=3.64), coaching/feedback (M=3.63) and Modeling (*M*=3.62) were rated as the most useful of the coaching activities. Observations (*M*=3.21) were rated as least useful.

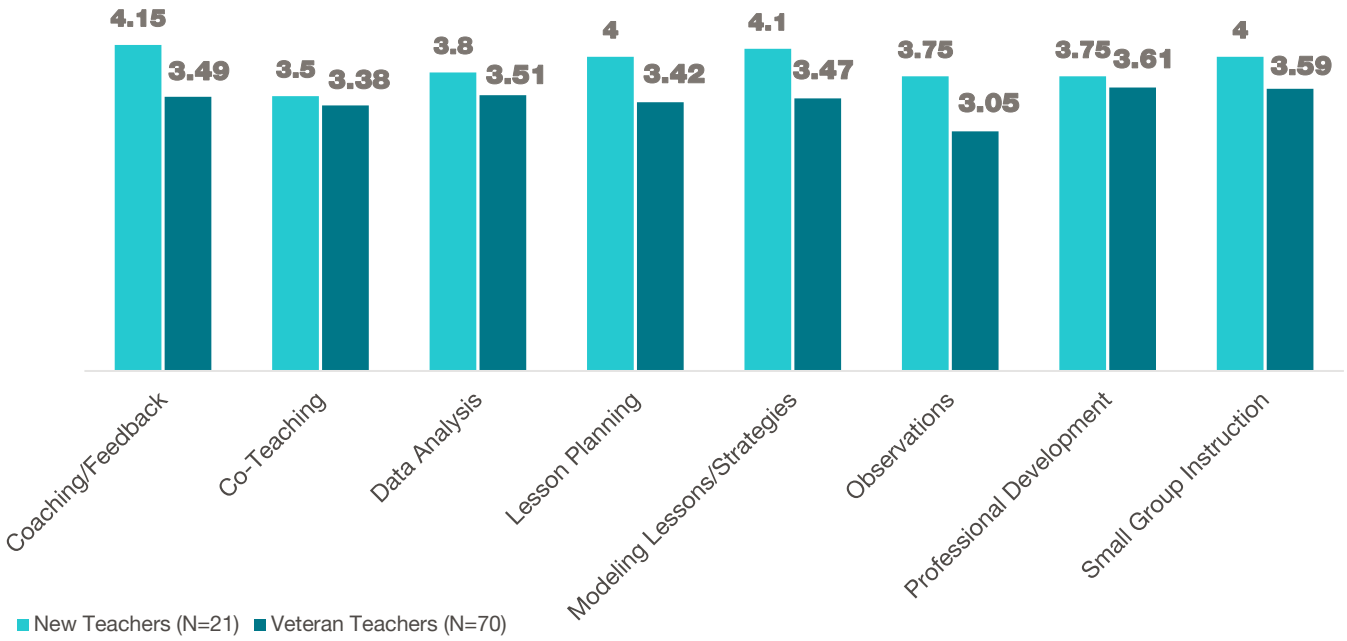
Teachers rated the coaching components less favorably when they had less access to the coach either because the coach had a high number of teachers to work with or limited time with teachers. Some of the comments from teachers indicated frustration with large class sizes, lack of resources and behavior management overall. Some suggested that instead of working with a coach once infrequently the district should invest money in small group instructors, more para-educators and more resources in general.

"I cannot imagine going through these first two years without having someone there to help me when I'm struggling or problem solve ways to improve instruction."

-a teacher

FOR THE SECOND YEAR, NEW TEACHERS RATED ALL COACHING ACTIVITIES AS MORE USEFUL THAN TEACHERS WITH MORE EXPERIENCE.

On average, new teachers reported more frequent contact with coaches.



COACHES INPUT

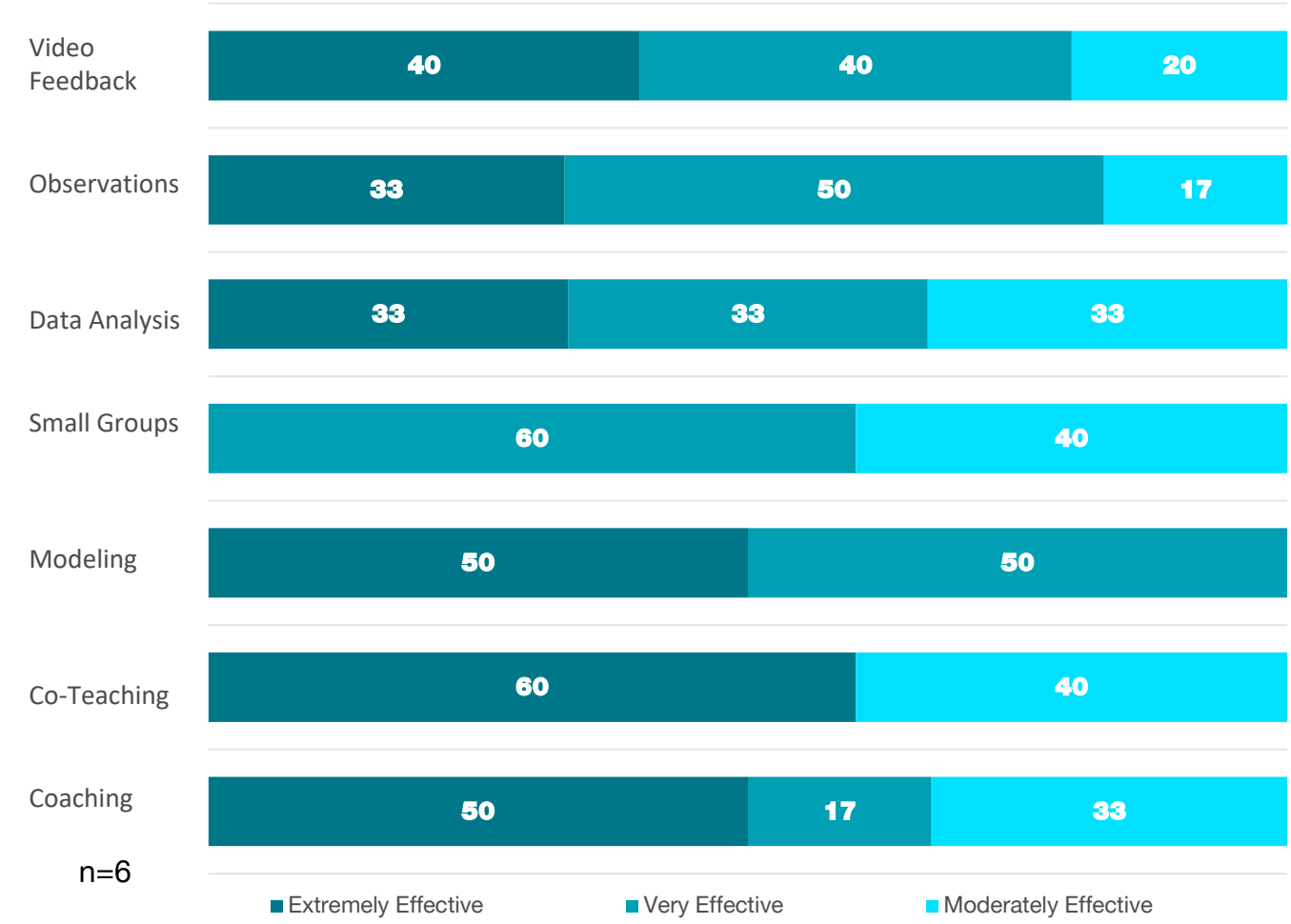
A coach survey was administered to instructional coaches across four districts with six coaches from three districts responding. Coaches were asked questions about successes, strategies, who seems to be benefitting the most, lessons learned, and obstacles in creating a coaching program. From the responses, it was clear that the number of teachers working with a coach

varies from below 20 to more than 30 teachers. In addition, all coaches reported having an average to excellent relationship with building leadership when it came to the coaching program. None of the coaches reported having a negative relationship with their building administrator.

Coaching, co-teaching, and modeling feedback were rated as being highly effective by the instructional coaches. Small groups instruction was viewed as less effective in helping teachers improve instruction than the other coaching components. However, this is in contrast with how teachers viewed small group instruction as teachers rated it as one of the most useful coaching components.

COACHES RATED SEVERAL COMPONENTS AS BEING VERY TO EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE.

Modeling was the highest rated component across all Instructional Coaches.



Coaches were asked both about their coaching successes as well as challenges/obstacles they have encountered while implementing coaching in their respective district. The most common obstacles coaches reported were teachers not wanting to engage in the coaching process and lack of time to complete everything.

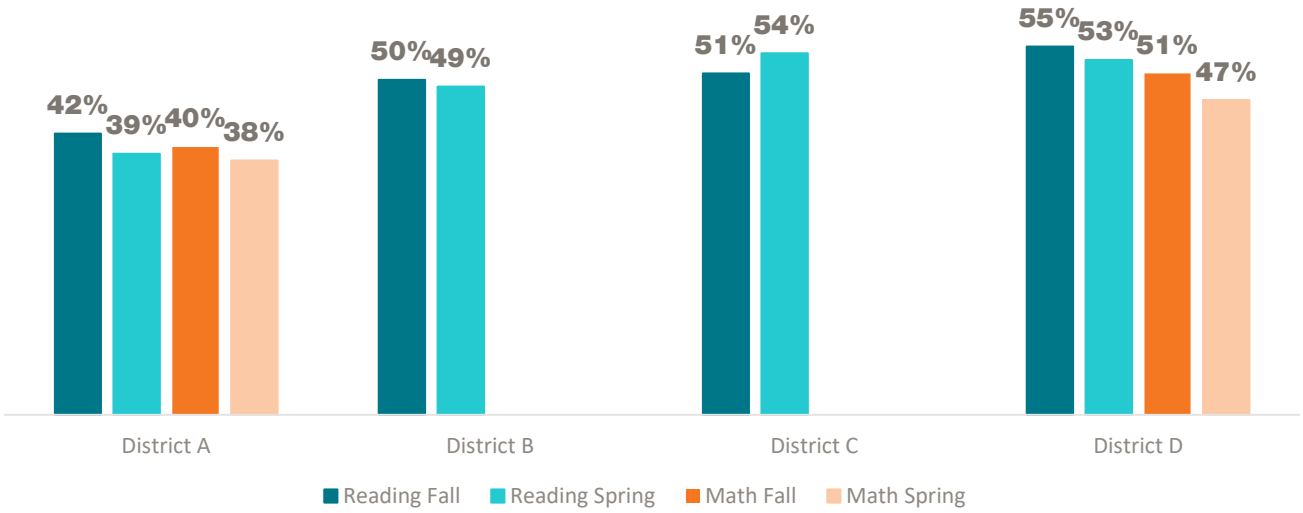
INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING HAS CHANGED AS DISTRICTS GROW AND BUDGETS IMPACT THE PROCESS. District budgets were brought up in a number of comments and in meetings with districts. However, the comments around budgets differed by district. Some teachers were frustrated that the budget didn't allow for more coaches while others suggested eliminating the coaching program to allow for more para-educators in classrooms. However, in districts where coaches were rated as highly effective, both administrators and teachers are looking to increase their presence and number.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES WERE VIEWED AS HIGHLY VALUED AND A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS IN THEIR FIRST THREE YEARS. Survey data indicated that new teachers perceived coaching as more valuable than veteran teachers did. In particular, new teachers found coaching/feedback and observations to be much more useful than did veteran teachers.

TEACHERS WITH LESS ACCESS TO COACHING PERCEIVED COACHING ACTIVITES AS LESS USEFUL. Teachers reported being frustrated with the lack of coaching support and also lack of support in general. When coaches had more teachers on their caseloads, the scores for the usefulness of coaching activities was lower and more negative comments about the coaching program in general were noted.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

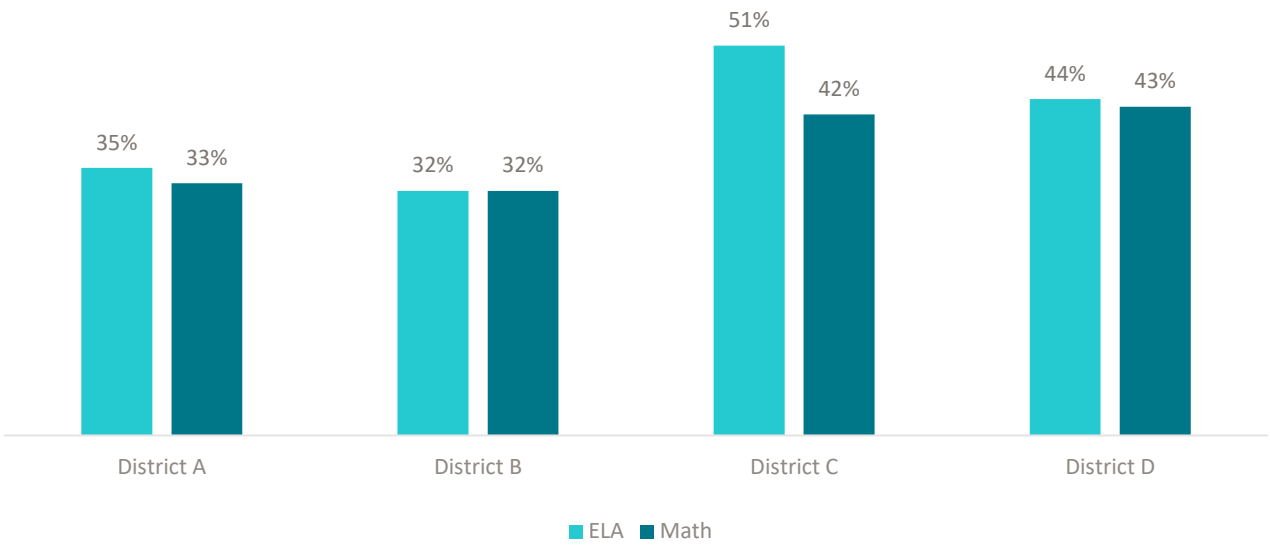
THE PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE THE 50TH PERCENTILE REMAINED CONSTANT FROM FALL TO SPRING WITH VARIABILITY AMONG DISTRICTS.



FINDINGS. NWEA-MAP™ scores were provided for each student in schools receiving instructional coaching. Two districts provided scores only for reading as that is the area of priamry focus in their coachng model. The other two districts provided all MAP data requested. Individual student growth from fall to spring was monitored as well.

NEBRASKA STUDENT CENTERED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (NSCAS) RESULTS

NSCAS PROFICIENCY RATES BY DISTRICT VARIED.
No district met the Nebraska percent proficent for either reading or math.



Scores on the NSCAS varied by district and were below the state proficiency average of 52% on the ELA assessment and 52% on the math assessment. NSCAS scores reported here are only for the buildings in the district participating in instructional coaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Instructional coaching is viewed as a valued resource by teachers and coaches. Data from surveys and focus groups suggest high impact when a coaching model has administrative support, a manageable caseload, a defined coaching model, and time to develop relationships within a building. Data from the teacher surveys support that new teachers see the benefit of working with an instructional coach more than veteran. One recommendation is to focus instructional coaching efforts on teachers in their first three years to maximize benefits. A second recommendation is to measure the impact of coaching cycles both on change in teacher instructional practices and on student learning. A third recommendation would be to analyze data based upon instructional coach caseload and the amount of contact a teacher receives during a year.

Extended Learning

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Extended Learning programs provide additional direct instruction for students with smaller teacher to student ratios and a focus on specific skills identified by spring assessments. These opportunities provide engaging interactions that can motivate young learners. Summer programming, in particular, is designed to prevent learning loss so that students are better prepared for academic success as they enter into the next school year.

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Students are provided instruction in reading, writing and math during this 3-week program. Weekly newsletters and communication are sent home to parents about their child's progress along with resources and tips for parents to use as they wish. Students attend three hours per day. The goal of the program is to help students maintain their academic skills from spring to fall. Thirty-nine students participated in the program. Free-reduced lunch rate was not reported.

COMPLETELY KIDS. Students in this before and after school program are served at Field Club elementary. The strongest focus in the before school program is on academic enrichment (successful KIDS). Programming focuses largely on building reading and math skills through games and other activities during the before school program. In addition to the academic programming, health, safety, and family engagement activities and resources are incorporated into the programming. One hundred fourteen students participated in programming with 85% qualifying for free reduced lunch.

ELKHORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Jump Start to Reading provided students at-risk for reading failure three weeks of intense reading intervention. The goal of the program is to reduce summer reading loss. The program pulled from multiple curricula (Reading Street's My Sidewalks, Read Naturally, Guided Reading and/or Guided Writing) and was taught by district teachers. The goal of the program is to reduce summer reading loss. A total of sixty-seven students participated with 16% qualifying for free reduced lunch.

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Summer programming in Millard is provided at one site for students from ten elementary buildings for three weeks. Students invited to participate in the program are those qualifying for free/reduced lunch status and those who have demonstrated being academically at-risk in math and/or reading. In addition to academic instruction, three family involvement days are held during the three weeks. The program is provided for students in grades K-3. The goal of the program was to reduce/prevent learning loss occurring from spring to fall. One hundred sixty-seven students participated with 50% qualifying for free reduced lunch. Of the students who attended 34% had limited English Proficiency and 26% were students with a disability.

SPRINGFIELD-PLATTEVIEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Students targeted for this school year program receive individual/small group math instruction at two elementary buildings. Students participate one hour per week with intervention lessons that are developed as a result of a collaborative effort between the classroom teacher and the math interventionist. The goal of the program is for at-risk students to be meeting grade level expectations in math by the end of the school year. Fifth grade is the level targeted for this intervention. Eight students participated in the program with 25% qualifying for free reduced lunch.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 395 students in grades K-5 were served through extended learning programming across five sites. Of the students participating in the extended learning programs, the FRL% of students ranged from 16-85%.

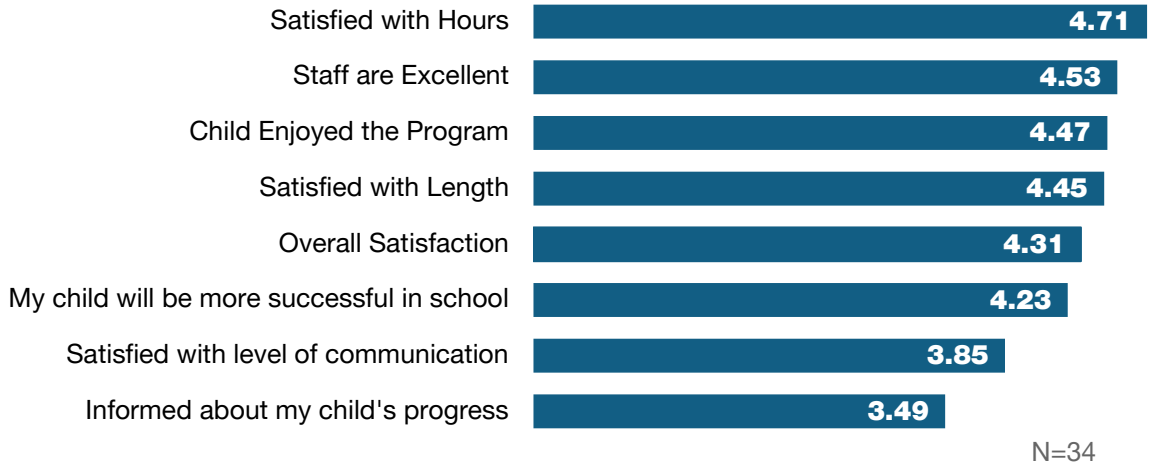
OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Thirty-four parents completed the survey across the 5 participating programs. The survey was provided to programs in both Spanish and English. Parents were asked to respond to multiple satisfaction questions using a 1 to 5 scale *(1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)*. Parents had the opportunity to provide specific comments on the successes and possible improvements for programming.

FINDINGS. Parents reported high levels of overall satisfaction (*M*=4.31) with the extended learning programs. The item with the highest level of satisfaction was hours of the program (*M*=4.71) followed by the excellence of staff (*M*=4.53). One area of improvement was being informed about their child's progress (*M*=3.49).

PARENTS WERE HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH THE STAFF AND OVERALL PROGRAMMING.
Student enjoyment of the extended learning programming improved from 2017-2018.



Many of the parent comments around programming reflected the quantitative findings of the survey. Parents were satisfied with the quality of the program and noted both the enthusiasm of the teachers and the engagement of their child(ren) with the activities. Parents noted that their student liked attending and they appreciated how it kept their child in the flow of learning without being a repeat of the school year. Programs that provided meals, transportation and supplies for students were recognized as being helpful to parents as well.

