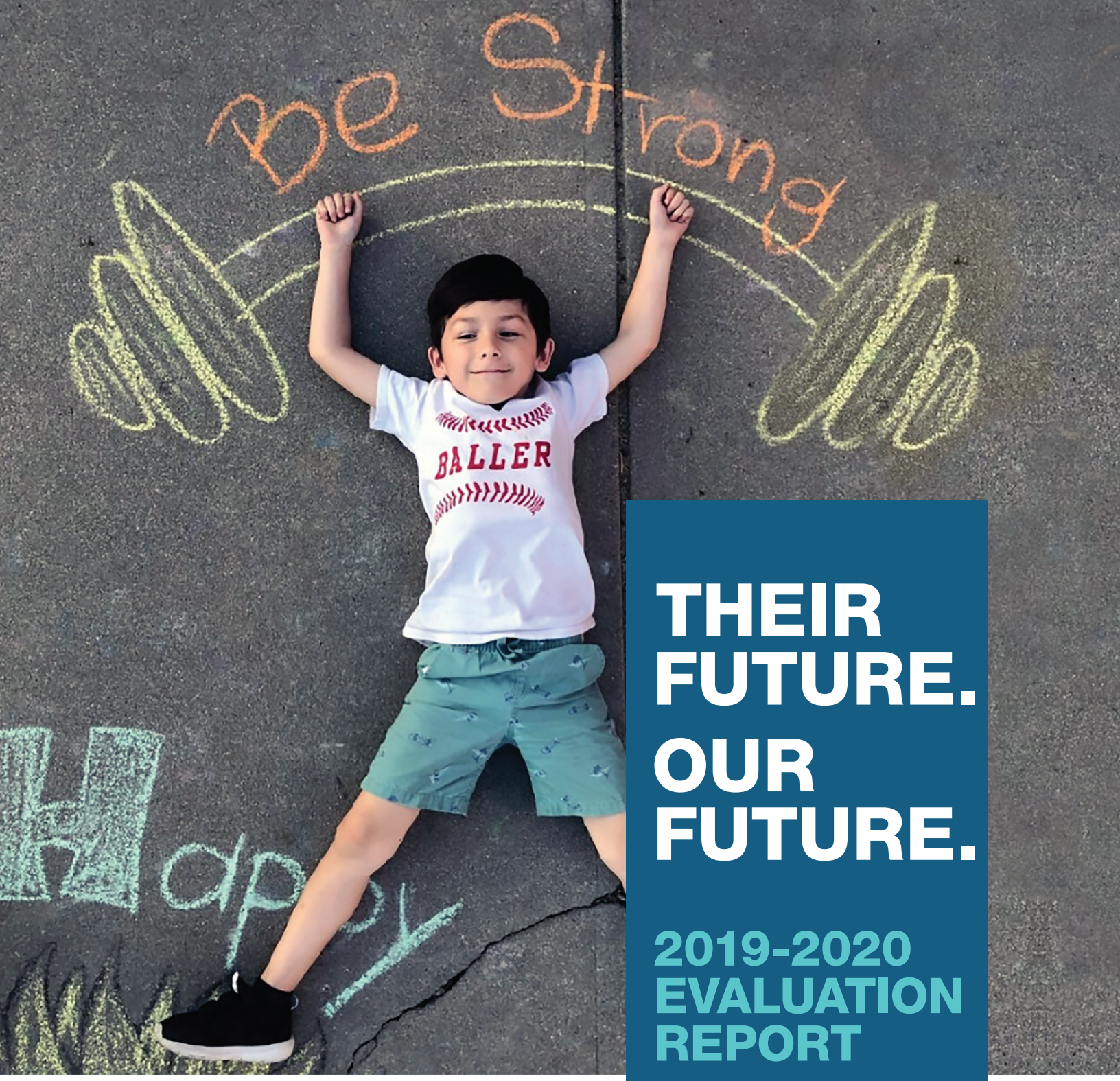

THEIR FUTURE. OUR FUTURE.

2019-2020 EVALUATION REPORT

learning community
DOUGLAS SARPY

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

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Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

"Be Strong" is the theme for the 2019-2020 Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties Annual Report. While the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted some outcomes, this report affirms a key strength of the Learning Community and its partners–to work across school district borders–to meet the needs of children and families.