"It focused on the areas of learning my child needed."

"My son was happy, and he made new friends."

"My child seemed engaged and thought it was very fun while being educational."

-parents of students

As in previous years, improvements suggested by parents included more communication about student progress and/or things that could be worked on at home.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

METHOD. Districts involved in the extended learning programs use different measures to assess and monitor student progress. In addition, the goal for districts with summer programming is to reduce/eliminate summer learning loss while the goal for the district with a school year program is to close the gap for students scoring below expectations. However, four of the five programs used NWEA-MAP™ to measure student progress. As it is a common metric, the MAP data was used for this evaluation. Districts used additional measures such as text levels and progress monitoring assessments.

FINDINGS. Results found that students' performance varied across districts programs and also by grade level. However, overall roughly half of the students enrolled in summer programming maintained their academic skills on the NWEA-MAP™ from spring to fall. For the students enrolled in an intensive intervention program during the school year, most showed growth in both RIT score improvement and in percentile rank growth. All of the students enrolled in the district's extended learning programs were selected due to being either behind in an area or for being academically at-risk. It should be noted that not all districts used NWEA-MAP data in 2018-19 for all students. Therefore, the data reflects only those grade levels for which MAP was administered in the previous year.

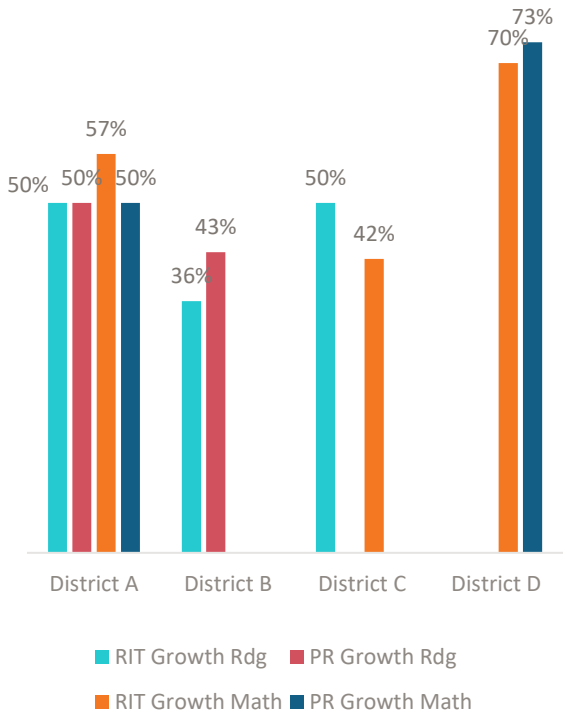
Of the districts also collecting reading text levels as an indication of progress, one district had **76% of enrolled students either maintain or improve their reading level** from May to end of August while a second district had **71% of participating students maintain or improve their text reading level.** Both of these districts invite students to participate in summer programming based on their spring reading levels and other assessments indicating potentially being at-risk to struggle academically. The difference in these assessment scores versus the NWEA-MAP scores

could indicate that the text levels measure skills closer to what is being taught in summer school and closer to the intervention being implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

Continue to refine the evaluation process for extended learning. Now that a common metric is available for use the evaluation team and districts should consider quasi-experimental comparisons. Those comparisons could include students invited but did not participate in summer school, comparisons of students receiving different interventions and perhaps comparisons from spring to fall of all students in a school compared to those attending summer school.

EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS HELP ACADEMICALLY AT-RISK STUDENTS MAINTAIN SKILLS.



Jump Start to Kindergarten

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

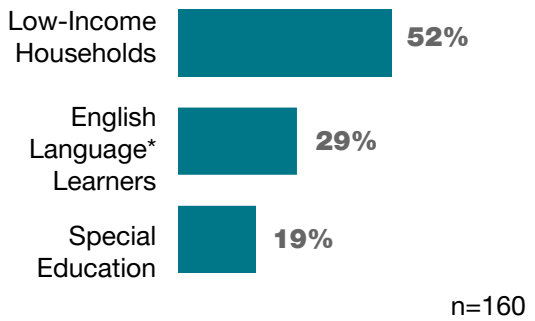
Jump Start to Kindergarten began in 2011. Programming is designed for low-income students who have limited or no previous educational experience. The opportunity to participate in a kindergarten setting and daily routines prior to the first day of school is a significant contributor to school readiness.

Programming focuses on pre-academic skills, social-emotional-behavioral readiness and orienting students to the processes and procedures of the school. Further, some programs also include a strong family engagement component such as home visits, parent days, or other family engagement activities. All programs utilize certified teachers for part or all of their staffing; the hours and days per week vary based on the needs analysis of each district.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the summer of 2019, Jump Start to Kindergarten was implemented in three districts: Elkhorn, Millard, and Papillion La Vista. A total of 160 Kindergarten students served of which 135 were present for both pre and post assessment using the Bracken School Readiness Assessment. Demographic information including: eligibility for free and reduced lunch, race, ethnicity, and/or enrollment in special education services was collected to help interpret the evaluation findings.

JUMP START CLASSES SERVED SOME HIGH RISK POPULATIONS OF STUDENTS.



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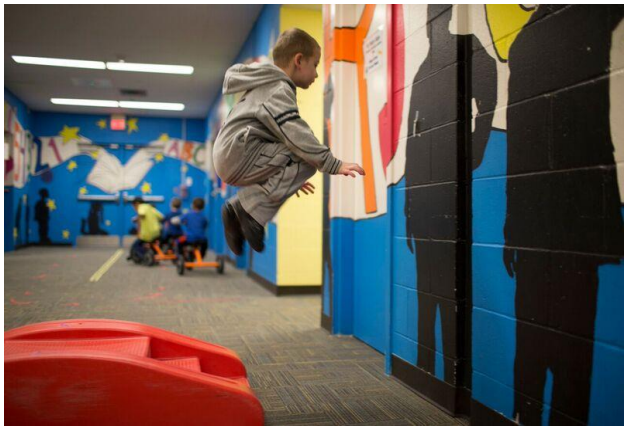
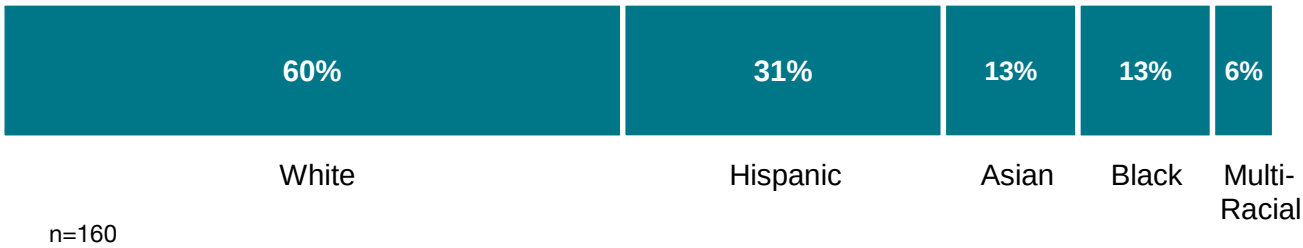


Jump Start to Kindergarten served 14 classrooms in 8 schools across the 3 participating districts. The program served more males (60%) than females (40%). The majority of children served were five years of age.

THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.



n=160

OUTCOMES

STUDENT OUTCOMES

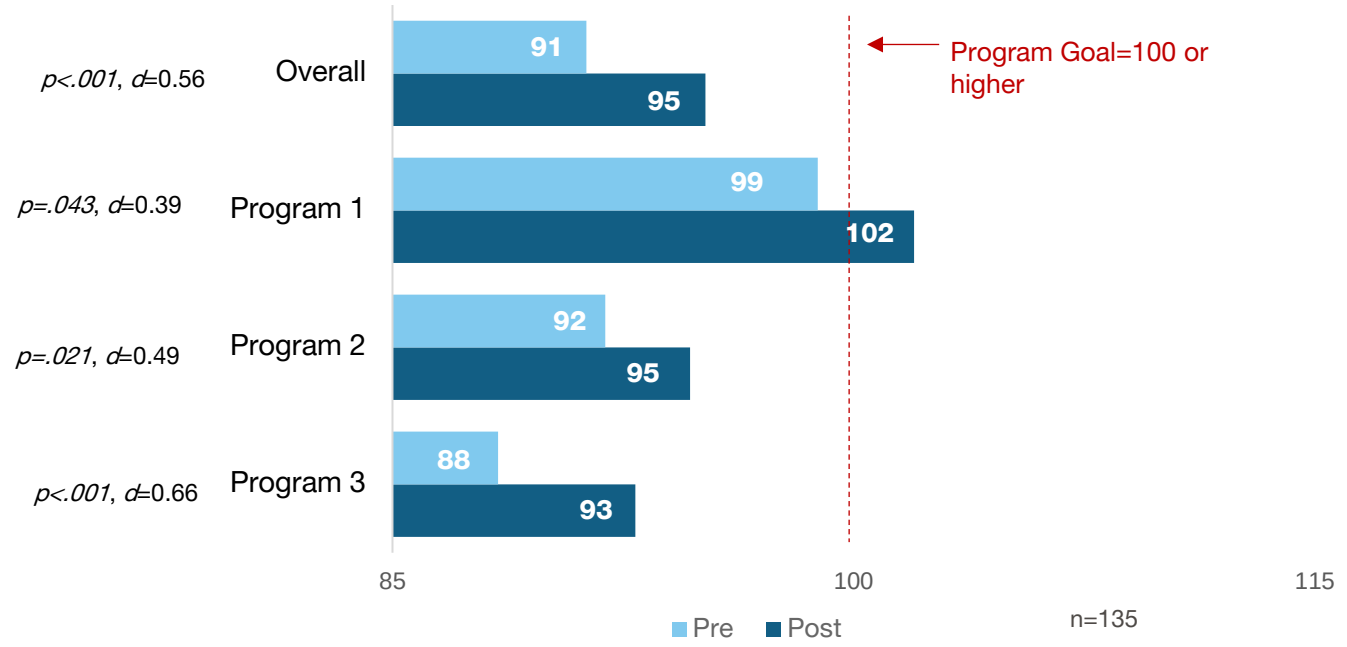
Did the students' school readiness change over time?

METHOD. 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 students' school readiness was the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA). The BSRA measures 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 85 to 115 falling within the average range (one standard deviation above and below the mean).

SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For the 2019 summer, pre-post comparisons were made using a paired-samples t-test. The results found that overall, the students made significant gains over the course of the program (t=-6.553, $p<.001$, d=0.56) suggesting substantial, meaningful change. While results varied across programs, children made significant gains in all three programs.

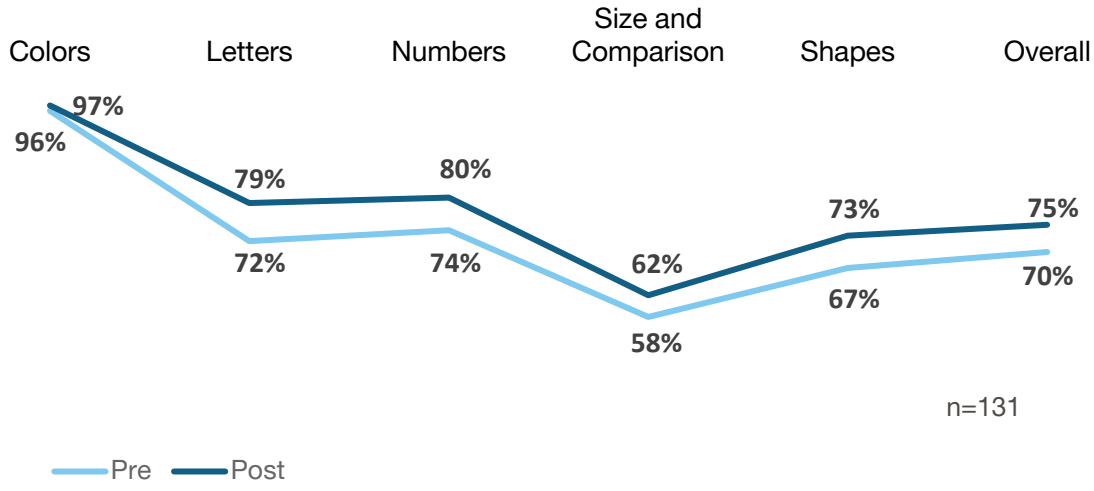
STUDENTS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVERALL IN ALL THREE JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS. EFFECT SIZE VARIED BY DISTRICT.



The overall mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 91 to 95, moving them closer to the desired mean of 100. The goal each year is to move the group as close to mean scores of 100 or greater as possible.

When examining individual subtests, the percentage of mastery increased in all areas, with an overall increase of 5 percentage points. An area of strength for these students was color naming (97% mastery). An area for improvement would be Sizes/Comparisons (62% mastery). Sizes/Comparison may be a higher cognitive level skill for students as this subtest assesses their understanding of location words, comparison concepts, and understanding directional concepts.

PERCENT OF MASTERY INCREASED IN EACH SUBTEST.



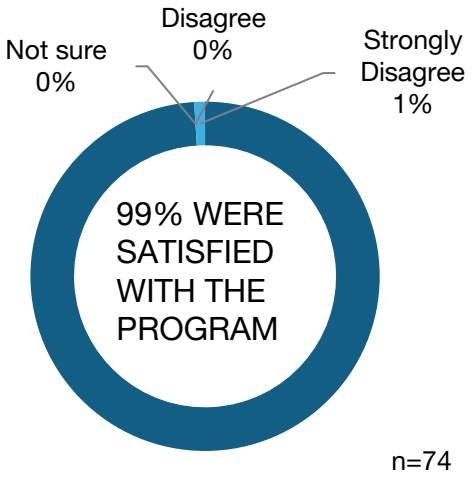
PARENT SATISFACTION

What did parents report about the Jump Start Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. 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 tables (n=74).

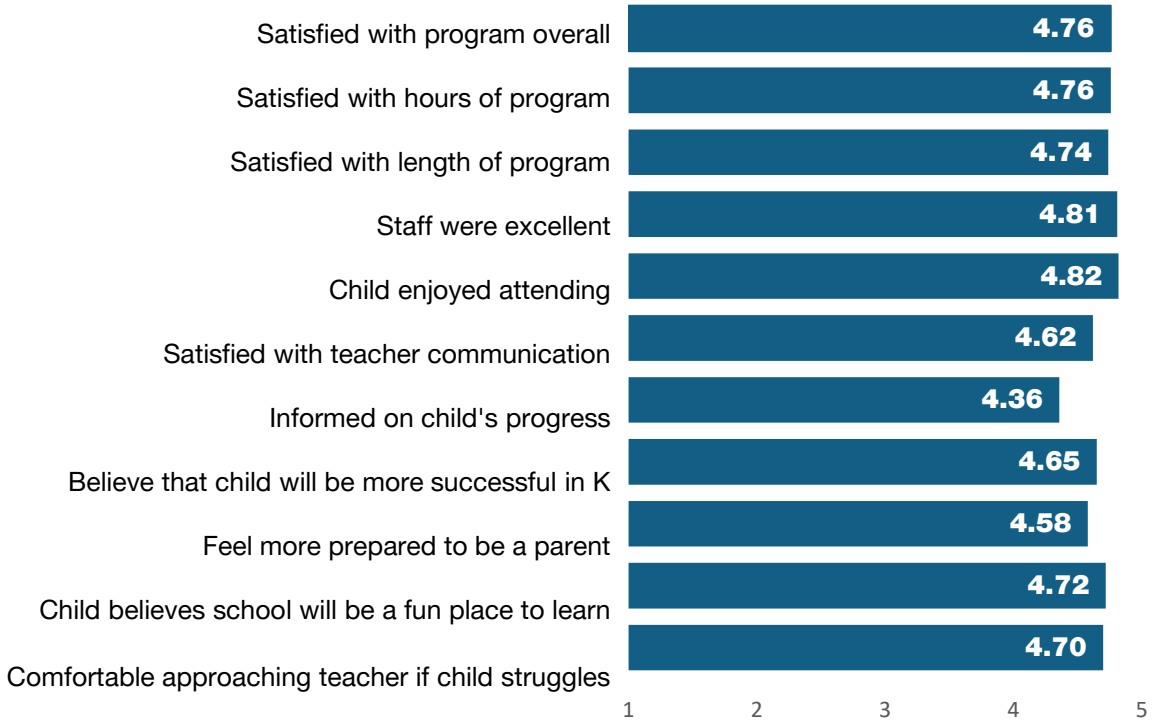
FAMILY SATISFACTION RESULTS

Families reported high overall satisfaction in all areas, including the structure and environment of the program. They also reported high levels of satisfaction on such items as believing the program staff were excellent and feeling that their child enjoyed attending the program. The lowest level of satisfaction was for being informed about their child's progress.



n=74

PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS.



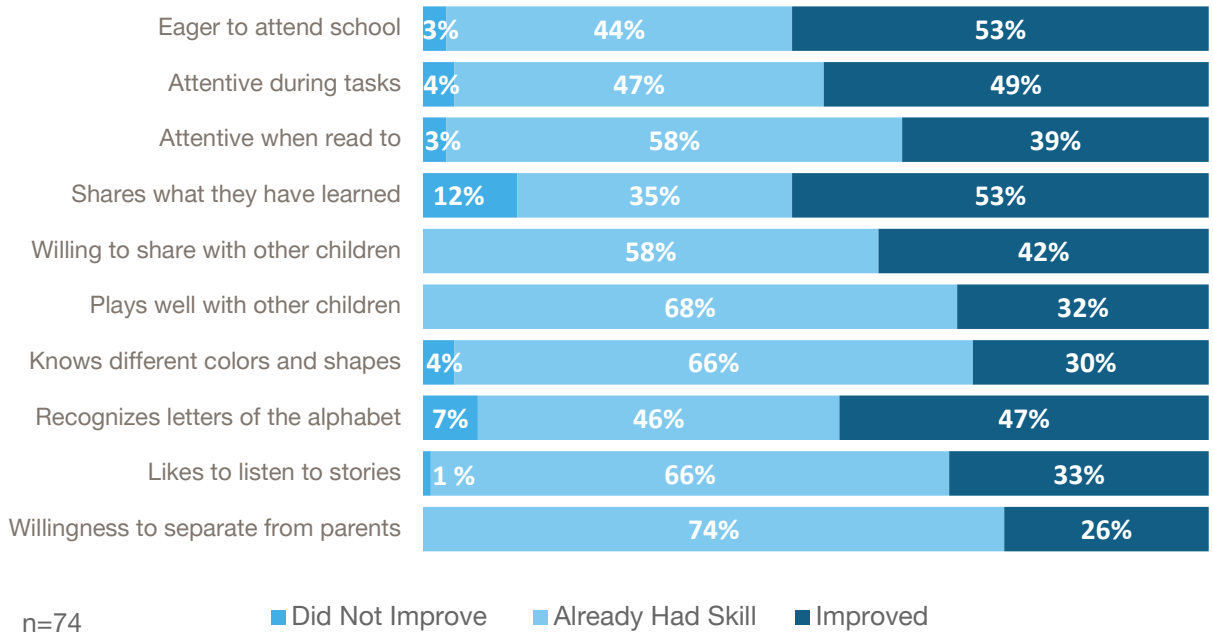
n=74

How did parents rate their students' readiness for school?

PARENT RATING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Parents were also surveyed about their perceptions of how the program impacted their child. Almost 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 included: attentive when read to, willingness to separate from parents, likes to listen to stories, knows different colors and shapes, plays well with others, and willingness to share with other children. Shares what they have learned had the highest percentage of "did not improve" (12%), but also showed the one of the greatest improvements (53%).

THE MAJORITY OF PARENTS REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILDREN EITHER IMPROVED OR ALREADY HAD THE SKILL GOING INTO THE PROGRAM.



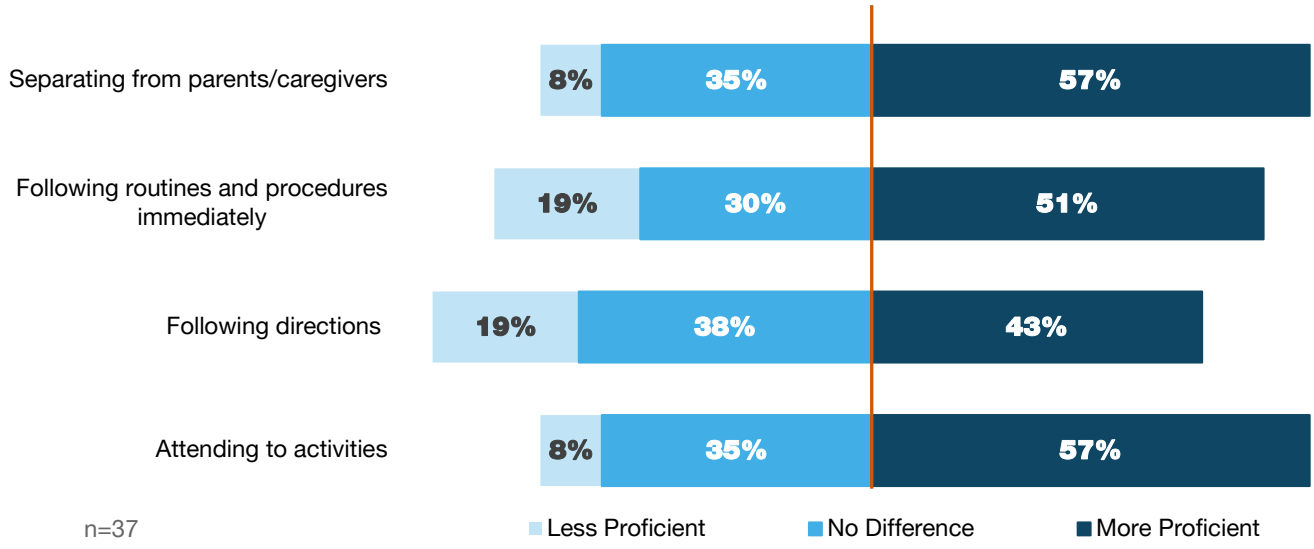
What did teachers report about students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. In the Fall of 2019, all Kindergarten teachers who had 2019 Jump Start to Kindergarten students in their classroom were asked to fill out a survey about the overall level of proficiency of students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten program compared to those that did not. All three of the participating districts used the survey. Of the 37 teachers that were surveyed, 8 taught Jump Start to Kindergarten this year, and 29 (78%) did not.

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Teachers reported high overall proficiency in all areas, including separating from parent/caregivers and following routines and procedures right away. Teachers consistently reported that Jump Start to Kindergarten students were either more proficient or that there was no difference in skill level, when compared to their peers who did not attend the program.

TEACHERS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS WERE EQUAL TO OR MORE PROFICENT THAN THEIR PEERS WHO DID NOT ATTEND THE PROGRAM.



LEARNING COMMUNITY ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTH OMAHA: EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- 447 PreK and 307 Grade K-1 students were enrolled
- Majority are low income & represent diverse populations
- Classroom were of very high quality in Classroom Organization & Emotional support
- PreK students demonstrated meaning gains in their vocabulary, school readiness, executive functioning, and social emotional skills
- K-1 students made meaningful gains on their executive functioning skills
- Over 40% of the K-1 students met or exceeded their expected growth goals
- English speaking K-1 students had more children at the 50th percentile or higher than their ELL peers

PARENT UNIVERSITY

- 244 parents were enrolled with majority representing low income & culturally diverse populations
- Enrolled parents had 459 children of which 257 were within the targeted age range
- Parents participated in 54 different courses which focused on parenting, school success, leadership, and life skills
- Parents demonstrated substantial meaningful gains in Protective Factors
- Parents improved their relationships with their children, learned new parenting strategies, improved their financial stability, increased social connections, and lowered their parenting stress after participation in parenting classes

FUTURE TEACHER CLINICAL TRAINING

- 326 students were enrolled in early childhood classes.
- 14 students graduated with an associate's degree this year
- Since 2016, 20 students have enrolled in 4-year institutions to continue their education
- An articulation agreement between Creighton University & Metropolitan College provides mechanism for student to continue their education

CHILD CARE DIRECTOR TRAINING

- 9 center-based directors participated in the project
- Teachers' who were coached by their directors improved their instructional practices to support children's social-emotional skills
- 8 of the directors were also enrolled the state quality initiative, SU2Q
- Directors reported that the training and coaching were highly valuable and they gained competencies that they appied in their centers and classrooms
- The majority of the teachers reported the child care workplace environment was positive

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA:

FAMILY LEARNING

- 318 families were enrolled
- 478 0-8 year old children
- 422 siblings
- Two generation programming yielded positive effects Workforce Development with 46 participants earning at least one certificate
- For the third year in a row, parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement
- 87% of participants gained at least one level on the BEST Plus assessment

PARENTING OUTCOMES

- Parents reported parenting classes helped to reduce parental stress, improved their understanding of school processes and helped prepare children for school
- Parents demonstrated strengths inn the following areas: Supportive Directions, Encouragement, Sensitivity of Responses, Supporting Emotions, Physical Interaction and Involvement in Child's Activities. The domain of Building Relationships met the program goal both in the pre and post assessment
- For parents receiving LFS services, significant decrease occurred for total behavior symptoms and for hyperactivity/inattention symtoms
- 50% of parents were able to close their cases with LFS

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Majority of students (92%) entering kindergarten had executive functioning skills in the average range
- Students outperformed the district proficiency average on the NSCAS-Math assessment
- Students performed better than the district and state EL population on the NSCAS-ELA assessment
- Students missed on average 6.82 days of school while 82% missed fewer than 10 days
- 42% met their growth goal for reading on NWEA-MAP™
- 44% met their growth goal for math on NWEA-MAP™
- 43% scored above the 50th percentile on NWEA-MAP for math
- 41% scored above the 50th percentile on NWEA-MAP for reading

SCHOOL DISTRICT PILOT PROGRAMS

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

- 280 teachers, and 5110 students were served across 4 districts
- Teachers met the threshold of quality fo Classrom Organization, Emotional Support and Student Engagement
- Instructional Support continues to be an area for improvement
- Teachers in their first three years consistently rated coaching activities as more useful than veteran teachers
- Most teachers reported having a positive working relationship with their instructional coach

JUMP START

- 160 kindergarten eligible students enrolled in Jump Start across 3 districts
- 52% qualified represented low income households and 40% represented ethnically diverse populations
- Students demonstrated significant gains in school readiness skills
- The majority of the parents (99%) were satisfied with the programs
- Kindergarten teachers consistently reported JS students had skills equal to or more proficient than peers not attending the program

EXTENDED LEARNING

- 395 students were enrolled in Extended Learning with 16-85% qualifying for FRL
- 4 districts and 1 community agency participated
- Parents were highly satisfied with the program, their children enjoyed the program and felt the staff were excellent
- Overall satisfaction with the program was 4.31 on a 5-point scale
- One district had 76% of students maintain or gain at least one text reading level

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APPENDIX A. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Tool	Author	Purpose
Bracken School Readiness Assessment, 3rd Ed.	Bracken, B. (2007)	The Bracken School Readiness Assessment evaluates
Child Parent Relationship Scales (CPRS)	Pianta, R. (1992) Unpublished Tool	The CPRS measures the relationship of the parent and child. It evaluates both the closeness and the conflict in the relationship.
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)	LaParo, Hamre, & Pianta, 2012.	CLASS "is a rating tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning."
Circle of Security Survey	Jackson, B. (2014) Unpublished	This survey completed by parents evaluates three areas including parenting strategies, parent-child relationships, and parenting stress. It is based on a 5 point Likert scale.
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), Second Edition	LeBuffe, P. & Naglieri, J. (2012).	The DECA assesses young children's social-emotional protective factors, specifically evaluating, initiative, attachment, behavior concerns, and self-control.
FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (PFS)	FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (2011)	The PFS is a broad measure of family well-being that examines five factors including: family resiliency, social supports, concrete supports, child development knowledge and nurturing and attachment. It is scored on a 7 point Likert scale.
Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale (PARCA)	Hair, E., Anderson, K., Garrett, S., Kinukawa, A., Lippman, l., & Michelson, E. 2005	This is a parent completed assessment that evaluates three areas including: supporting good behavior, setting limits and being proactive in their parenting. It is based on a 7 point Likert scale.
Parenting Stress Scale (PSS)	Berry and Jones (1995) Unpublished	The PSS is completed by the parent to assess parental stress. It is based on a 5 point Likert scale with higher scores reflecting greater stress.
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-IV	Dunn, L. M.,& Dunn, D. M. 2007 Pearson	A measure of receptive vocabulary.
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Goodman et al., 2000	The SDQ is 25 item parent assessment on a child's behavioral strengths and difficulties.

Tool	Range of Documented Effect Sizes	Supporting Documentation
Bracken School Readiness Assessment, 3rd Ed.	.38-.50	Anderson, Shin, (2003). The Effectiveness of EC Development Programs, Am J Prev Med. (ES:.38) Gorley, & Windsor, (2000). Early childhood education: A meta-analytic affirmation of the short-and long-term benefits of education opportunity, School Psychology Quarterly, Vol 16(1), Spr 2001. pp. 9-30 (ES: .50)
Child Parent Relationship Scales (CPRS)		No research to support Effect Size benchmark.
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)	Cohens	No research with grade school population examining change over time.
Circle of Security Survey	Cohens	No research to support Effect Size benchmark.
FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (PFS)	Cohens	No research to support Effect Size benchmark
Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale (PARCA)	Cohens	No research to support Effect Size benchmark
Parenting Stress Scale (PSS)	Cohens	No research to support Effect Size benchmark
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-IV	.32-38 .	Weiland, C., & Yoshikawaa, H. (2013), Impacts of a Prekindergarten Program on Children's Mathematics, Language, Literacy, Executive Function, and Emotional Skills, Journal of Child Development. ES: .38 Barnett, S. (2008). Preschool Education and its lasting effects: Research and policy implications, Education Public Interest Center. (ES: .32)

APPENDIX B: EFFECT SIZE SUMMARY

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT INTERPRETING EFFECT SIZES?

Effect size can be affected by factors related to measurement error and duration of the intervention. Both the type of assessment and the age of the child are critical factors that may contribute to measurement error. The following are examples of potential sources of measurement error that reduce the magnitude of the standardized effect size:

The age of the child influences the measurement error. The infant measures often contain more measurement error because they have a smaller range of skills, which are more often influenced by external factors (e.g., fatigue) (Neisser et. al., 1996).

Type of assessments influence measurement error. It has been found that observations, surveys, and rating scales have more measurement error (Burchinal, 2008). More broad-based cognitive skills have smaller effect sizes than those that are more targeted (e.g., literacy and knowledge that can be mastered in a short time) (Barnett, 2008).

The developmental domain assessed influences measurement error. Language, cognitive, and academic skills have less measurement error than those assessments that include rating social-emotional or behavioral skills.

The duration and intensity of the intervention influence the magnitude of the effect size. The intensity of intervention can influence the magnitude of change.

HOW ARE EFFECT SIZES INTERPRETED IN THIS EVALUATION REPORT?

Research literature that matches the Learning Community work (e.g., based on population, measures, and target intervention) will help guide recommendations of benchmarks for interpreting effect size for each set of evaluation data. The four factors described above that influence measurement error will inform the establishment of the benchmarks for this report. Appendix B will provide the evidence that supports the established benchmarks used in this report. If the benchmark is achieved, it will be reported as a substantial, meaningful change in the report. For areas that do not have research-based support for established benchmarks, Cohen's recommendations about the magnitude of the effect will be adopted (minimal =.20, moderate =.50, and substantial =.80).

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SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN

BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation: 2018-19

FOURTH YEAR REPORT

Buffett
Early Childhood
Institute
at the University of Nebraska

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation is a collaborative partnership among the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools (CYFS) at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska.

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The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska promotes the development and learning of children from birth through age 8. Our vision is to make Nebraska the best place in the nation to be a baby.

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BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation: 2018-19

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Executive Summary

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan offers an innovative, comprehensive approach for reducing income- and race-based opportunity and achievement gaps for children from birth through Grade 3 in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The plan was developed in response to legislation (LB 585) passed in 2013 that directed the Learning Community Coordinating Council to enact an early childhood program created by the metro Omaha superintendents for young children living in high concentrations of poverty. The plan is financed by a half-cent levy, resulting in annual funding of approximately $2.9 million to be used for this purpose.

In 2013, the superintendents of the 11 school districts in Douglas and Sarpy Counties invited the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska to partner with them to prepare a plan for their review and, after approval by the Learning Community Council, to facilitate the plan's implementation. The plan was adopted unanimously by the 11 superintendents in June 2014 and approved by the Learning Community Council in August 2014. In-depth planning and initial implementation within the districts occurred throughout 2014-15. Implementation of plan components was launched in summer 2015, and continues.

The goal of the Superintendents' Plan is to reduce or eliminate social, cognitive, and achievement gaps among young children living in high concentrations of poverty. Translating research into practice, the plan provides for a comprehensive systems approach that transforms learning opportunities for children at risk for school failure by the end of third grade. Because of its systemic perspective, the plan is intended to elevate the capacity of the Omaha metro school districts to serve all young children.

The Superintendents' Plan engages in three levels of implementation through which school districts, elementary schools, and community-based professionals can strengthen efforts targeted at increasing educational opportunity and reducing achievement gaps among young children.

1. ***School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3 (full implementation)*** is an approach in which elementary schools serve as a connector to build pathways of continuous, high-quality, and equitable learning experiences for children starting at birth and extending through Grade 3. Strong links between school, home, and community open up new opportunities for families' partnership and provide access to supports and resources as they navigate their children's learning experiences. A shared goal is the prevention and reduction of income- and race-based disparities in opportunity and achievement.
2. ***Customized Assistance*** offers school districts technical assistance and consultation tailored to specific needs in birth through Grade 3 policies and

programming. In the 2018-19 school year, Gretna and Ralston school districts participated in customized assistance projects and related program evaluation.

3. ***Professional Development for All*** provides a connected series of professional development institutes open to all school and community-based program leaders, teachers, early childhood professionals, and caregivers who work with young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. PD for All introduces leading-edge research and innovative practices while promoting collaborative connections and shared commitments to strong early learning and family support systems. In the 2018-19 school year, sessions were offered in English and Spanish.

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan entered its fourth year of implementation and evaluation across six school districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. During this fourth year, the evaluation continued to assess school-level change, program quality, family processes, and child learning and development, and included a revision of previous years' evaluations, adjusting to align with program and evaluation shifts, including: (1) an increased focus on program quality and (2) child development and learning with screening in birth – 3 years, developmental assessment at 3 years, and inclusion of the entire PreK – Grade 3 population in full implementation schools for achievement and executive functioning. With this revised approach, we were able to include data for more than 2,000 children in the evaluation.

For the 2018-19 year, evaluation activities addressed the following questions:

What has been learned about the processes and outcomes related to program quality, family processes, and child learning and development?

- *Are family supports and classroom practices related to program quality improving?*
- *Do family interaction processes reflect support and engagement?*
- *How are children in full implementation schools learning and developing?*
- *How are schools implementing School as Hub?*

A variety of methods were used in the current evaluation approach, including observations in schools and family homes, direct child assessments, and family surveys. Principals, school staff, and educational facilitators were interviewed about their work supporting school connections with families and communities. In all evaluation processes, efforts were made to understand how schools and families partner to create contexts that support children's learning and development, and how schools can be supported in leading that engagement. Specific findings about the processes and outcomes related to program quality, family processes, and child learning and development are highlighted below.

Are family supports and classroom practices related to program quality improving?

- ***Classroom quality***, assessed by an observational measure of instructional, emotional, and organizational support, has increased significantly over the course of the four years. Coaches and teachers, supported by principals and schools, are refining their classroom climate and interactions with students.
- ***Home visiting*** and personal visit participation is increasing with implementation of *Growing Great Kids* curriculum. While implementing home visiting can be challenging for schools, efforts to engage families are increasing.

Do family interaction processes reflect support and engagement?

- ***Family engagement***, as connected to interaction with the home visitor and measured via the *Home Visiting Rating Scales (HOVRS)*, improved over the course of the school year, reflecting increased quality relationships among home visitors and families.
- ***Parent-child interaction***, as assessed by the *KIPS* assessment tool, reflected that most parents involved in the home visiting evaluation were interacting with children in ways that supported early learning.
- ***Family perceptions of school engagement***, as assessed using an adapted version of the *Road Map Family Engagement Survey*, reflected relatively high family perceptions of engagement with schools. Future efforts aim to increase the number of families who provide feedback using the survey.

How are children in full implementation schools learning and developing?

- ***Development and learning from birth – 3 years*** were assessed using a screening tool completed by parents. Most children enrolled in home visiting were developing typically, according to parents.
- ***Development and learning at 3 years*** were assessed for children transitioning out of home visiting. Using a standardized assessment, children demonstrated language, pre-academic skills, and executive functions in the low average range.
- ***Academic achievement in Kindergarten – Grade 3*** was assessed using school-based achievement assessments. On average, children's reading and mathematics achievement status were below the expected levels, and varied by family and child demographics related to income, race, and ethnicity.
- ***Executive functioning in Kindergarten – Grade 3*** was evaluated using a standardized assessment. Children's executive functions were in the average range, and improved over grades.

How are schools implementing School as Hub?

- ***Family partnerships*** are increasing. Schools are shifting their perspectives related to engaging families from birth, and learning what it means to prioritize the work in the landscape of competing priorities.

- ***Community partnerships*** are perceived as important and growing. Some full implementation schools are exploring the value of partnering with community-based child care.

The work of shifting school systems is complex and labor intensive. As the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan enters its fifth year, program and school staff have learned to identify essential elements of school systems change and are implementing at more intensive levels each year. Schools and districts are more intensively and intentionally engaging families and communities from children's birth through Grade 3. Evaluation efforts are capturing how efforts are implemented and how they manifest in program quality and family processes. We anticipate that identifying improvements at these levels will manifest in improvements in children's development and learning. Most importantly, we hope to detect decreases in achievement disparities.

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: Overview

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan offers an innovative, comprehensive approach for reducing income- and race-based opportunity and achievement gaps for children from birth through Grade 3 in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The plan was developed in response to legislation (LB 585) passed in 2013 that directed the Learning Community Coordinating Council to enact an early childhood program created by the metro Omaha superintendents for young children living in high concentrations of poverty. The plan is financed by a half-cent levy, resulting in annual funding of approximately $2.9 million to be used for this purpose.

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THREE LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendents' Plan engages in three levels of implementation through which school districts, elementary schools, and community-based professionals can strengthen efforts to increase educational opportunity and reduce achievement gaps among young children.

Level 1: Full Implementation of the School as Hub for Birth – Grade 3 Approach

In this systems-level implementation, schools serve as hubs that connect young children and their families to a pathway of continuous, high-quality, and equitable learning experiences for children starting at birth and extending through Grade 3. This continuum includes home visiting for children birth to age 3, three times per month, personal visits in the context of transitions to high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, and aligned Kindergarten through Grade 3 educational experiences. Educators,

families, and communities work together to attain new levels of excellence in children's early learning experiences, from birth through Grade 3. Table 1 displays demographics for the schools participating in the full implementation.

TABLE 1. | SCHOOL AND DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS: FULL IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOLS 2018-19

District and Schools	2017-19 Student Enrollment	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Racial Ethnic Minority Population	% At or Above Proficient 3rd Grade Language Arts*	% At or Above Proficient 3rd Grade Math*
Bellevue	**9,801**	**38.98%**	**31.14%**	**48%**	**40%**
Belleaire	295	68.81%	43.39%	40%	19%
DC West	**958**	**35.18%**	**10.44%**	**42%**	**43%**
DC West	484	39.46%	9.30%	42%	43%
Millard	**24,018**	**20.76%**	**22.20%**	**64%**	**63%**
Cody	297	52.86%	42.76%	30%	33%
Sandoz	367	49.59%	46.87%	56%	44%
Omaha	**52,836**	**76.66%**	**72.95%**	**34%**	**32%**
Gomez Heritage	840	89.52%	92.98%	29%	25%
Liberty	728	92.99%	89.97%	14%	17%
Mount View	390	91.54%	88.72%	16%	16%
Pinewood	224	71.43%	72.77%	39%	48%
Ralston	**3,407**	**56.53%**	**47.99%**	**45%**	**35%**
Mockingbird	383	75.46%	66.58%	45%	33%
Westside	**6,066**	**33.88%**	**29.31%**	**59%**	**55%**
Westbrook	544	55.33%	46.69%	39%	38%
Total school enrollment	***4,552***				
Total district enrollment	***97,086***				

*Based on 2017-18 proficiencies

Level 2: Customized Assistance to Districts

Customized Assistance offers school districts technical assistance and consultation tailored to specific needs in birth through Grade 3 policies and programming. In the 2018-19 school year, Gretna and Ralston school districts participated in customized assistance projects and related program evaluation. Gretna's initiative focused on developing teachers' capacity to support children's social-emotional competence, while the Ralston school district made efforts to continue fostering high-quality PreK practices, particularly around language development.