MOBILIZING TO PREVENT LEARNING LOSS

Harsh circumstances are hardly a new experience in Learning Community homes. However, unemployment, stress and illness related to the pandemic, did create more extreme hardships. The Learning Community mobilized quickly in response to the growing threat of deep learning loss. Thanks to our partnership network, we relied upon tremendous expertise, especially in healthcare and community services.

A Communitywide Response

- In the transition to virtual learning, dedicated staff in Learning Community Centers worked to close the digital divide in early childhood education. Outreach to private donors ensured no families would go without a tablet or computer, but without digital literacy, access would serve no purpose. Learning Community teams created curriculum to teach basic computer skills. Parent training classes, virtual home visitation, and how-to videos proved their value. In just a few weeks, families gained confidence to help their children navigate virtual learning and participate in web-based school readiness activities.

- Families in Learning Community Centers showed great resilience with support from the new Learning Community Foundation. In its startup year, members have raised nearly $100,000 for essentials like baby formula and diapers. Their support greatly reduced financial stresses that could have been overwhelming. Instead, families continued making progress in classes to learn about early childhood growth and development, as well as school readiness. The foundation is a valuable ally for resources which are well outside the Learning Community budget.

- When school districts scrambled to establish a food distribution system last March, a determined group of partners came together to ensure a healthy start to home-based learning. Millard Public Schools, Learning Community, OneWorld Community Health Centers, NorthStar Foundation, and the Omaha Community Foundation successfully bridged the gap, distributing meals to thousands of families in Omaha and Millard.

CONNECTING EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND OUR ECONOMY

Research confirms that a family's financial security directly impacts a child's academic outlook. Despite the pandemic, families in Learning Community Centers took advantage of two-generation (2-Gen) opportunities in education and employment. Their positive outcomes further validate our 2-Gen model for children and families to move forward together

Highlights: 2-Gen Outcomes

- Parents successfully learned to build supportive relationships with their children which is key to the development of academic and social skills.

- New workforce training options for families grew with positive impact for two-generations. In our new pilot programs, parents upskill into high-need, higher wage occupations. When parents get ahead in employment, we know children develop greater confidence in learning.

- Digital literacy training made virtual learning accessible. Families in our community centers became more comfortable using technology to partner with local schools, communicate with teachers, and connect to school district resources.

BUILDING COMMUNITY ALLIANCES

Just ten years ago, our school districts had limited community resources to support student achievement. The landscape for learning now holds new opportunity and a strong trend line in early childhood education and family engagement. This year, the Learning Community will more intentionally align 2-Gen learning with economic initiatives in the Omaha metro region.

In my first six months as Learning Community CEO, I see new alliances forming around our schools, homes, and workforce. As you work to leverage the strengths of our great state, please let me know how the Learning Community can support your efforts. We all want learning to become a destination with opportunity for everyone.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bradley Ekwerekwu
Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
Chief Executive Officer
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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).

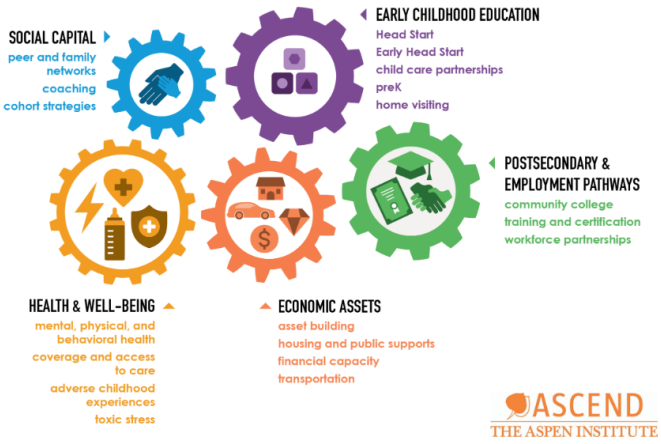
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION IS CRITICAL FOR STUDENTS' SUCCESS. Family engagement with their children and their schools is a key element for student school success (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Partnerships between home and school are especially

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 Parent University at 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 INITIATIVES

The Learning Community also supports programs in nine school districts. School districts customize 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.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic altered the programming, services, education, and evaluation of the Learning Community in 2020. Programs and school districts responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to mitigate the impact. Both Parent University and the Learning Community Center of South Omaha continued to reach out and partner with families and their communities. The pandemic necessitated a change in service delivery while meeting the needs of families and providing supports for students whose school instruction changed dramatically.