Level 3: Professional Development for All

PD for All provides a connected series of professional development institutes open to all school and community-based program leaders, teachers, early childhood professionals, and caregivers who work with young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. PD for All introduces leading-edge research and innovative practices while promoting collaborative connections and shared commitments to strong early learning and family support systems. The theme for the 2018-19 PD for All series was "Harnessing the Power of Language and Communication to Build Children's Literacy Success." Five institutes (including two in Spanish) provided professional development to 498 early childhood education professionals.

Evaluation activities specific to each of the three interconnected levels of implementation in the Superintendents' Plan are described in the sections that follow.

THE FOURTH YEAR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL AS HUB BIRTH – GRADE 3 APPROACH

School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3 is a leading-edge approach in which elementary schools serve as a connector to build pathways of continuous, high-quality, and equitable learning experiences for children starting at birth and extending through Grade 3. Strong links between school, home, and community open up new opportunities for families' engagement and provide access to supports and resources as they navigate their children's learning experiences. A shared goal is the prevention and reduction of income- and race-based disparities in opportunity and achievement.

According to the theory of change for the School as Hub for Birth – Grade 3 (see Figure 1), continuity, quality, and equity for children are the lens through which practices and policies are shaped and evaluated at all levels of educational systems, including classrooms, elementary schools, districts, and communities. Only by addressing all levels of the system can we expect this approach to be effective in reducing or eliminating income- and race- based disparities in opportunity and achievement.

Continuity

Continuity refers to the commitment to provide children with seamless learning and educational experiences from birth through Grade 3. Continuity and seamless transitions across the full birth through Grade 3 continuum promote stability and long-term educational success for children (Stipek, Clements, Coburn, Franke, & Farran, 2017; Takanishi, 2016).

Quality

Quality refers to the commitment to implement practices with families, children, and educators that are evidence-based, produce developmentally and educationally important outcomes, and are informed by continuous improvement. High-quality classroom and family support practices are based on two-way relationships that enhance interactions between educators, children, and families; they promote social-emotional well-being and stimulate learning and thinking; they are tailored to individual needs; and they are culturally and linguistically affirming (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; Pianta, Downer, & Hamre, 2016).

Equity

Equity refers to the commitment that every child receives what is needed to succeed in school and life (Blankenstein, Noguera, & Kelly, 2016). An explicit focus on equity throughout School as Hub practices and policies provides an essential catalyst for progress toward the goal of preventing and eliminating income- and race-based disparities in opportunity and achievement by starting early.

An essential feature of the School as Hub approach is a guiding integrated framework that combines educational experiences for children with opportunities for family engagement and parenting supports. The School as Hub framework identifies three essential dimensions, requiring schools to: (1) implement a continuum of birth through Grade 3 practices; (2) strengthen organizational environments; and (3) build professional capacity. These dimensions highlight the School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3 approach as a systems approach through which multiple components work together interactively. While changes in practices to enhance children and family supports are at the forefront, school organizational environments and professional capacity are equally influential dimensions that must be intentionally cultivated as part of the transformation from traditional elementary school to School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3 (Fullan, 2010; Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006). As the School as Hub approach is implemented, strategic and interdependent changes are promoted to build professional capacity through leadership and collaborative learning. Organizational environments, such as school culture and family-school partnerships, also are strengthened (Figure 1). Table 2 describes the three dimensions and their components.

FIGURE 1. | SCHOOL AS HUB FOR BIRTH THROUGH GRADE 3: THEORY OF CHANGE

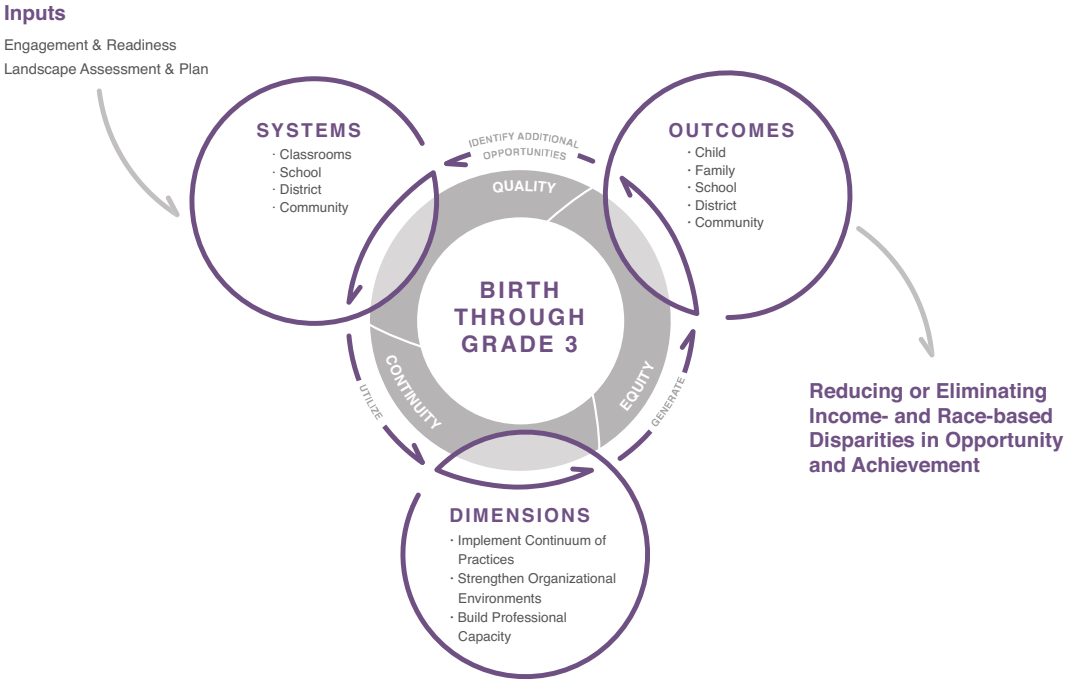


TABLE 2. | SCHOOL AS HUB FOR BIRTH THROUGH GRADE 3 FRAMEWORK

DIMENSIONS		
Implement Birth – Grade 3 Continuum of Practices	**Strengthen Organizational Environments**	**Build Professional Capacity**
COMPONENTS		
• Child-Centered Teaching and Learning • Child-Centered Parenting and Learning • Cross-Cutting Practices	• Culture and Climate • Family-School Partnerships • Community-School Connections	• Leadership • Professional Learning • Collaboration

EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL AS HUB FOR BIRTH – GRADE 3 APPROACH

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation aims to capture the degree to which the School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3 framework is being implemented and observed across a range of districts and schools. In the following sections, we describe the methods used to evaluate the approach, findings related to program quality, and what is being learned about efforts in the full implementation. Subsequent sections describe engagement in the customized assistance and professional development for all programming.

The evaluation of the School as Hub Birth – Grade 3 approach (full implementation) includes evaluation from four system levels:

- Program quality in home visiting and classrooms
- Family engagement processes
- Child development and learning outcomes
- Program implementation within school systems

For the 2018-19 year, evaluation activities addressed the following questions:

What has been learned about the processes and outcomes related to program quality, family processes, and child learning and development?

- *Are family supports and classroom practices related to program quality improving?*
- *Do family interaction processes reflect support and engagement?*
- *How are children in full implementation schools learning and developing?*
- *How are schools implementing School as Hub?*

The full implementation approach is designed to bring about significant shifts in how "schools do school" over time. Principals, teachers, school staff, children, and families participate in the program. In addition to principals and teachers, school staff include a home visitor and family facilitator employed by each school to provide early parenting supports and promote family-school-community partnerships. Table 1 describes the characteristics of the children enrolled in the full implementation districts and schools.

Evaluation Overview: Full Implementation

The evaluation was designed to document, measure, and support implementation of the Superintendents' Plan, and to provide information about shifts in practices and progress in school systems, family processes and engagement, and child learning and development. In 2018-19, the evaluation was revised to accommodate shifts in program components and to be responsive to feedback from district and school partners. The goals for the evaluation plan for 2018-19 were revised to:

- Align the evaluation with the updated change strategies and theory of change for the School as Hub approach including:
  - Implementation of the *Growing Great Kids* curriculum for the parents of children ages birth to 5
  - Addition of personal visits for families after children age out of home visits up to age 5
  - Focus on school-based system change via the School as Hub approach
- Increase the number of children included in the evaluation in order to draw more meaningful conclusions about the quality and effectiveness of program components

- Maximize the scope of the evaluation while reducing the assessment burden on children, schools, and families

Our partnerships are essential to the ongoing evaluation. Evaluators from the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) at the University of Nebraska Medical Center managed the data collection processes for (1) family surveys, (2) for the 3-year-old children who were transitioning out of Home Visiting, and (3) children in Kindergarten – Grade 3 who participated in the evaluation. Evaluators from the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS) at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln managed: (1) data collection training for the home visitors and family facilitators, and (2) video coding and analyses for children birth – age 3, their parents, and home visitors.

To more effectively align with program shifts and participating school needs, revisions to the 2017-18 evaluation design and processes were implemented in 2018-19, and will be continued in subsequent years. The quality of home visiting and classroom practices was assessed using the same observational measures as in previous years. An additional observational time point was added for home visiting to facilitate feedback to program improvement. Family process assessments included observations of parent-child interactions and a modified survey to assess aspects of family engagement, aligned with the theory of change dimensions. Child development and learning outcomes were assessed with standardized measures of educational achievement and executive function. The measures chosen were either currently being utilized by the schools or could be implemented with all children in the same manner as the current school-based measures so that data could be used for multiple purposes. Data sharing agreements were negotiated with participating districts to facilitate the efficient use of school-based data. General methods by child age group are described below. Specific methods for program quality, family processes, and child learning and development are described in the following sections.

Birth – Age 3

Children under 3 years who were enrolled in home visiting and whose families consented to participate in the evaluation are represented in these results. Families completed developmental screening and home visiting observations that included home visitor interaction quality and parent-child interaction.

Age 3 (Transitioning out of Home Visiting)

To allow the evaluation to examine a similar “starting point” or baseline for all children enrolled in home visiting, evaluation staff used direct assessments of academic skills, language, and social-emotional (executive function) for children at age 3 who were transitioning out of the home visiting program.

Kindergarten – Grade 3

Evaluation staff used direct assessment of children, video observation of classroom practices, and a family survey. All children in Kindergarten through Grade 3 were asked to participate in the evaluation through a passive consent process. The passive consent process involved a letter sent to each family within each of the schools that provided an overview of the evaluation activities and the use of student assessment data. Families were given the opportunity to decline participation in the evaluation if the form was signed and returned within a two- to three-week time frame. This process resulted in 2,376 Kindergarten through Grade 3 children, across 10 full implementation schools, participating in the evaluation. The total number of children for whom families declined participation in the evaluation was 170 across the 10 schools.

Following Children From Previous Cohort Design

The previous cohort design was modified to allow for children's learning and development to be studied at a population level after PreK; however, children included in the original design continue to participate in the evaluation. Moving forward, these children will be followed through third grade in order to differentiate them from children added to the evaluation. For children enrolled in Birth – Age 5 programming (e.g., home visiting and personal visits) future evaluations will consider the number of years children were enrolled in programming and participation in School as Hub components. This will be particularly valuable as we consider children in the original Birth to Age 3 cohort who experience multiple years of home visiting.

Data Analytic Approach

Descriptive and inferential data analytic approaches were used to address the evaluation questions. Statistical analyses were conducted to test for differences across time points and groups as well as to account for clustering of data (e.g., children and teachers within schools). Sample sizes (of classrooms and students) were often sufficient for determining the statistical significance of group differences and change over time, something not possible in previous reports.

Program Quality: Home Visiting and Classroom Practices

BIRTH – AGE 5: HOME VISITING AND FAMILY FACILITATION

Schools Continue to Learn How to Partner With Families From Birth

School-based, voluntary home visiting is a key program component for the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 approach. Consistent, high-quality home visiting in the early years has been shown to increase children's outcomes over time by: (1) increasing parents' capacity to support their child's learning and development (Caldera et al., 2007) and (2) enhancing families' relationships and engagement with their child's school (Wessels, 2013). The home visiting program includes three one-hour visits per month with each participating family, throughout the school year and summer months. As children age out of home visiting at 3 years old, family facilitators continue to perform personal visits with most families once per month to provide continuity of educational experiences for children until they enter school-based PreK or Kindergarten.

Leaders at each school identified criteria for recruiting families into the voluntary home visiting program, with an emphasis on including children and families with the highest needs. To encourage early and continuous engagement with families, schools were encouraged to prioritize recruitment of families with children under age 1 or those expecting a child. Other priorities for recruitment included low income, teen parent(s), low birth weight, low maternal education level, and home language other than English. When home visitors enrolled families in the program, they invited them to participate in the evaluation. Evaluation activities in the 2018-19 year focused on the process of home visitation and parent-child interaction. A typical home visit was recorded for each family, lasting approximately 60 minutes.

In the 2018-19 year, 122 children received home visiting services from their school (95 families). Of these children, 81 participated in the evaluation. Table 3 provides a description of program and evaluation enrollment by district and school.

As of May 31, 2019, 14 children had turned 3 years old and transitioned out of the home visiting program. Of this group, eight children were accepted into school-based PreK/Head Start classrooms, and the remaining six children will stay home or attend community programs.

We use the term "parent" in this report to refer to the family member (parent, grandparent, guardian) who served as the primary contact and participant in the evaluation. Parents provided demographic and other information about their family and children. More than 49% of parents self-identified as Hispanic, 23% White, 18% Black, and 9% Asian/Pacific Islander. All parents reported that their children qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch participation.

TABLE 3. | HOME VISITING PARTICIPATION

	ENROLLED		CONSENTED TO EVALUATION	
School	Families	Children	Families	Children
Belleaire	9	10	6	7
Cody	8	9	4	4
DC West	8	11	8	8
Sandoz	9	13	9	13
Gomez	15	18	8	10
Liberty	12	15	10	10
Mockingbird	11	13	8	8
Mount View	6	9	3	3
Pinewood	11	14	11	12
Westbrook	6	10	6	6
Totals	**95**	**122**	**73**	**81**

School-based home visitors and family facilitators implement the *Growing Great Kids* curriculum (*GGK*; Elliot, Flanagan, Belza, Dew, 2012). With a focus on understanding family assets and cultivating resilience, home visitors engage and empower parents in their role as educators of their children. *GGK* is relationship-based and supports families in building secure attachments.

The quality of home visiting practices was assessed using the *Home Visiting Rating Scales* (*HOVRS*; Roggman et al., 2017). The *HOVRS* assessment includes a videotaped observation containing two subscales: *home visiting practices* and *family engagement*. Individual items are scored using anchors that indicate the quality of the interaction (1 = needs training, 3 = adequate, 5 = good, 7 = excellent), and each scale is assigned an overall score (1 – 7). *Home visiting practices* refers to the home visitor's responsiveness, relationship with the family, facilitation of parent-child interactions, and non-intrusiveness and collaboration. *Family engagement* refers to how the home visitor supports developmentally appropriate parent-child interactions (see section on Family Processes).

Home visiting quality is evaluated twice per year as part of the professional development for home visitors and family facilitators. Families are asked to consent to participating in the evaluation process. Families received $25 gift cards each time they participated in the *HOVRS*, which includes the home visitor video recording their interactions during the home visit. These confidential recordings are uploaded via secure school servers into protected online research folders. An external evaluation team scores the home visiting quality and shares reports with the home visitors and program team to support learning.

HOVRS coders participate in a rigorous training and reliability process. Coders must

achieve 85% reliability and submit to ongoing reliability checks on every fifth video to continue coding. Individualized reports are shared with the program staff for professional development and self-assessment purposes. Compilations of these data are utilized for evaluation aims.

Recorded observations were evaluated from 10 home visitors and five family facilitators for a total of 15 school-based professionals. Ninety-seven completed observations included 81 from home visitors and 16 from family facilitators. Observations were split roughly between baseline (*n* = 47) and follow-up three months later (*n* = 50). Sixty different families participated in these recorded evaluation observations. The process of using technology to observe home visiting was not an easy one, and some data were lost in the collection process.

The *Home Visitor Practices* subscale was used to assess home visitors based on four items, each of which is assigned a rating of 1 – 7. The items include: *responsiveness to family*, *relationship with family*, *facilitation of parent-child interactions*, and *non-intrusiveness and collaboration*. The four items are summed to provide the summary score. Most summary mean scale scores were within the "adequate" range (11 – 18). Mean *Home Visit Practices* quality summary scores were 14.70 (*SD* = 4.26) at baseline and 15.16 (*SD* = 4.37) at follow-up. Scores for the individual item *Relationship with the Family*, a foundational element for building trust in the context of home visiting, were positively rated in the "good" range at 4.98 at baseline and 4.78 at follow-up.

PREK – GRADE 3: CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICES

Classroom Interactions and Instruction Trends Are Strong and Increased Over Time

The quality of teachers' practices and interactions in the classroom is associated with higher academic and social interactions throughout the elementary school years (Hamre & Pianta, 2003). To enhance quality instructional practices, the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan employs methods and instructional content grounded in child development and learning. Educational facilitators provide coaching and professional learning opportunities for PreK – Grade 3 teachers and work with all school staff to promote school climates that support evidence-based strategies to support children's optimal learning and development.

The *Classroom Assessment Scoring System* (*CLASS*) is an observational tool that assesses the quality of classroom practices in the domains of *emotional support*, *classroom organization*, and *instructional support* (see Figure 2). *CLASS* scores (scaled from 1 to 7) have evidence-based associations with student achievement across classrooms and can also predict gains in student achievement (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). PreK through Grade 3 classrooms across all 10 full implementation schools participated in the *CLASS* assessment and were videotaped for an hour during

January through March, 2019. Trained evaluators reviewed and scored the videotapes. Teachers and coaches received their score reports and had access to videotapes to observe their teaching.

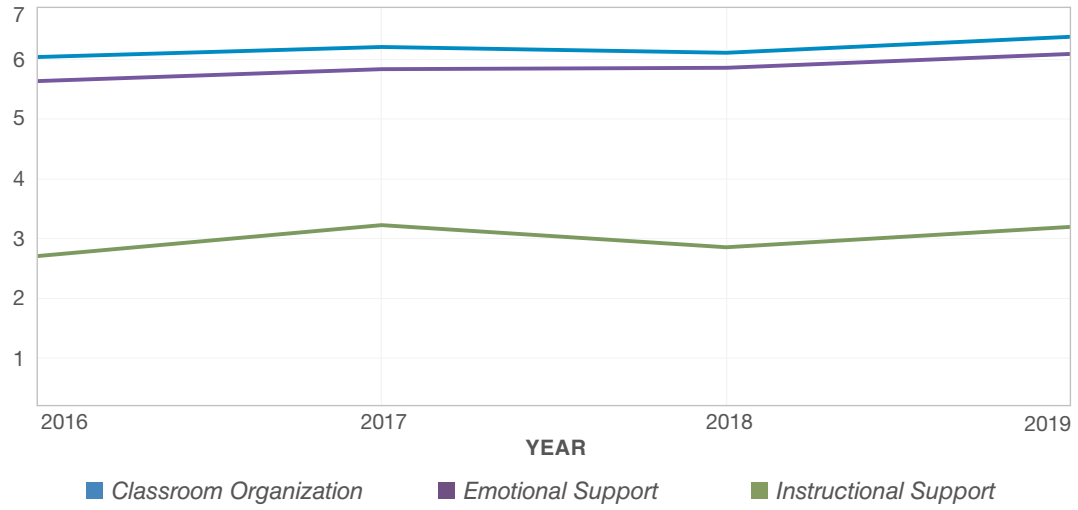
FIGURE 2. | *CLASS* DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	*CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION*	*INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT*
• Positive Climate • Teacher Sensitivity • Regard for Student's Perspective • Negative Climate	• Behavior Management • Productivity • Instructional Learning Formats	• Concept Development • Quality of Feedback • Language Modeling

- *Emotional Support* reflects positive teacher-student relationships and communication patterns. PreK – Grade 3 teachers in the full implementation schools exceeded national benchmarks on three of four *Emotional Support* dimensions including positive climate (M = 6.29, SD = .77); absence of negative climate (M = 6.95, SD = .17); and teacher sensitivity (M = 6.38, SD = .82).
- *Classroom Organization* reflects settings in which teachers establish structures and opportunities for student engagement in learning, including facilitating student discovery and supporting attention through clear expectations and routines. Scores for *Classroom Organization* are in the high-quality range and exceed national benchmarks, for behavior management (M = 6.57, SD = .69), productivity (M = 6.51, SD = .63), and instructional learning formats (M = 5.81, SD = .89).
- *Instructional Support* reflects how the teacher uses language and activities to scaffold children's learning. *Instructional Support* scores in the full implementation PreK – Grade 3 classrooms are mid-range, and reflect national trends (Hamre, 2014; Moiduddin, Aikens, Tarullo, West, & Xue, 2012). However, these scores exceed national Head Start averages across all dimensions, including concept development (M = 2.74, SD = .99), quality of feedback (M = 3.13, SD = 1.4), and language modeling (M = 3.57; SD = 1.06).

CLASS scores in all three domains improved over the first four years of the full implementation and were significantly higher in 2019 relative to 2018 and 2016 across all three domains. Average *emotional support* scores increased from year to year, with statistically significant score improvements occurring from 2016-17 and 2018-19. *Classroom organization* and *instructional support* scores also showed an overall positive directional trend (See Figure 3).

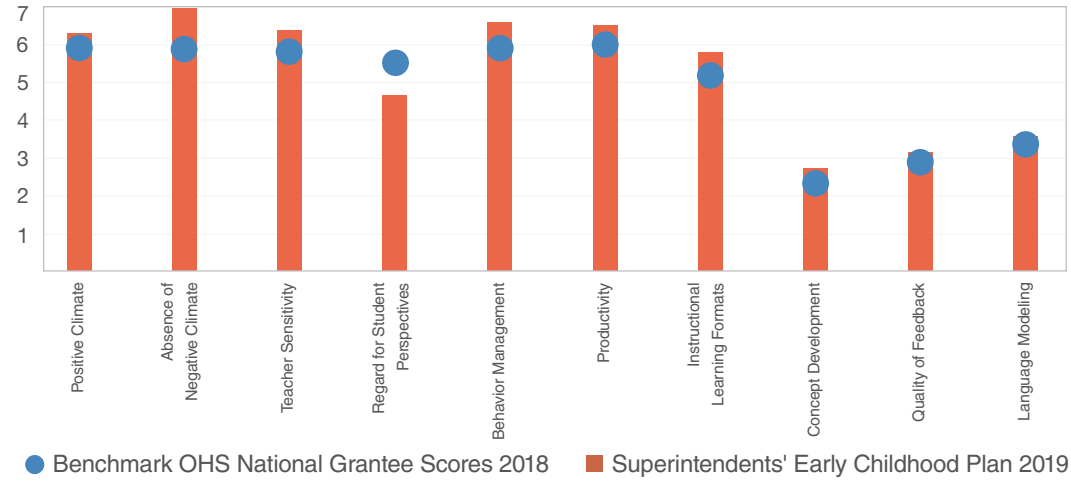
FIGURE 3. | PREK – GRADE 3 *CLASS* DOMAIN SCORES 2016-19



Teacher Practice Scores Surpass National Benchmarks

To situate the quality of classroom interactions in a national context, *CLASS* dimension scores from the 2018-19 academic year were compared to national grantee benchmarks from the national Office of Head Start (A National Overview, 2019). Overall, classroom quality, as measured by *CLASS*, outperformed national benchmarks across domains and over most dimensions. Figure 4 represents PreK – Grade 3 *CLASS* dimension scores compared to the national benchmark.

FIGURE 4. | PREK – GRADE 3 *CLASS* DIMENSION SCORES COMPARED TO NATIONAL BENCHMARK



Family Processes

The Superintendents' Plan works with schools to re-examine and address how to support families of young children, birth – Grade 3. Schools can support families by helping families connect with other families, school staff, and helpful community resources (Min, Anderson, & Chen, 2017). Through intentional interactions with every family, such as those taking place in the context of a home visiting relationship or parent-child interaction group, schools can provide information about child development and learning and promote healthy relationships. These trusting relationships often offer families an opportunity to ask questions, express opinions, and learn about school processes. Schools can listen and be responsive to families as a part of this partnership and shift their practices related to partnering with families, communication, school culture, and trust. To learn about family processes in the full implementation, we examined parent-child engagement, observed parent-child interaction, and surveyed families about their partnership with schools.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Home Visiting and Family Facilitation Foster Positive Parent-Child Interaction

Connecting families to early education knowledge, other families, and the schools in their communities are the sources of family partnership and a major goal of home visiting in the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 approach. The quality of family processes is assessed using the *Home Visiting Rating Scales* (*HOVRS*; Roggman et al., 2017), focused on the *family engagement* subscale. The *family engagement* subscale assesses the degree to which the home visitor supports developmentally appropriate parent-child interactions. Home visitors (n = 9) and family facilitators (n = 3) video recorded parent-child-home visitor/family facilitator interactions as part of the home visit and these were coded by trained evaluators. Analyses focused on the 33 families that participated in the evaluation at baseline and follow-up.

The three *Family Engagement* items, Parent Engagement, Child Engagement, and Parent-Child Interaction, are each rated between a minimum of 1 and maximum of 7 and are summed to get the summary score. *Family engagement* subscale scores at baseline (M = 13.74, SD = 3.04) and follow-up (M = 15.21, SD = 2.79) improved significantly (t (33) = 2.31, p = .027), and reflected movement from "adequate" to "good" ratings of engagement. By follow-up, two of the three items (Parent Engagement and Child Engagement) were meeting or exceeding "good" quality standards, with the third item (Parent-Child Interaction) also showing gains.

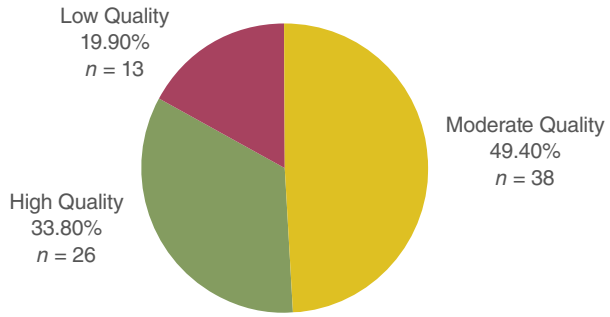
PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Positive Parent-Child Interactions Support Learning and Development

The parent-child relationship contributes in essential ways to young children's development and learning (Richter, Griesel, & Manegold, 2004). A primary goal of home visiting is to help the parent develop and maintain a positive relationship with their child (Sama-Miller et al., 2017). In the context of the home visit, the home visitor or family

facilitator video records the parent and child engaging in play for 10 minutes. Trained coders observed how the parent and child interacted in play and used the *Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale* (*KIPS*; Comfort & Gordon, 2006) to observe how the parent responds to the child in ways that promote trust and acceptance, scaffold child learning, and encourage the child's self-confidence. The 12-item scale is rated on a 5-point scale (1 = rarely, 3 = usually, and 5 = consistently). Seventy-seven observations were recorded and rated for 53 families; some families had multiple children enrolled in the program. Most families participating in home visiting demonstrated moderate to high-quality parent-child interactions (M = 3.65, SD = .65), suggesting that on average, parents are responsive and supportive of their children's development and learning (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. | QUALITY OF PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS IN HOME VISITING



FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Assessing Family Perceptions Informs Family-School Partnerships

When schools engage meaningfully with families, children demonstrate better educational achievement and social outcomes (Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Child, 2004). To support schools' practices engaging families for continuity, quality, and equity, an adaptation of the *Road Map Family Engagement Survey* (*FES*; Ishimaru & Lott, 2015) was used to assess families' perceptions about collaboration among families, communities, and schools. Twelve items addressed six domains: Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence, Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, Parent/Family Influence and Decision-Making, Family-Educator Trust, Family-Educator Communication, and Principal Leadership for Engagement. Parents rank items on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Surveys were distributed to families enrolled in home visiting or family facilitation and in PreK to Grade 3 full implementation schools, in either online or paper format, based on school preference. Families enrolled in home visiting or family facilitation also received the surveys.

A total of 731 families responded to the survey across all 10 schools, with 189 of these families reporting speaking a language other than English in the home. The majority of the families reported their race as White (n = 433) with the next-largest race category reported being Black (n = 87). Over half of the families (n = 372) reported qualifying for Free or

Reduced Lunch. Descriptive statistics were obtained for each of the items in the survey. As a whole, families responded very positively to the items with mean item scores ranging from 5.98 to 6.49 (out of 7).

Child Development and Learning

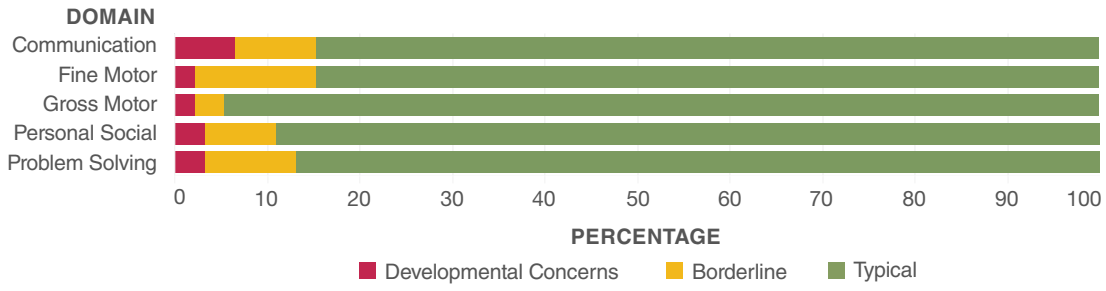
Over time, a focus on continuity, quality, and equity in the context of the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 approach is expected to manifest in improved development and learning for all children and reduced disparities based on race and income. Children's development and educational achievement are being assessed annually to investigate changes in learning and disparities over time. Measures used in the 2018-19 school year were revised to (1) better identify development concerns in the birth to 3-year-old population participating in home visiting, (2) establish a baseline measurement for 3-year-olds' language skill and early academic skill related to math and reading, and (3) allow for population-level examination of development and learning for children using school-based assessments for reading and math, PreK to Grade 3.

DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING: BIRTH – 5 YEARS

Children's development was assessed using the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition* (*ASQ-3*; Squires, Bricker & Twombly, 2009). A screening tool, the *ASQ-3* includes 21 age-specific questionnaires for 3 – 60 months, with items assessing five developmental areas: *communication*, *gross motor*, *fine motor*, *problem solving*, and *personal-social*. Scores for each developmental area are assigned one of three ratings meant to indicate risk of developmental delay and need for referral: Developmental Concerns (lowest) Borderline (mid-range), and Typical (highest). Families complete the questionnaires in the context of the home visit or personal visit; home visitors and family facilitators score and discuss any concerns families may have about their child's development. Due to the ongoing recruiting of families into home visiting and family facilitation, children's ages at first assessment varied. Ninety-one children were assessed at least one time, with the youngest child measured at 1.08 months and the oldest child measured at 61.22 months (M = 17.03 months, SD = 12.86 months).

Due to the variability in the number and timing of assessment points, children's initial enrollment questionnaire served as the focus of these analyses. A majority of children in home visiting were developing typically (85% – 95% across five areas), and a very small number presented developmental concerns (two to six children across five areas). Figure 6 illustrates the proportion of children rated in each developmental category.

FIGURE 6. | CHILD DEVELOPMENT BIRTH – 5 YEARS *ASQ-3*



DEVELOPING AND LEARNING: 3 YEARS – GRADE 3

An indicator of children's early academic achievement includes the ability to understand written language and acquire fundamental math concepts. In the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, educational facilitators work with classroom teachers to support academic instruction in PreK – Grade 3 classrooms.

Language, Cognitive, and Academic Skills at 3 Years

Children's language develops rapidly in the first three years of life and continues to predict academic achievement through the school years (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000). Receptive language skills develop first and are demonstrated in children's ability to understand language and use it to reason and solve problems. Expressive language skills develop next and are reflected in children's ability to use gestural and verbal, and eventually written language, to communicate with others and demonstrate understanding. Language serves as a linchpin for ongoing learning. When children are delayed in their language learning or are not exposed to language-rich environments, they often struggle with social development and academic achievement as well (Scarborough, 2009).

Children's language development and early academic skills at 3 years were assessed in the home using the *Expressive Language* subscale of the *Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Early Cognitive and Academic Development* (*ECAD*; Schrank, McGrew, Mather, LaForte, Wendling, and Dailey, 2015). This assessment is a battery of early development tests that measure general intellectual ability and early academic skills. It is designed for children from ages 2 years, 6 months to 7 years, 11 months and for children with cognitive delays up to age 9 years, 11 months. The *Expressive Language* subscale is made up of tests of picture vocabulary (child is shown an image and given the correct object label, child is asked to point to the object, child is asked to say the object label aloud) and sentence repetition (child is asked to repeat words, phrases, and sentences exactly as heard). Thirteen children were assessed at age 3 from six of the full implementation schools. Children who spoke Spanish as their home language, as reported by parents, were assessed using the *Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey III* (*WMLS III*; Woodcock, Alvarado, Ruef, and Schrank, 1993-2017), but participant numbers were too small to report ($N < 10$).

Mean scores on the *Expressive Language* subscale were 87.50 ($SD = 21.30$). Generally speaking, scores on the *Expressive Language* subscale are highly variable in young children, but these averages suggest that in this small sample of 3-year-olds transitioning out of home visiting, language ability is in the low average range of the developmental level expected for children this age.

Children's math and literacy skills were also assessed at 3 years old in the home using the *Early Academic Skills scale of the Woodcock-Johnson* (Woodcock, 1984). The *Early Academic Skills* measure is made up of tests of letter-word identification (identification of

letters or words and/or other images), number sense (knowledge related to counting, size, etc., e.g., *show me two hands*), and writing (drawing or tracing letters, shapes, and words). Mean scores on the *Early Academic Skills* subscale were 88.92 (*SD* = 14.37), considered in the low average range. Children's scores on the two scales of the *Woodcock-Johnson* (*ECAD*) were significantly related to each other ($r = 0.67$, $p = .016$), such that children with higher scores on the *Expressive Language* subscale also scored higher on the *Early Academic Skills* scale.

Academic Achievement in Kindergarten – Grade 3

The Northwest Evaluation Association's *Measures of Academic Progress Growth* (*NWEA MAP*) was used to examine students' academic achievement. *MAP Growth* is a computer adaptive, multiple-choice norm-referenced assessment that measures student proficiency and growth in the areas of Reading, Mathematics, Language Usage and Science. Schools participating in the Superintendents' Plan administer *MAP Growth* testing three times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring) in K – 3. For evaluation purposes, data obtained from participating schools were used to examine *status* and *status of student growth* for Math and Reading. Status refers to a student's achievement level at a specific point in time (e.g., the end of the school year). Growth refers to how much the student progressed across multiple points in time (e.g., fall to spring). We used achievement scores from spring 2019 to address evaluation of status and an NWEA metric calculated based on fall 2018 and spring 2019 assessments to address students' growth status. Data for nine of the 10 Superintendents' Plan schools were provided for Kindergarten and Grades 1 – 3; one school provided only data for Grade 3. Due to policies related to sharing information about students, Free and Reduced Lunch status (FRL) data were only provided by four schools.

Student Achievement Status

NWEA MAP uses a proprietary *RIT* (*Rasch UnIT*) scale to measure student achievement status. The *RIT* scale is an equal-interval scale which is particularly useful for measuring student achievement in a variety of subject areas as well as tracking student achievement over time (https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1647). Spring 2019 *RIT* scores were used to evaluate the status of reading and mathematics achievement of students in Kindergarten through Grade 3. Table 4 summarizes *RIT* Reading and Math scores across Superintendents' Plan schools and grade levels. Compared to the 2015 student status norms developed by NWEA (Thum & Hauser, 2015), aggregate scores were slightly lower for students from Superintendents' Plan schools, across grade level and subject area. Since aggregating scores across the Superintendents' Plan schools masks the number of schools that did meet or exceed student status norms, this information is also included in the Schools column of Table 4.

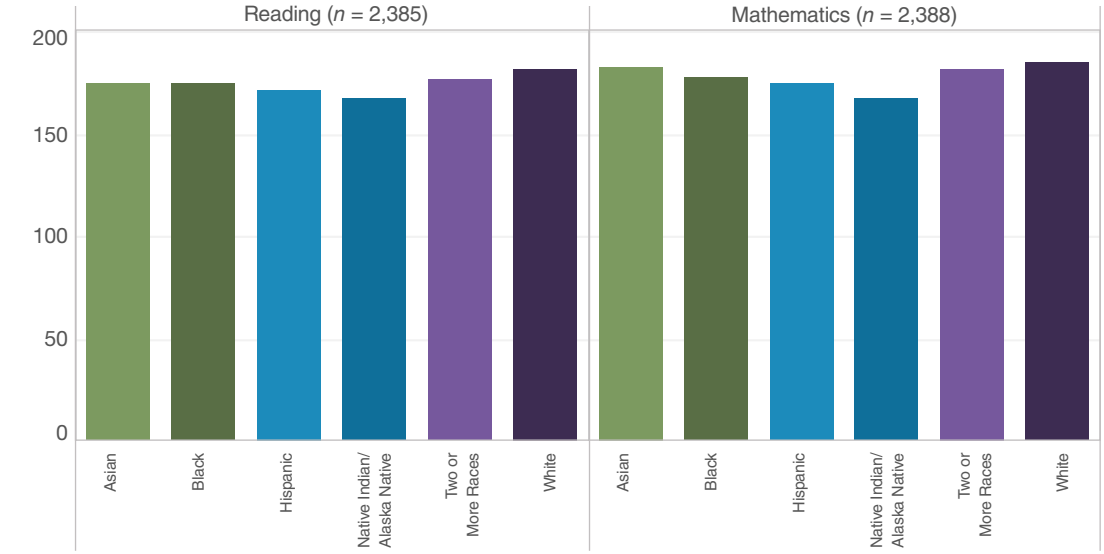
TABLE 4. | KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 3 SPRING 2019 *MAP* ACHIEVEMENT STATUS

Grade	READING				MATHEMATICS			
	N	*Mean*	*SD*	Schools Meeting	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	Schools Meeting
Kindergarten	654	153.74	13.74	4	654	154.62	15.69	4
First	600	173.41	14.80	4	599	178.57	15.09	5
Second	538	183.09	15.61	4	538	185.55	13.63	4
Third	658	192.03	17.79	4	661	197.29	15.60	4

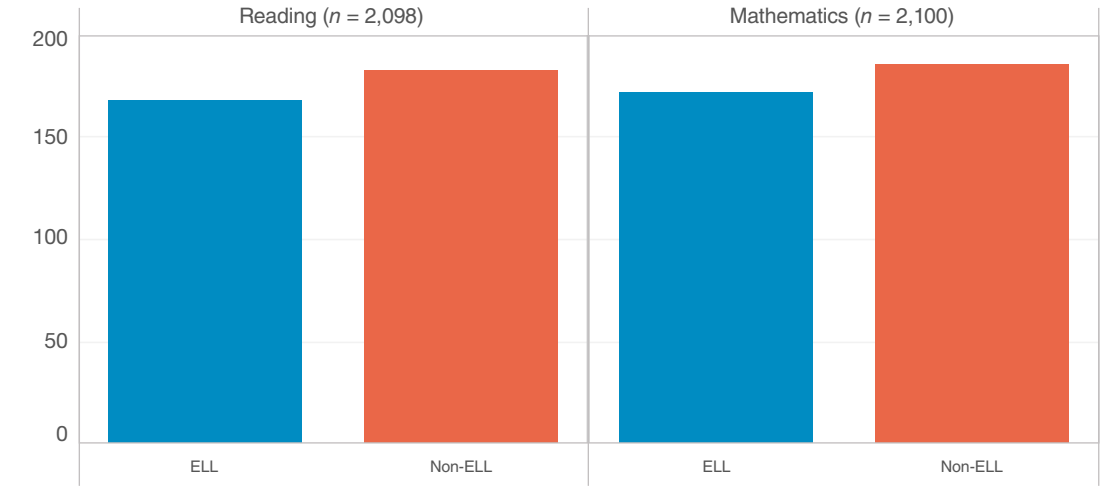
Students' reading achievement status and mathematics achievement status were also analyzed by demographic groups. Figure 7 presents the demographic breakdown of spring 2019 mean *RIT* scores across race/ethnicity and English-language learner (ELL) status. The Nebraska Department of Education's Nebraska Student and Staff Record System definition of race/ethnicity was used for the demographic breakdowns (NDE, 2009). A similar pattern appears across reading and mathematics *RIT* scores for each demographic breakdown.