> "Everyone has been flexible in adjusting their role, hearing our participants, meeting the participants where they are, and adjusting our daily routines as needed."
>
> "It allows us to keep the families engaged and still ties into the mission of the program and helps us support the families through their journey and the pandemic."
>
> ----staff from LCCSO

SERVICES PROVIDED AT LCCSO AND PARENT UNIVERSITY

TEACHING TEAM

LCCSO. The teaching team for LCCSO continued to engage with participants and families in a multitude of ways. They created a YouTube channel to keep families engaged, provided information on Facebook, assisted with educational supports and videos to assist with remote learning packets from OPS, provided ESL classes and home visits online, and delivered curriculum classes through Zoom.

Teaching participants moved from classroom teaching expanding into virtual classes and tutoring. For many participants, the teaching team needed to provide training and teaching on the use of technology. Several families did not have their own tablet or computer at home and were unfamiliar with how to use basic functions including email, website navigation and connection with school resources. As a result, the team began providing classes on computer literacy. Staff members in the focus group noted, "For the teaching team,

technology is the resource most needed for our families (i.e., technology access, internet access, more devices, and capability of devices)."

PARENT UNIVERSITY. For participants in Parent University, classes moved to virtual learning. GED and ESL classes were offered 2x/week virtually. A pre-homeowner class (5 weeks) was offered as was an effective praise parenting class. Additionally, educators were available to provide individual tutoring for participants needing extra assistance.

HOME VISITORS

The education navigators and family liaisons at both LCCSO and Parent University continued to connect with families in a number of ways. All staff used various modes of communication for home visits (i.e., Zoom and phone calls, WhatsApp and Facebook messenger). Navigators facilitated connections to children's teachers and provided additional supports for families regarding children's schooling. In addition, navigators were instrumental in connecting families to resources for assistance with finances (rent, utilities), food pantries and distribution, mental health supports and information on COVID-19. For Parent University participants, navigators provided supports and information on coping strategies to help handle the stress of the pandemic.

Communication with families increased two-fold during the first few months of the pandemic moving from monthly contacts to connecting with families every other week. One staff member noted, "Communication has become more constant and has been effective in helping us retain home visit numbers during the summer."

"As an Educational Navigator, we are being intentional in meeting participants' needs and sharing resources." Additionally, staff are building healthy routines and acknowledging the grieving process their families may be going through. Part of that process included providing resources for mental health services (i.e., free sessions through UNMC and MMI were very popular with some families).

COVID-19 SPECIFIC RESOURCES

All staff connected families to community resources as one noted, "We are becoming more creative in our ways of communication and engaging families". Additional supports provided to families included: donated diaper and formula distribution, food and laptop distribution, and social interactions through the use of the Happy Bus (i.e., singing and dancing outside the homes with kids).

To keep connected with their families, the staff at LCCSO produced 107 videos. Eight of the videos were Story Time with staff reading different books with one video having 317 views. They also put together videos for young children around different early academic concepts. Videos produced between March and June 7, 960 views with one video receiving 563 views. In addition to the videos, staff assembled and distributed 200 activity packets. Both LCCSO and Parent University distributed and/or assisted families with the OPS homework packets.

At both Parent University and LCCSO, donated diapers and formula were distributed to families in need. In LCCSO, 137 families received diapers and formula while 53 families from Parent University received the supplies. Both centers assisted with food distribution for families. Sites also provided free face masks and assistance for free/low cost internet services.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Focus groups were conducted with families at both Parent University and LCCSO to examine the impact of COVID-19, how they were coping with the stressors, and how they had engaged with the centers during this time.

Focus groups were also conducted with staff members (N=15) from LCCSO to examine how COVID-19 affected not only delivery of services but the impact on them personally and professionally.

Learning Community Center of South Omaha Staff Focus Group Themes

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD. Families were impacted financially, socially, mentally, and health-wise. Preventative work was provided at the beginning of the pandemic (i.e., connecting families to food pantry or jobs). One participant noted, as some participants tested positive for COVID-19, staff connected families to testing locations and financial supports (i.e., Together Inc., public schools, Project Harmony, and Heartland Family Service).