FIGURE 7. | *NWEA MAP* MEANS: ACHIEVEMENT STATUS

Average Spring 2019 *RIT* Scores Across Race/Ethnicity



Average Spring 2019 *RIT* Scores Across ELL Status



Student Growth Status

The *Conditional Growth Percentile* (*CGP*) is a percentile rank measure of student growth which indicates the amount of growth a student has made relative to the 2015 NWEA growth norms. (Conditional Growth Index, 2019). For instance, a *CGP* of 50 indicates a student met his or her projected growth exactly. We used the median of the *CGP* to summarize student growth percentiles by our groups of interest. In this instance, a median *CGP* of 50 indicates that half of the students in a group demonstrate growth above 50 and half are below 50. Table 5 provides the median *CGP* of students grouped by grade level for Reading and Mathematics growth from fall 2018 to spring 2019. Consistent with student achievement status findings, student growth status falls below projected

growth (i.e., median *CGP* less than 50) in most grades except for mathematics scores of Kindergarten and first grade students. Also similar to achievement status, a number of schools met or exceeded projected growth within each grade level (See Schools column, which represents the number of schools that meet or exceed projected growth at each grade level).

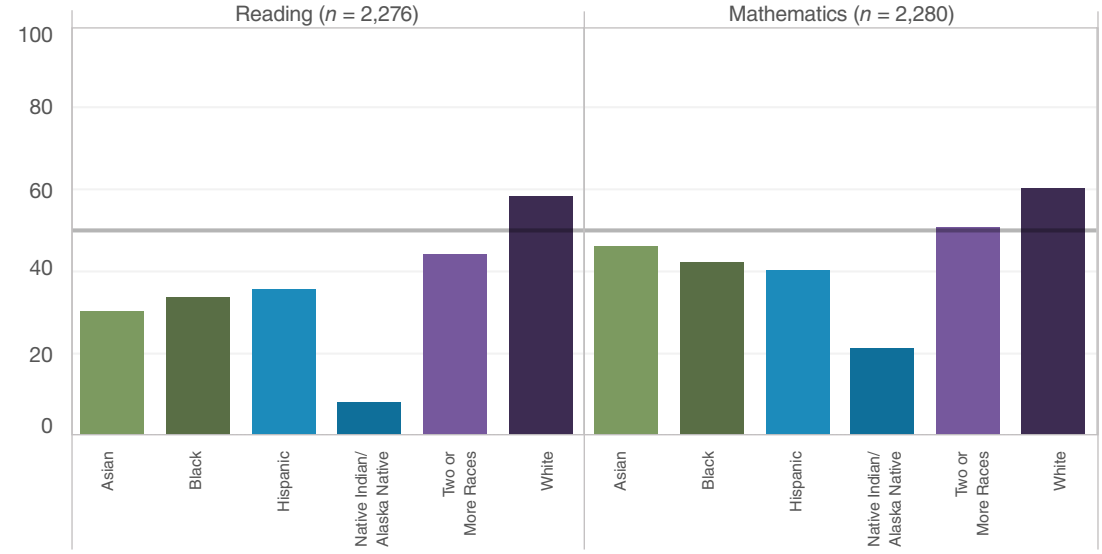
TABLE 5. | KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 3 *MAP CONDITIONAL GROWTH PERCENTILES*

	READING			MATHEMATICS		
Grade	*N*	*Median*	Schools Meeting	*N*	*Median*	Schools Meeting
Kindergarten	624	43.00	4	623	58.00	4
First	573	41.00	4	573	51.00	6
Second	511	41.00	3	511	37.00	3
Third	629	41.00	4	633	43.00	4

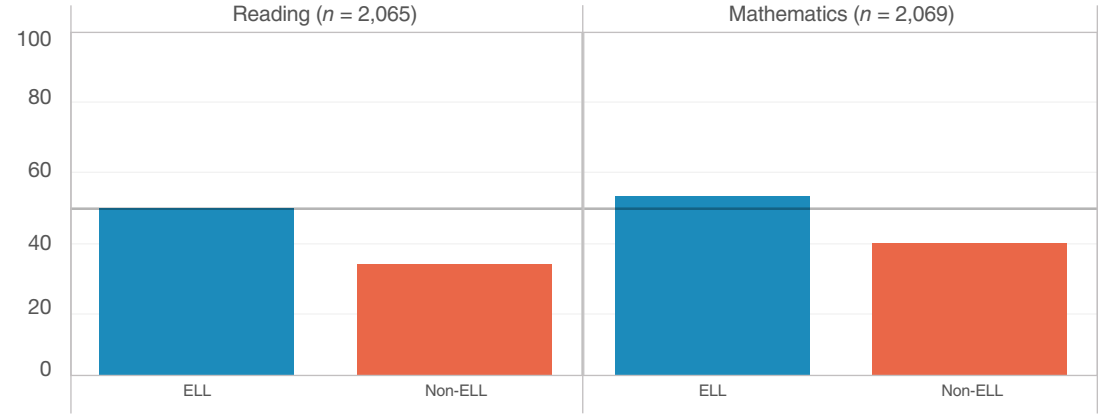
Figure 8 presents the demographic breakdown of fall 2018 to spring 2019 median *CGP*s across race/ethnicity and English-language learner (ELL) status.

FIGURE 8. | *NWEA MAP*: ACHIEVEMENT GROWTH STATUS

Median Fall to Spring *Conditional Growth Percentiles* (*CGP*) Across Race/Ethnicity



Median Fall to Spring *CGP* Across ELL Status



Social-Emotional and Executive Function Development

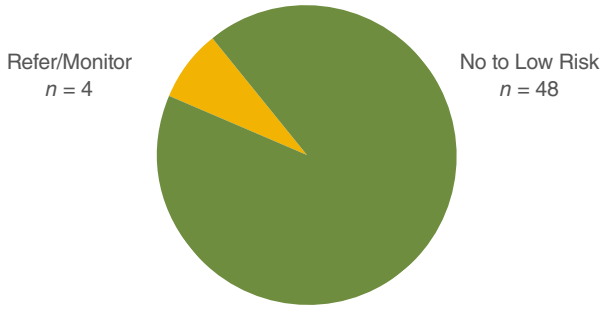
Social-emotional and executive function development in early childhood is strongly associated with children's academic progress through the school years. Learning to express and regulate emotions, develop empathy for others, develop relationships, make responsible decisions, and adapt to challenging situations effectively are key achievements during early childhood (Mahoney, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2018). In the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, children whose families participate in home visiting (birth – 3 years) and personal visits (3 – 5 years) complete regular screening questionnaires on children's social-emotional development. When children turned 3 years old and transitioned out of home visiting services, and again in Kindergarten through third grade, a child assessor from MMI completed a specialized screening for executive function.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: BIRTH – 3 YEARS

A program specialist with the Buffett Institute coached school-based home visitors to support their work with families of children birth to 3 years. Home visitors work with families to increase their understanding of children's social-emotional development, with a focus on enhancing parent-child interaction quality. Using the screening tool, *Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional* (*ASQ:SE*; Squires, Bricker, & Twombly, 2002), families answer questions about their young child's expression and regulation of emotions, relationships, and interactions with others, and how the child explores her environment. Home visitors identify children who may need further assessment and/or intervention, and provide resources to families who may want to know how to support their child's social-emotional development. Offered in English and Spanish, parents completed the questionnaire for each child upon enrollment in home visiting and in regular intervals thereafter. The assessment takes about 10 to 15 minutes for parents to complete and is scored by the home visitor. Scores reflect the degree to which the child may be exhibiting delays and provides guidance for action: *No to Low Risk, Monitor,* or *Refer*.

During the 2018-19 school year, complete data were available for children whose families participated in home visiting in eight of the 10 full implementation schools, for a total of 52 children, aged 2 to 37 months. At the first visit of the school year, 48 children (84.2%) scored in the *No to Low Risk* category, three (5.3%) scored in the *Monitor* range, and one (1.8%) scored in the *Refer* range (see Figure 9). Children enrolled in home visiting were developing typically in terms of their social and emotional development (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 9. | CHILD SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT BIRTH – 3 YEARS



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: 3 YEARS – GRADE 3

In the first eight years, children's executive function skills develop rapidly and are associated with how well children participate in activities and engage in learning. Executive functions support children's ability to focus and shift attention, regulate emotions and behaviors, and follow directions. When children have well-developed executive functioning, they exhibit self-control, think creatively, and remember information while using it in thinking or planning. They regulate their behavior and emotions in order to learn well and get along with others. Children's executive functioning supports cognitive, social, and psychological development, as well as success in school and in life (Diamond, 2014).

Children whose families participated in home visiting were assessed at 3 years of age, using the *Minnesota Executive Function Scale* (*MEFS*). In each of the full implementation schools, children in Kindergarten through third grade completed the *MEFS* in the 2018-19 school year. *MEFS* is a global measure of executive functioning for children 2 years through adulthood (Carlson & Zelazo, 2014). It is reported as a single standard score, with an average of 100 (*SD* = 15). The *MEFS* is administered on an iPad by a trained assessor, and takes 5 to 7 minutes to complete. For children in the home visiting program, the *MEFS* was administered at age 3 by an evaluator from the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) at the child's home or elementary school, when the child was transitioning out of home visiting. For children in grades K – 3, a team of six evaluators from MMI spent one to four days at each participating school to conduct the assessments. The assessment was conducted in English or Spanish depending on the students' preferred academic language. Fourteen 3-year-olds and 2,241 Kindergarten – Grade 3 children completed the *MEFS* in the 2018-19 school year. Means were in the average range across age, with slightly lower scores for 3-year-olds and kindergartners (see Table 6).

TABLE 6. | AGE 3 AND KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 3 *MINNESOTA EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SCALE*

Grade	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*
Age 3	14	90.57	9.71
Kindergarten	592	97.51	11.16
First	568	99.62	10.45
Second	503	99.38	10.05
Third	578	98.77	10.82

Full Implementation Insights: Collaboration in the School as Hub Approach

Small-scale qualitative studies provide an opportunity to examine the processes involved in implementing the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 approach. By considering perspectives of people involved and examining how various systems—schools, families, and communities—are engaged in effecting change, we can learn more about how enhancements to quality, continuity, and equity are being supported. In the 2018-19 school year, Buffett Institute researchers engaged in two studies to investigate (1) how family-school partnerships are developing in full implementation schools, and (2) how the work to build meaningful connections among schools and community-based programs is emerging.

FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

This study spotlights school staff perspectives in working with families. While a family engagement survey captured families' perspectives of school engagement, this interview project allowed a multifaceted examination of school staff perspectives on how families were included in the School as Hub approach. Buffett Early Childhood Institute researchers conducted separate focus group interviews with Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan school staff (principals, home visitors, and family facilitators) in full implementation schools. Interviews were conducted at the Institute in spring 2019. Questions focused on beliefs and practices held by school staff on family-school partnerships.

School Staff Use Many Strategies to Engage Families in the School as Hub System

Principals recognize the importance of building relationships, one family at a time. As school leaders, principals are in a position to create larger cultural shifts in the schools. They contribute to informal and formal school-level policy shifts impacting family-school partnerships, such as elevating family engagement as a strategic planned goal or assembling a welcome packet for families entering the school. All full implementation schools have created welcoming spaces in their buildings for families to assemble. Principals frequently use technology to communicate with families, such as social media platforms, apps, and electronic newsletters. Finally, principals trust their staff for guidance on fostering relationships with families.

Home visitors and family facilitators are heavily invested in family-school engagement work and prioritize cultivating relationships with each birth – Grade 3 family in their school community. They often participate in the regular pattern of daily school activities, like greeting families at drop-off, as well as planning and leading parent-child groups and Kindergarten transition activities. Building on their rapport with families and guided

by the *Growing Great Kids* (*GGK*; Eliot, Flanagan, Belza, Dew, 2012) curriculum, home visitors and family facilitators conduct home/personal visits to increase parents' skills and knowledge of child development. Schools have come to appreciate that home visitors and family facilitators assume a leadership role in the building. Home visitors and family facilitators support families at school meetings, make connections to community services, and sometimes assist families by translating and/or interpreting. Home visitors and family facilitators support the annual program evaluation by enrolling families, scheduling data collection, recording data, and managing evaluation data.

School Staff Enact Quality, Equity, and Continuity

Home visitors, family facilitators, and principals value each other's roles in supporting children and families through the early education years. School staff appreciate the contributions early education can make to early child development and school readiness. Connecting families with young children into home visiting programs through schools and high-quality community child care or PreK programs can propel children forward, reducing the likelihood of educational disparities. As a result of a focus on early education in the full implementation schools, children and families have more opportunities to become acclimated with their community schools and with educators. Children and families are more likely to transition confidently from these early educational experiences to elementary school.

Family-School Partnership Work Is Valued and Evolving

Partnership work is guided by a perspective that each family must be understood and respected. Approaches to engagement are fluid and flexible. School staff implement sustained opportunities for families to engage with the entire school community. Home visitors and family facilitators are included in the fabric of the school, participate in meetings and assume school leadership positions. Partnerships to build mutually beneficial, respectful relationships with all families will continue to be developed over time through the work of all staff within the school community. These partnerships will promote shared work focused on elevating quality, continuity, and equity in teaching, learning, and family support.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL/ CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

This study documents the early stages of a collaborative initiative between schools and community-based early childhood programs. Research and evaluation staff interviewed an educational facilitator and a program administrator from the Buffett Early Childhood Institute in spring 2019. Topics included the emergence of partnerships, timelines, and the contexts of the participating schools and communities. Additional data sources included meeting agendas and minutes, staff activity logs, and informal interviews with program implementation staff throughout spring 2019.

Connecting Schools With Community Child Care Programs

The idea of connecting schools with community child care providers emerged through collaborative work with community schools in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. Buffett Institute program leadership identified early in the cooperative process that fundamental gaps in the early education pathway existed for children and their families. Starting strong with school-based, voluntary home visiting is a key program component of the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 approach in Superintendents' Plan schools. Yet children often exit home visiting with limited options to transition to PreK and preschool. This finding among program staff elevated the need to establish the school-community child care provider connections. It became imperative to collaborate to build connections between the elementary schools and existing, "feeder" child care programs in the school community, in order to help build continuity and quality in the education pathway from birth to Kindergarten.

School-Community Child Care Connections Initiative

Buffett program leadership designated two schools, Gomez Heritage (Omaha Public Schools) and Mockingbird (Ralston Public Schools), as pilot schools to advance connections among elementary schools and community child care providers in spring 2018. Both schools had demonstrated interest in building connections with the broader child care community. Gomez Heritage is well integrated in the surrounding community and has developed strong trust with community members. The Ralston district, and specifically Mockingbird Elementary School, had expressed interest in linking the community and school, and had previously hosted two community forums, one in English and one in Spanish.

Buffett program leaders held meetings with the two elementary school principals to share the vision of the pilot project and gain their interest. The principals each identified a child care center that "feeds" into their school and invited the site directors from these child care centers to participate in a discussion to share perspectives about potentially meaningful areas of focus in forming partnerships between each school and community preschool/child care programs. Program leadership also consulted with other community child care stakeholders, including the Learning Community Center of North Omaha.

Buffett Institute educational facilitators working at Gomez Heritage and Mockingbird facilitated the initiative at their respective schools, expanding their role from instructional support within the school to collaboration across education settings to identify and develop relationships with community child care and preschool providers whose programs feed into the schools. Educational facilitators visited child care providers in the community to understand their values, curriculum, strengths, challenges, and needs. To introduce the initiative and get their thoughts and perspective on building connections with community child care centers, educational facilitators also engaged teachers in

discussion. Furthermore, the educational facilitators met with child care stakeholders to discuss the child care landscape and to brainstorm approaches to connect with providers.

School Contexts

Gomez Heritage Elementary School is located in South Omaha and serves 840 students from PreK to fourth grade. The school serves a large bilingual population and offers a dual language immersion program. Gomez Heritage is surrounded by the community where families who attend the school reside and work. Kindergartners at Gomez Heritage transition from child care centers, home-based centers, or their family home in the surrounding community. The school is well integrated into the community and has developed strong community trust, on which the school prides itself.

Mockingbird Elementary School is located in Ralston and serves approximately 400 students from PreK through sixth grade. The school and surrounding community are learning how to best connect with the growing population of Spanish-speaking and refugee families. Kindergartners at Mockingbird Elementary transition from several child care centers throughout Omaha, shifting the initial plan to a focus on building relationships with family child care home programs. The principal and district have expressed interest in building connections between the school, community members, and the community child care providers.

Next Steps for Building Connections

This first year has been a necessary learning process for schools and program leaders, as they find out what can be gained from partnering with community child care providers in meaningful ways. Schools will continue to build capacity within the school by engaging school staff in collaboration and purposeful connections between school and community partners. Drawing in the community perspective and wisdom on early childhood education into these schools will continue to be a top priority as the initiative progresses.

School as Hub Full Implementation Evaluation: Summary and Recommendations

This year's evaluation represents a revision of previous years' evaluations, adjusting to align with program and evaluation shifts, including: (1) an increased focus on program quality and (2) child development and learning with screening in birth – 3 years, developmental assessment at 3 years, and inclusion of the entire PreK – Grade 3 population in full implementation schools for achievement and social-emotional learning.

PROGRAM QUALITY

Home visiting has been an area of intensive effort. It remains a challenging program for schools to deliver, in terms of recruiting families for program and evaluation participation. Several factors created barriers for implementation and evaluation of home visiting and family facilitation. Home visitors and family facilitators struggled to enroll families in the evaluation and had a steep learning curve for using the video technology used for assessments. Observation points were close together in time, limiting opportunity for using feedback for professional learning and coaching. In addition, home visitors and family facilitators did not include all families in the evaluation observations. Working with and enrolling a greater number of families in the evaluation, and improvements in the timing and sharing of observation assessments, will provide home visitors with information and practice needed to develop and grow skills, and increase capacity to influence and detect change over time. Increased district and school staff support to home visitors and family facilitators related to recruiting and consenting families with children birth – 3 years would greatly improve efforts to support and learn from families, and strengthen schools' abilities to engage with families during children's early years. The home visitation program for birth – 3 years is designed to serve 150 children and their families. In practice, 73 families consented to the evaluation; however, only 53 participated in the home visiting evaluation assessments. Schools can support staff and families in recognizing the value of this work; program specialists can collaborate to support schools in these efforts.

Classroom practices related to instructional, organizational, and emotional supports in the classroom climate have improved over the years of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, across all domains. Ongoing instructional coaching related to *emotional support*, *classroom organization*, and *instructional support* practices is an important focus in the full implementation schools. Strengths across areas can be leveraged to support a focus on areas of mid-range quality. For example, instructional quality should remain a programmatic priority because classrooms high in *Instructional Support* can serve as protective mechanisms for children placed at risk for school failure (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Howes et al., 2008). Educational facilitators can continue to provide evidence-based coaching and professional development to support teacher practices related

to instruction, such as higher order questioning and back-and-forth student-teacher exchanges. Similarly, reflecting on national benchmarks may help to raise "regard for student perspectives," an *Emotional Support* dimension focused on teachers' attention to their relational practice with students. Finally, to facilitate effective systems change, educators at all levels must recognize the value in the domains assessed. Principals and district instructional staff can prioritize classroom quality and support teachers' efforts informed by the *CLASS* assessment tool.

FAMILY PROCESSES

Family engagement, as connected to interaction with the home visitor and measured via the *HOVRS*, improved over the course of the school year, reflecting higher quality relationships between home visitors and families. Technology demands for data collection during home visits posed challenges and are being addressed in the 2019-20 program year.

Parent-child interaction, as assessed by the *KIPS* assessment tool, reflected that most parents involved in the home visiting evaluation were interacting with children in ways that supported early learning. Home visitors and family facilitators will continue to build trusting partnerships with families with the aim of supporting parent-child interactions, while increasing efforts to support program evaluation.