Families experienced significant emotional stress. During the early months and summer of 2020, families were expressing worry and fears. The staff assisted families with coping strategies to navigate through those emotions. Growing Great Kids/Growing Great Families^{R} curriculum provided strategies to support children and families experiencing stress. The program transitioned from providing supports on routines and nutrition to mental health services. A presentation on grieving during COVID-19 was provided for families. The presentation focused on behaviors associated during this period of time (i.e., side effects of not being at school and changes in their normal routines).

The following quotes from the focus group illustrate the strength and fortitude of the participants.

"Staff are trying their best to support the needs of the families. Our families are very strong and try their best to accommodate the needs of their children."

"Families are faced with a lot of financial strain. They are very brave as many work in places that don't have the benefits that offer them protection from COVID-19 and they continue to work to support their families."

"The families are trying the best they can to survive. They are very resilient, and I admire all of our participants."

"Our families are very courageous."

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WAS SIGNIFICANTLY DISRUPTED. Families worried about their children falling behind and their limited access to technology or materials. Additional concerns noted included minimal contact with school staff and no one answering the phone at the school. Parents were concerned with receiving late notices on summer school information, worried about their students with special needs and no services or communication provided (i.e. parents may not understand accommodations provided at school).

Limited access to internet and technology devices became a barrier for parents and students being able to connect with school. "Technology is a barrier with our population, so we have connected families with low cost internet resources." In addition, families requested more information on assisting students with on-line learning and navigating through the websites needed to complete schoolwork with multiple age groups in the home (i.e., academic support through the schools).

STAFF NEEDED SUPPORTS TO CONTINUE WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS. COVID-19 required staff to be flexible and adapt to the rapidly changing health situation and the needs of the families. Working with families and providing supports, while rewarding, was also emotionally exhausting. Staff were asked to change and expand job responsibilities to meet participants' needs. They had to connect with families, determine what was needed, and provide more individualized supports than had been needed previously. Some noted that the first couple of months were challenging as they tried to adapt not only to the rapid changes at work but also needing to balance those same changes and responsibilities at home. Still others mentioned the opportunities created by the pandemic to expand their own abilities and reach families in creative and non-traditional ways. Many mentioned being grateful for being able to continue their work with families even with all the changes. One staff member said, "I feel humbled that I am in the right place to be a support to our participants on a daily basis."

In addition to taking time for self-care, staff members expressed their appreciation for the support received from employers and the director as they work from home and continue supporting their own families. Many mentioned feeling supported by their supervisor and teammates and talked about the importance of communication including one on one check-ins, team time and social time. Finally, they stressed the importance of acknowledging their own feelings, stress and challenges during this time. "I feel supported, it is important for our teams to acknowledge and be ok with our individual feelings during this time."

Family Participant Focus Group Themes (LCCSO and Parent University)

COVID-19 NEGATIVELY IMPACTED MULTIPLE AREAS OF PARTICIPANTS' LIVES INCLUDING HEALTH, FINANCES, STRESS, AND EMOTIONS. As the virus became more widespread, families expressed fear for their own safety and the safety of those in their families.

Fear of the elderly and unwell contracting the virus, fear of sending their children to school again and fear of being in the community were all expressed. Participants talked about having family members becoming incredibly ill and dying and the additional emotional and financial stress that placed on the family.

“I used to think that this was something the president was doing to keep people controlled and that it was a lie. Then you realize this is real and you get scared to go out because of getting infected. Us Latinos are the ones that least take care of ourselves and we have the highest number in cases. I have close friends that have died due to the virus.”

“This situation it's so frustrating, especially because my father-in-law is sick. He has diabetes and we have to take him to his dialysis treatment. My husband also has diabetes. So, we have to be extra careful. If we need something, I have to go by myself; I have to do it all alone because I’m afraid they get sick.”

Emotions mentioned by participants concerning the pandemic were: afraid, uncertain, anxious, depressed, frustration, fear, stress (also children). The toll of being afraid and isolated was evident across several stories and experiences as it increased anxiety, depression, and frustration. Isolation and detachment from others was noted at both sites. Participants talked about how difficult it was to explain the situation to their children and handle their emotions especially the younger ones who didn’t understand and wanted to be outside of the house. Fear was a determining factor in them interacting with the outside world.

“I’m very afraid. Before I got infected I barely took my children outside, and now they are not going out at all. We just take car rides, but I don’t take them to the store. They only go to our backyard, and I try to entertain them with different things.”