Family perceptions of school engagement, as assessed using the *Road Map Family Engagement Survey (FES*), reflected relatively high family perceptions of engagement with schools. However, the response rate was low. Understanding family beliefs and values regarding education is an ongoing commitment for schools. Collecting and using data to inform school decisions should remain a regular priority. Families should be able to see themselves reflected in these data as schools continue to develop partnerships based on trust. In order to effectively support high-quality school partnerships and family processes, more family perspectives are needed to support school-based staff reflection and processes for engaging with and supporting families, birth – Grade 3.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Development and learning from birth – 3 years were assessed using a screening tool completed by parents. A majority of children enrolled in home visiting and family facilitation were developing typically in all areas. Home visiting supports were in place to help children whose development was at risk. Children will continue to be screened, monitored, and supported using the *ASQ* and *ASQ: SE* in the context of birth – 3 years home visiting and family facilitation.

Development and learning at 3 years of age were assessed for children transitioning out of home visiting. Using a standardized assessment (*MEFS*), children demonstrated

language and pre-academic skills that were in the low average range. Similarly, children's executive functions were in the low average for 3-year-olds transitioning from home visiting. Program efforts, in particular home visiting, can put an emphasis on supporting parents in their interactions that can increase children's learning and development (cognitive, language, social-emotional, and executive functioning) in the first three years.

Academic achievement in Kindergarten through Grade 3 was assessed using the school-based *MAP* assessments. On average, children's reading and mathematics achievement status was below the expected levels and varied by family and child demographics related to family income, race, and ethnicity. Children's academic achievement will continue to be measured using *MAP* assessments in future evaluation years to examine how system-level changes may be associated with child outcomes. Efforts will continue to work closer with school districts to obtain essential data. Future analyses will compare baseline achievement status and growth across school years to examine how system-level changes might influence child development and learning over time.

Executive functioning in Kindergarten – Grade 3 was evaluated using the *MEFS* assessment. Children's executive functions improved over grades, as expected, and was largely in the average range. Executive functions will continue to be assessed with the *MEFS* at 3 years and again PreK through third grade to help provide learning and insight about how children's executive functions and academic learning progress over time. Efforts to improve young children's opportunities to develop executive functions will be examined, with particular efforts focused on children who may not have equal access to high-quality opportunities for learning. Increasing the number of children and families who have access to home visiting may be one way to address this learning opportunity gap. It will also be important to identify intentional instructional practices that can be integrated into the PreK – Grade 3 curriculum to support children's developing executive function skills.

Implementation studies examined how schools are engaged in the work of connecting with families and communities. Schools are shifting their perspectives related to engaging families from birth and learning what it means to prioritize the work in the landscape of competing priorities. Some full implementation schools are exploring the value of partnering with community-based child care. The evaluation will continue to examine the processes associated with enacting systems change using the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 approach.

NEXT STEPS FOR SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN FULL IMPLEMENTATION

The current evaluation plan for the full implementation of the School as Hub Birth – Grade 3 approach will continue into the 2019-20 program and evaluation year, with an emphasis on employing a systems-based perspective of ongoing program quality, family processes, and child development and learning. By engaging in intensive efforts related to home visiting and personal visits, using observational data with school staff, we anticipate that schools will enhance their connections with children from birth and their families, and experience increased capacity to engage in quality home visiting. We expect that ongoing coaching, supported by observational classroom data, will result in continued classroom quality improvement across all grades. Using multipronged approaches with family partnership (e.g., home visiting, personal visits, family group activities), schools will experience enhanced relationships with all families. By assessing children's learning and development at age 3, we hope to observe a "baseline" that reflects increasing developmental outcomes as a result of home visiting and provides a way to highlight the benefits of early investment related to school achievement. By tracking almost all children in Kindergarten through Grade 3, we hope to demonstrate improvements in learning and development for all children. In order to accomplish this, we will work to access necessary data from all Superintendents' Plan schools, across all time points. We hope to access data regarding Free or Reduced Lunch status (FRL) from all full implementation schools in order to establish how access to opportunities based on family income is associated with children's social-emotional development and academic achievement over time, and how School as Hub can support the learning and development of children from low-income families to address achievement gap disparities.

Customized Assistance to Districts

Customized assistance provides Learning Community school districts with access to state and national consultation as they engage in strategic planning and improvement efforts to affect system-wide early childhood education and services. Districts design and deliver sustained professional learning opportunities for staff, addressing key dimensions of birth – Grade 3 programming. Distinct evaluation plans are employed for each customized assistance plan. Measures are aligned with goals and expected outcomes for the specific plan and with the overall goals of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. The customized assistance plans of Gretna and Ralston Public School Districts are highlighted below.

STRENGTHENING CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENTS: GRETNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gretna Public Schools' plan focuses on enhancing teacher practices and classroom environments to support students' social and emotional development via coaching. The district uses the *Pyramid Model* to help teachers increase their support of students' social competence while preventing challenging behaviors (Hemmeter, Fox, Snyder, 2013). This plan extends across all elementary school buildings, provides professional development for PreK through third grade educators, and includes support staff such as counselors and resource specialists.

Findings for Teachers

In 2018-19, first, second, and third grade teachers were assessed for fidelity to the *Pyramid Model*. Teachers were observed on 14 indicators of the *Modified Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool*. As of spring 2018, teachers reached 99% proficiency, indicating an exceptional capacity to implement the *Pyramid Model*. Educators remained proficient in their ability to implement the *Pyramid Model* in their classrooms, despite a turnover in raters during the school year.

Findings for Children

For the social developmental domain, Gretna teachers documented student skills using an authentic assessment, the *Work Sampling System* (*WSS*; Dichtelmiller, Jablon, Marsden, Meisels, 2013). Using the *WSS*, students demonstrate their competencies in four areas: (1) self-concept, (2) self-control, (3) approaches to learning, and (4) interactions with others. Children identified with social-emotional risks, as compared with their peers, were less likely to demonstrate proficiency in the fall. However, regardless of risk, children show gains throughout the school year, with larger proportions of children at proficiency in the spring.

Next Steps

Gretna district leaders will continue professional development activities to prepare new teachers and sustain veteran teachers' practices to support social-emotional

competence and prevent challenging behaviors. A curriculum committee of teachers and counselors developed standards for social-emotional learning in the early primary grades. The district adopted and field tested social and emotional learning curriculum materials that were endorsed by teachers in 2018-19.

SUPPORTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES: RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Ralston Public Schools focused its professional development on language interactions between PreK educators and students. Targeted training sessions included classroom language practices for new educators and ongoing customized coaching for seasoned educators. Educators participated in professional development and individualized cycles of observation, coaching, and feedback.

Findings for Teachers

Ralston's goals for educators focused on supporting students' transitions through the school day, promotion of social and emotional development through relationships, and fostering awareness of how language influences children's learning. Evaluation efforts focused on how professional development is impacting instructional practices and students' development on targeted learning outcomes. Using the *Ralston Look Fors* tool, a coach observed and evaluated instructional practices related to routines, transitions, relationships, and types of language. Coaches summarized their observations and described educators' progress. Newer educators identified daily transitions as an area of ongoing focus for their coaching and feedback cycles. Veteran educators utilized a variety of transition strategies in their practice, such as verbal reminders, movement games, and songs. District-wide, educators created environments and spaces that reduced behavior issues and facilitated center activity. Notably, Ralston educators were rated highly in the respect and warmth they expressed in interactions with students in their classrooms, including relational affection is found in verbal (gentle tone of voice) and non-verbal behavior (eye contact, facial expression, appropriate touch). Educators employed language with intention, making specific and descriptive comments with students, reintroducing vocabulary, and using open-ended questions to support language development.

Findings for Students

Students' learning outcomes were assessed using *Teaching Strategies GOLD* (Burts et al., 2016). *Teaching Strategies GOLD* Assessment features 38 objectives designed to guide teachers through the assessment cycle, aiding them in linking observable behavior to essential early learning requirements and predicting likely next steps in development and learning. Three student learning objectives were selected from *Teaching Strategies GOLD* that aligned with the professional development goals on language: (1) Listens to and understands increasingly complex language (Objective

8), (2) Uses language to express thoughts and needs (Objective 9), and (3) Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills (Objective 10). Scored on a scale of 1 to10, Figures 10 – 12 reflect scores for the three learning objectives.

From fall to spring semesters, students progressed into the range of developmentally appropriate language for 4-year-olds in a PreK classroom. Students' language comprehension improved. Language expression showed more variability, such that over 80% of students met or exceeded the objective benchmark by the end of the academic year. Over 90% of PreK students mastered the complex language skill of appropriately using social rules of language in conversation by the spring semester.

Next Steps

District leaders are developing guidelines aligned with the *Ralston Look Fors* and previous professional learning activities to support new Ralston PreK teachers. These new educators will receive additional coaching and support during 2019-20. Collaboration will continue among the PreK teachers and paraprofessionals to sustain implementation of effective practices. The team will also work toward more consistent planning with Kindergarten teachers to support students transitioning to Kindergarten.

FIGURE 10. | PREK *GOLD* LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION N = 124/133

Rating Not Yet	Fall 2018	Spring 2019
1		
2		
3	2	2
4	10	12
5	29	32
6	70	74
7	10	12
8	3	
9		1
10		

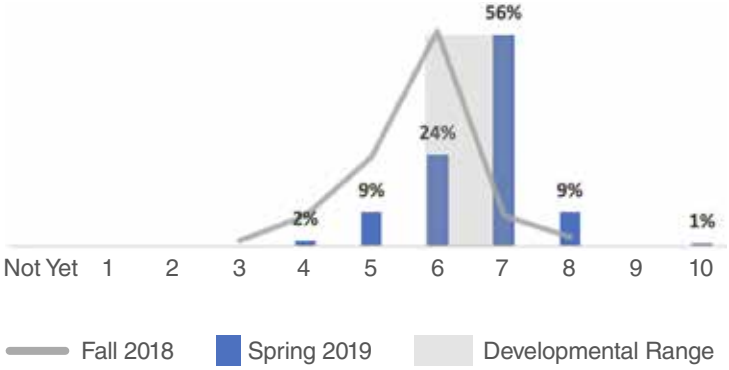
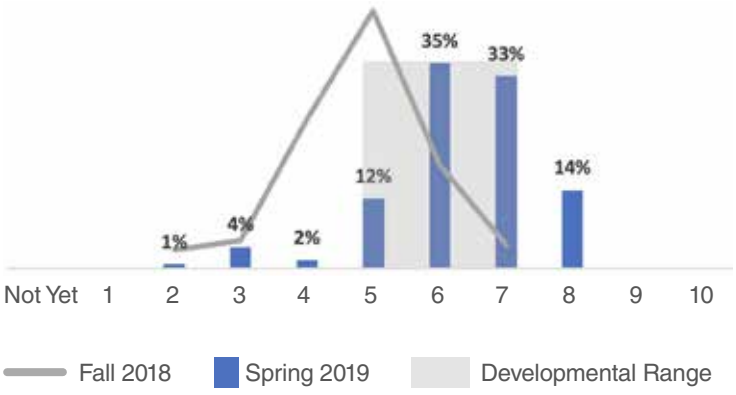


FIGURE 11. | PREK *GOLD*: "TELLS ABOUT ANOTHER TIME OR PLACE" N = 124/133

Rating Not Yet	Fall 2018	Spring 2019
1		
2	4	1
3	6	5
4	32	2
5	55	16
6	22	47
7	5	44
8		18
9		
10		

FIGURE 12. | PREK *GOLD*: "USES SOCIAL RULES OF LANGUAGE" N = 124/133

Rating Not Yet	Fall 2018	Spring 2019
1	1	1
2	2	1
3	10	3
4	14	1
5	26	16
6	41	13
7	27	47
8	3	25
9		25
10		1



Professional Development for All

The Superintendents' Plan offers a Professional Development for All (PD for All) series for professionals who work with children from birth through Grade 3 and families in the Omaha metro area. The 2018-19 theme, "Harnessing the Power of Language and Communication to Build Children's Literacy Success," targeted research-based language and communication practices to support children's emerging literacy, classroom community, and social-emotional learning. Three English-language and two Spanish-language (in collaboration with the Learning Community Center of South Omaha) institutes provided professional learning on three topics: (1) High-Utility Practices for Developing Language, Promoting Literacy, and Achieving Equity, (2) The Art of Communication in Classrooms: Helping Children Find, Develop, and Use Their Voices for Learning, and (3) Children as Expressive Artists: Artistic Expression as a Powerful Vehicle for Communication (in collaboration with Joslyn Art Museum). Over 600 professionals registered for the events; 400 attendees participated in the English-language institutes, and 90 attended the Spanish-speaking institutes. Participation in one of the English-language sessions may have been lower than expected in January due to inclement weather.

METHODS

Participants from the first two English-language PD for All institutes (n = 166) and the first Spanish-language PD for All institute (n = 12) completed a survey (Time 1) of their knowledge and skills related to teaching practices explored through the PD for All series. Time 1 surveys were distributed ahead of the September and January English-language institutes and the December Spanish-language institute, via email, to the registered attendees. Paper surveys were available at the September institute for those who had not yet completed the electronic version. At the conclusion of the 2018-19 PD for All series, English-language attendees who attended two or more PD for All institutes (n = 89) and all Spanish-language attendees (n = 66) were invited via email to complete an online evaluation survey (Time 2). Reminders were sent out at least once; 29 (22 English- and seven Spanish-language) completed the Time 2 survey.

FINDINGS

Work Setting

Most survey respondents worked in school-based programs (n = 124, 65.3%), including elementary schools, PreK within elementary schools, and Head Start or Educare within elementary schools. A quarter of respondents (n = 48, 25.3%) were from community-based programs, including child care centers and preschools (not in elementary schools), religious-based programs, and the Omaha Learning Community Centers.

Age Group Served

The majority of the survey respondents worked primarily with preschool-age children (3- and 4-year-olds; n = 80, 43%). Sixteen percent worked with children ages birth to 3

years (*n* = 30, 16.1%), 13.4% worked with children in Kindergarten through Grade 3 (*n* = 25), and a few worked directly with families (*n* = 9, 4.8%). About a fifth of respondents worked with more than one age group (*n* = 41, 22%).

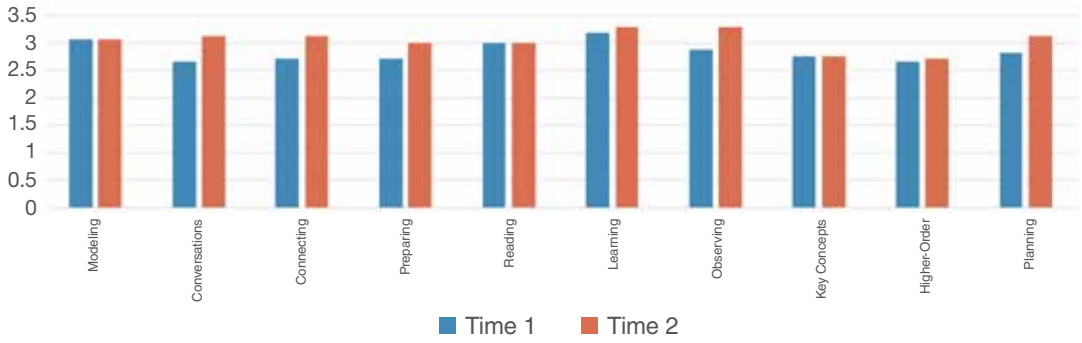
Job Title

Many respondents identified themselves as teachers (*n* = 59, 30.7%). Other roles included home visitor or family facilitator (*n* = 29, 15.1%), director (*n* = 18, 9.4%), assistant teacher/paraeducator (*n* = 15, 7.8%), and principal/assistant principal (*n* = 3, 1.6%). Many respondents identified as "other" (*n* = 63, 32.8%), and included speech language pathologists, coaches, early childhood coordinators and developers, individuals working with special education populations, and higher education professionals.

Do attendees who participate in two or more PD for All institutes report increased knowledge of effective educational practices?

Respondents rated their knowledge of teaching skills and practices, related to the institute topics, on a scale from 1 (starting learning) to 4 (in-depth knowledge). The average reported knowledge across all 10 items for all attendees was 2.79 at Time 1 and 2.99 at Time 2. Figure 13 shows the Time 1 and Time 2 scores for the 17 participants who completed both surveys, with an average of 2.84 for Time 1 and 3.05 for Time 2.

FIGURE 13. | PD FOR ALL: KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING SKILLS AND PRACTICES



Did attendees who participated in two or more PD for All institutes apply the knowledge and skills that they gained in their professional work?

Twenty-five of 29 (86.21%) respondents indicated that they applied the knowledge, skills, and practices they learned during the PD for All institutes.

Do PD for All attendees share the knowledge and skills they gained with work colleagues?

Twenty-four of 27 (88.89%) respondents indicated they were sharing knowledge and ideas learned from the PD institutes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Survey response rates were lower than in past years, possibly due to incentives for completion not being offered. It will be good to examine both method and incentives as possibilities for increasing participation in future years of PD for All. The impact of PD for All on building capacity and sustainability for future spread by developing local presenters also needs to be explored further in next year's evaluation. Opportunities for reaching a more diverse workforce audience include considering location of events, continuing to expand Spanish-language institutes, and scheduling. Ongoing evaluation and program improvement will allow PD for All to expand its reach as a resource for evidence-based professional learning for the birth – Grade 3 and early childhood-affiliated workforce in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

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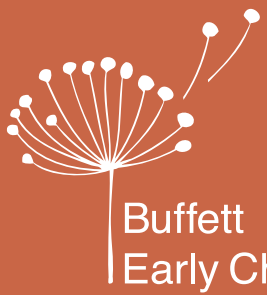

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STUDENT DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS

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 2018-2019 school year. Comparative data from previous years are also presented. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) provided the data included in this section.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION BY SUBCOUNCIL

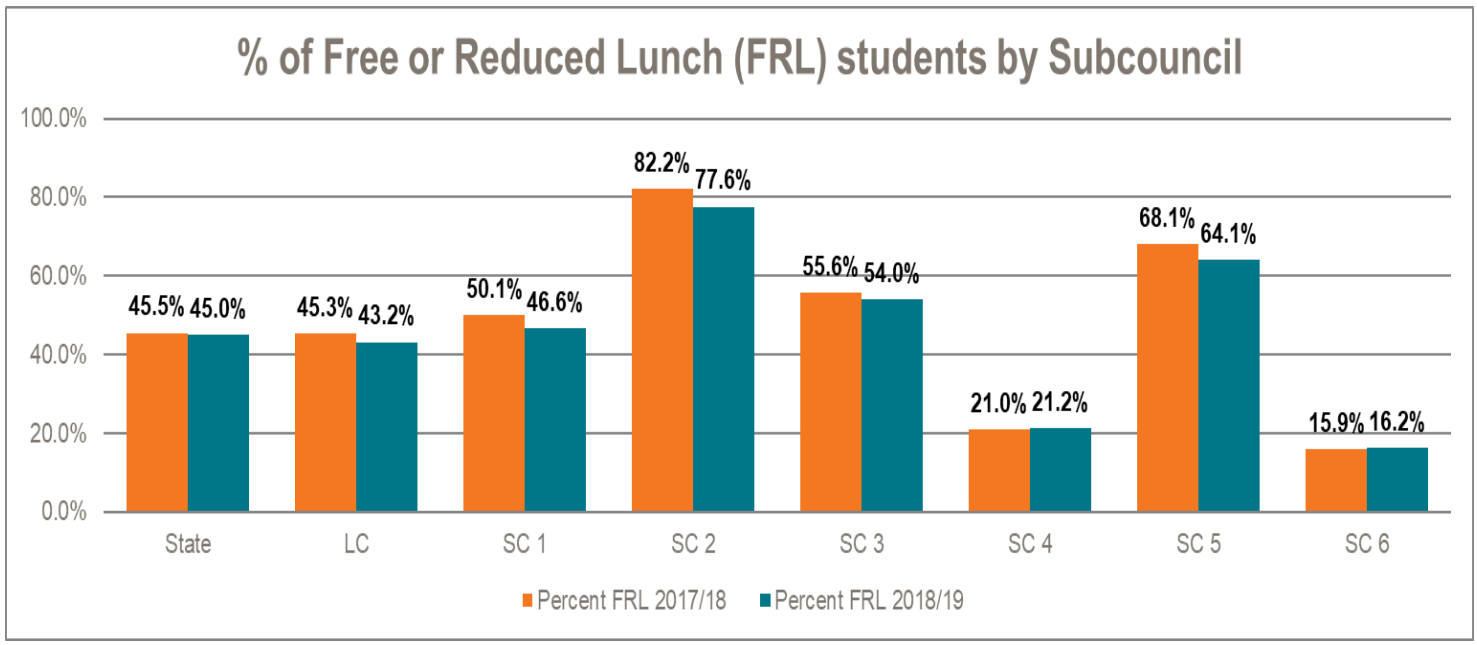
Nebraska Statute establishes six Achievement Subcouncils within the two-county area of the Learning Community. The population is divided among the Subcouncils as equally as feasible.

Table III.1: 2018-2019 Demographic data including the total number of enrolled students, percent eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL), and percent of English Language Learners (ELL) by Subcouncil

	SC	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER FRL	PERCENT FRL	NUMBER ELL	PERCENT ELL
K-6	1	8,884	3,863	43.5%	631	7.1%
7-12	1	7,591	3,815	50.3%	385	5.1%
Subcouncil Total	**1**	**16,475**	**7,678**	**46.6%**	**1,016**	**6.2%**
K-6	2	8,747	7,608	87.0%	2,016	23.0%
7-12	2	7,878	5,294	67.2%	709	9.0%
Subcouncil Total	**2**	**16,625**	**12,902**	**77.6%**	**2,725**	**16.4%**
K-6	3	9,223	5,108	55.4%	1,450	15.7%
7-12	3	6,245	3,245	52.0%	366	5.9%
Subcouncil Total	**3**	**15,468**	**8,353**	**54.0%**	**1,816**	**11.7%**
K-6	4	12,211	2,709	22.2%	421	3.4%
7-12	4	11,108	2,245	20.2%	101	0.9%
Subcouncil Total	**4**	**23,319**	**4,954**	**21.2%**	**522**	**2.2%**
K-6	5	12,312	8,193	66.5%	3,460	28.1%
7-12	5	10,866	6,669	61.4%	974	9.0%
Subcouncil Total	**5**	**23,178**	**14,862**	**64.1%**	**4,434**	**19.1%**
K-6	6	15,623	2,538	16.2%	200	1.3%
7-12	6	12,797	2,054	16.1%	52	0.4%
Subcouncil Total	**6**	**28,420**	**4,592**	**16.2%**	**252**	**0.9%**
K-6	All LC	67,000	30,019	44.8%	8,178	12.2%
7-12	All LC	56,485	23,322	41.3%	2,587	4.6%
Learning Comm. Total	**All LC**	**123,485**	**53,341**	**43.2%**	**10,765**	**8.7%**

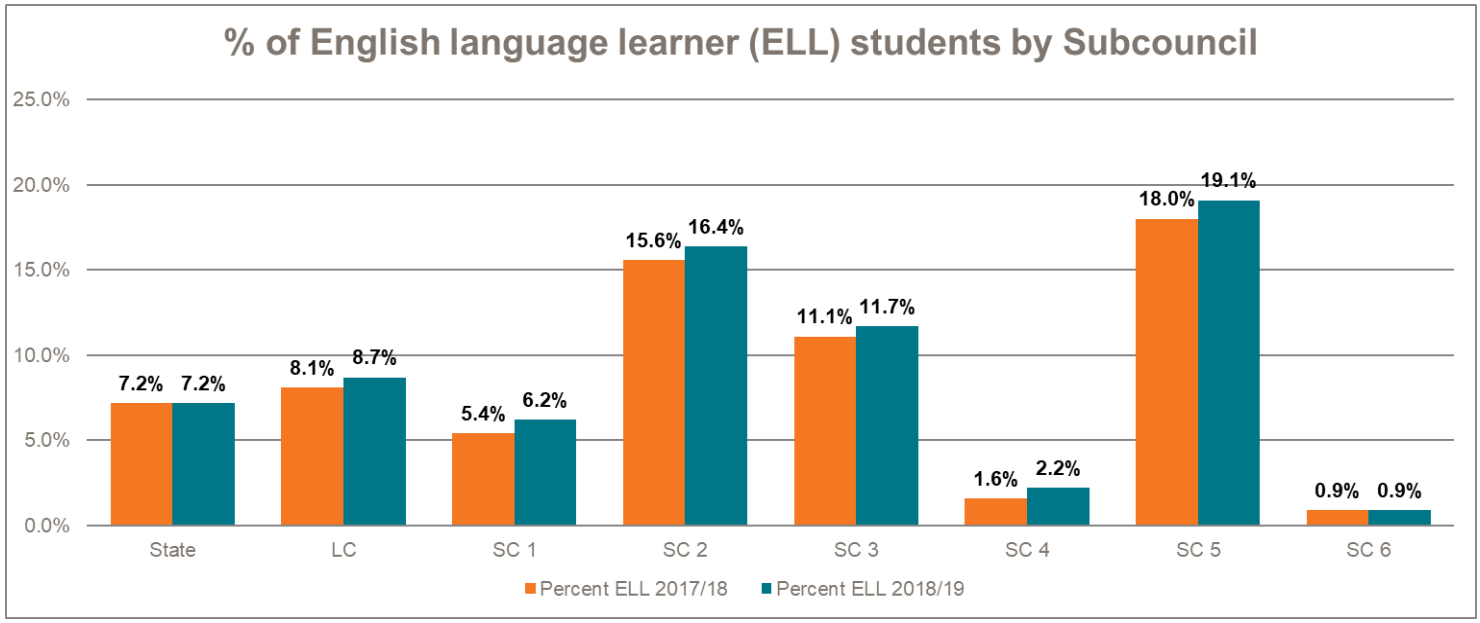
The growth within the Learning Community has been consistent over the last several years, with 1.16% growth year on year and 2.89% over 2 years. In fact, total enrollment has increased 7.6% over the past five years.

Figure III.1: 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 Percentage of FRL Students by Subcouncil



- The percentage of FRL students decreased slightly in all Subcouncils except Subcouncils 4 and 6 which saw slight increases.

Figure III.2: 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 ELL by Subcouncil

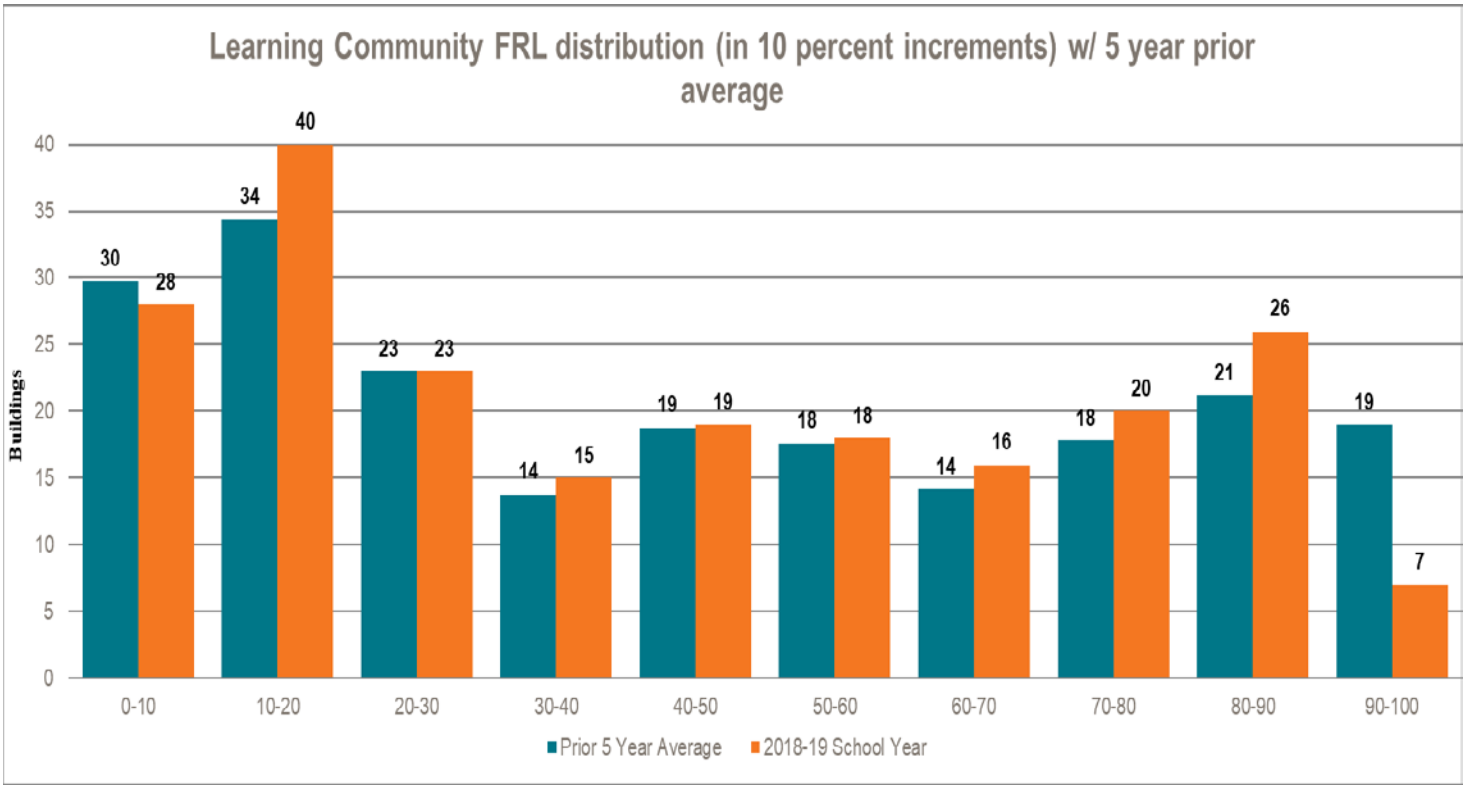


- The percentage of ELL students to total student continues to increase.

FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH CONCENTRATION

Figure III.3 provides additional information about the concentration of poverty within the Learning Community. The graph shows the FRL percentages by school building within ranges of 10%. The blue bar in each set represents the average number of schools in each interval in the previous five years and the red bar shows the number in the 2018-2019 school year.

Figure III.3: Number of Learning Community Schools in FRL Intervals of 10% Comparing 2018-2019 with the Previous Five-Year Average



Generally, the number of schools with the lowest FRL participation is decreasing; the number of schools with the highest FRL participation is increasing; and the number of schools in the middle ranges has remained fairly constant.

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

Figure III.4: 2018-2019 Percentage of Nebraska Schools in FRL Intervals of 10% (excluding Learning Community)

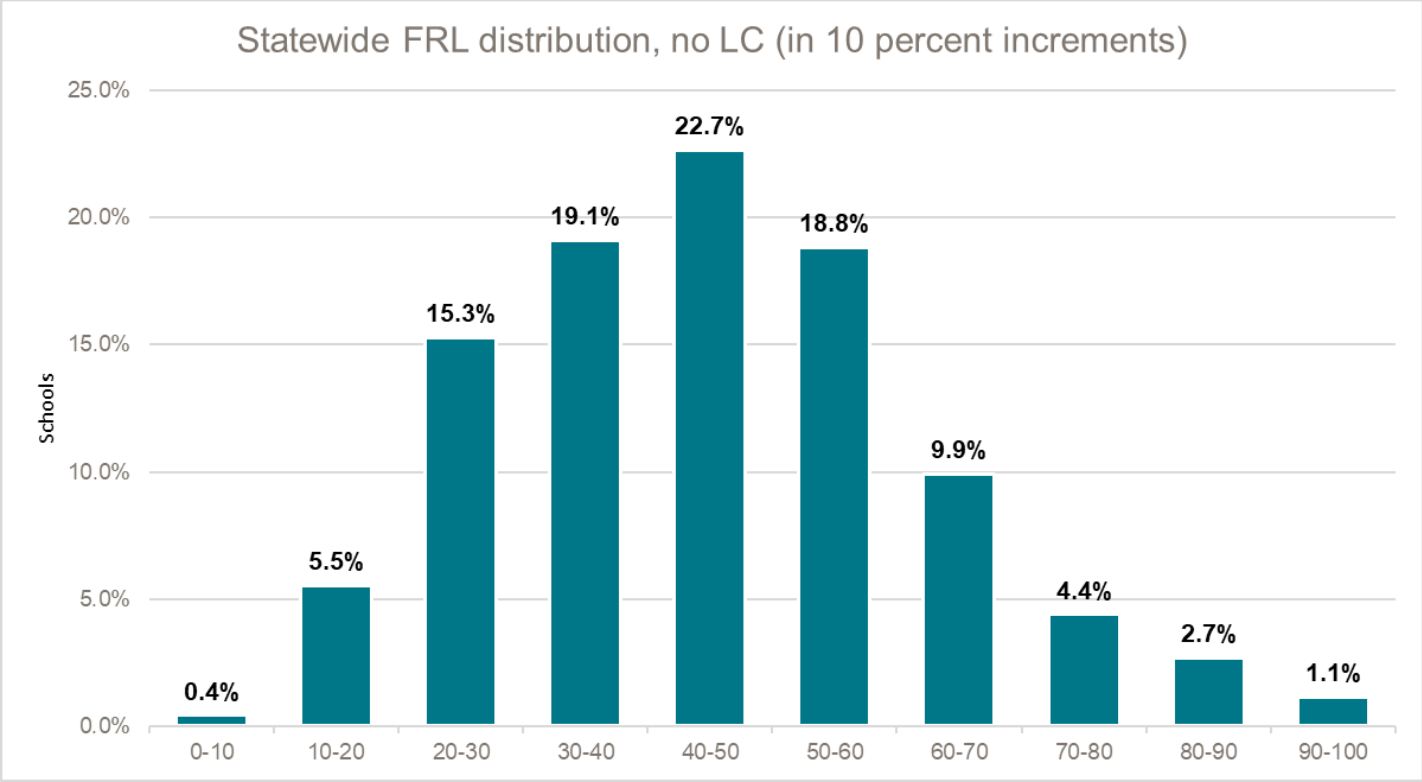
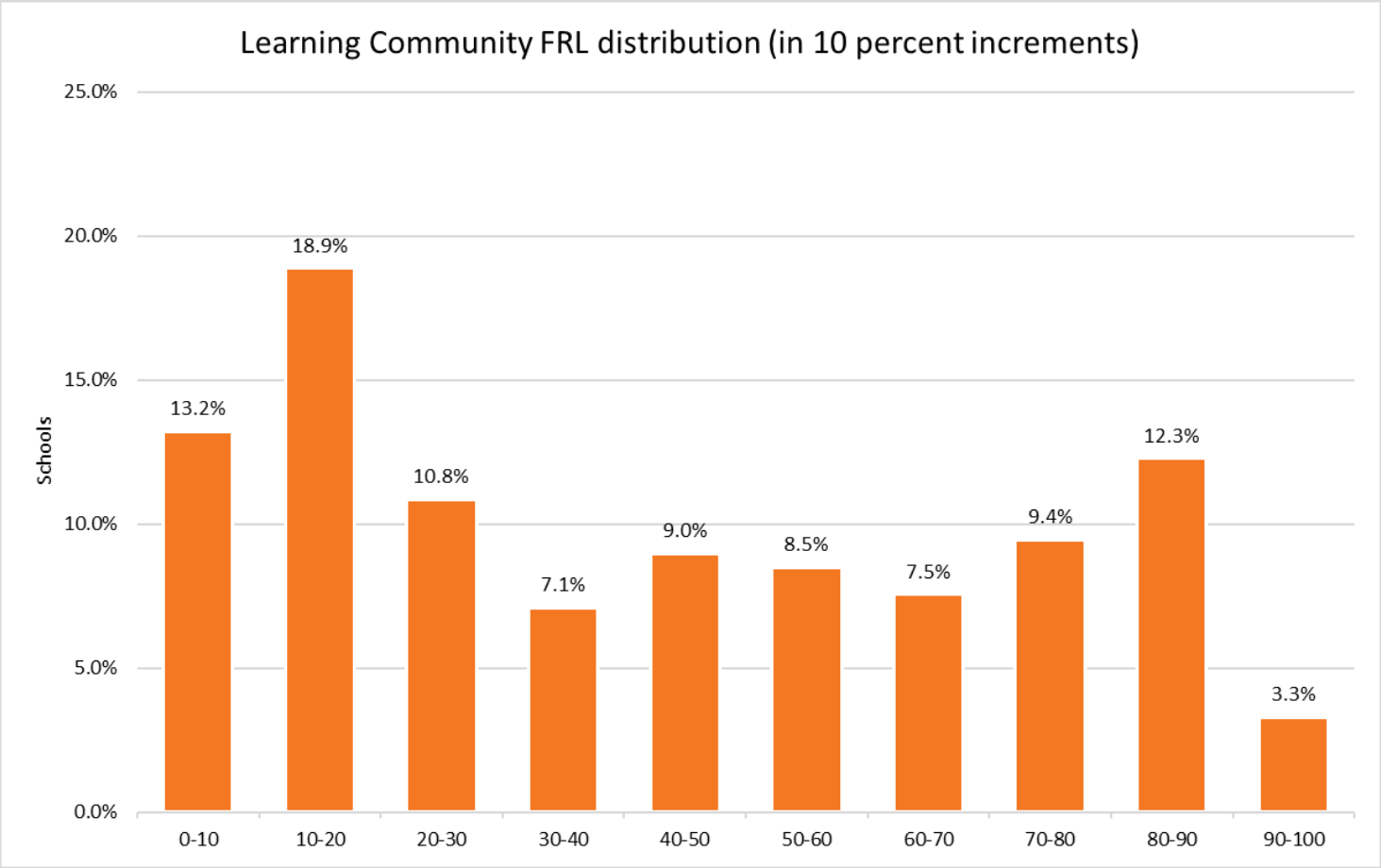


Figure III.4 illustrates that most Nebraska schools fall in the middle ranges of free and reduced lunch concentrations, and few schools fall in the very low and very high ranges when comparing FRL population to all students.

Figure III.5 (page 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 III.5: 2018-2019 Percentage of Learning Community Schools in FRL Intervals of 10%



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 through 2018 Evaluation Reports. It does not appear that there is much progress toward greater economic diversity in Learning Community schools. There has been little change in the number of schools in the middle ranges and at the extremes.

Open Enrollment

This section of the report describes the status of Open Enrollment. Data are provided by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and Learning Community school districts. The 2016-2017 school year marked the last year of the Open Enrollment process for new students in the Learning Community school districts. Only students currently in Open Enrollment will be eligible to continue at their current school building in the 2018-2019 school year.

Before presenting the Open Enrollment data, it is important to have a common understanding of the difference between *Open* Enrollment and *Option* Enrollment.

OPEN AND OPTION ENROLLMENT

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

- *Open Enrollment* refers to students who transferred to another school or school district through the Learning Community's Open Enrollment process, which went into effect in the 2010-2011 school year. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, open enrollment was only available to students who were continuing in their current school building and had chosen open enrollment in the 2016-2017 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. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, all Learning Community school students not covered by open enrollment above will use option enrollment going forward.

An important difference between Option and Open Enrollment is the priority given to students who contribute to the socioeconomic diversity of the school. 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, were classified as Open Enrollment students. Those who transferred prior to the 2010-2011 school year were 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. This process will reverse in the succeeding years as Open Enrollment students transition back to Option Enrollment after

leaving their current school building.

THE STATUS OF OPEN ENROLLMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON DIVERSITY

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.

As stated earlier, the 2016-2017 school year marked the last year of the Open Enrollment process for new students in the Learning Community school districts. As such the Learning Community had focused on the impact Open Enrollment has had in improving the economic diversity of Learning Community schools.

Table IV.1 shows the total number of Open Enrollment students and the percent qualifying for FRL in each of the last six years of Open Enrollment.

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF TOTAL OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS WHO QUALIFY FOR FRL	LEARNING COMMUNITY PERCENT FRL
2013-2014	6,535	41.68%	44.47%
2014-2015	7,244	41.01%	44.29%
2015-2016	7,826	40.28%	44.20%
2016-2017	8,054	39.79%	42.46%
2017-2018	4,396	38.97%	45.29%
2018-2019	2,525	36.59%	43.19%

The percentage of Open Enrollment students who qualify for FRL is decreasing in comparison to the percentage of the Learning Community districts as a whole. As such the impact of Open Enrollment on economic diversity is greater in comparison with student membership as a whole.

Table IV.2 shows the total number of students in all Learning Community school districts and the total number of Open Enrollment students for the last six years.

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER LEARNING COMMUNITY STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	TOTAL NUMBER OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP
2010-2011	108,800	2,563
2011-2012	110,908	4,334
2012-2013	112,498	5,769
2013-2014	114,699	6,535
2014-2015	116,886	7,244
2015-2016	118,460	7,826
2016-2017	120,022	8,054
2017-2018	122,073	4,396
2018-2019	123,485	2,525