“At first, I was scared of the virus and all the information about it. Because of the isolation, I started to feel anxious and depressed.”

One participant in particular noted an effective strategy being implemented by Parent University, “We’re going to class on Tuesdays where we can find a better way to care for your family. They are trying to de-stress ourselves and not be so worried and be the parent we can be to help our kids with school and go to work.”

THE FEAR OF COVID-19 WAS BASED VERY MUCH IN THE REALITY OF DAY TO DAY LIFE FOR MANY PARTICIPANTS. Many of those in the focus groups were directly impacted by COVID-19; some had entire families infected with COVID-19. Others were exposed by ill family members and forced to quarantine. Part of the fear was not knowing where to turn for resources or which information to trust.

"Financially this has affected us. Right at the beginning of the pandemic my dad died, we covered all the expenses, and later my husband's work was reduced."

"I am still not feeling my 100%. When I do a lot or walk a lot, I get short breaths. The doctor said that within the time my lungs will get better. However, it's frustrating, because I want to do some things, and I'm still not able to."

"Financially, it has been a struggle. My husband was out of work for a month, so we used our savings. Later I got sick, so we had to quarantine for couple of weeks. Right when he was called to work again, he had to take time off to stay in quarantine."

"I was sick, and think I'm sick again, I'm waiting for the test. My husband got sick too just a week after I did, it was really bad, I thought he would die."

THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED NOT ONLY THE ADULTS IN THE FAMILY BUT ALSO THE CHILDREN. Parents talked about how each of their children were handling the pandemic and the emotions of it differently. Participants at both LCCSO and Parent University noted that perhaps additional mental health supports should be considered for older children and teenagers. They noted that some children were ready to return to school while others were afraid. The older ones struggled with the transition to online learning while the younger ones didn't understand why they couldn't see their friends and play with others. Some participants discussed how hearing about the virus in the news also affected their children. Overall, participants talked about the difficultly not only in managing their own stress and emotions but tending to those in their children.

"There are different emotions. My daughter is in college and says learning is not the same online. Children do not focus as well at home; it does not work for children to learn online. My son is afraid to return to school, and so am I. It is stressful."

FAMILIES VIEWED THE CENTER AS A RESOURCE DURING THIS TIME AND MANY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE PROGRAMMING AND RESOURCES. Participants talked about being able to continue their GED and ESL classes and how the center connected with them to make sure they could continue their studies. If they couldn't continue at the moment, a navigator or liaison was reaching out to keep them in the loop about possibilities in the future.

"They have been in touch, attentive, and caring for us. I had COVID-19 and had to go on quarantine. They gave us information to help us pay my bills, and where to find resources; like paying for my rent."

Technology assistance was mentioned frequently as a necessary resource and benefit to connecting with the centers. Participants mentioned the need for assistance with the internet and

using computers to not only help their children but to continue their classes as well. Many mentioned the patience from the LCCSO staff in helping them continue to work even at an individualized pace. Families talked about being able to continue with English and GED classes through Zoom video chat. They discussed doing Zoom videos/classes such as math, Zumba, activities for the kids, and other classes throughout the day for the whole family.

Increased communication was noticed by the families at both LCCSO and Parent University and they noted the multiple methods used by staff including calls, texts, and video chats. They felt that they had more access to information due to the communication from staff. Participants appreciated communication about the virus, health resources, and communication about school and how to access children's teachers. Some mentioned the information on disinfecting and hygiene as well as the classes/presentations on stress as being helpful. Finally, all participants talked about how the communication made them feel less stressed and more connected even if they didn't need access to other resources or additional supports. Many were uplifted and felt encouraged by the when staff visited their front yards to sign and talk with families in person.

"I talk with my navigator every 8 days, and we always talk about my emotions. Things that I can do that might help. I have the opportunity to talk to someone. Between everything that's happening, the things that I have to do for my family, and my father-in-law, it gets very stressful. So, it's really nice to have my navigator to talk to someone."

UNEXPECTED POSITIVES HAVE RESULTED DUE TO THE PANDEMIC. Participants talked of increased persistence and tolerance. More time was available to spend bonding with family, learning new things, and being of service/helping others. They talked about how they found alternatives and developed more of an appreciation of work and of schools for children to attend. Some talked about how this has pushed them to learn to use technology and how technology allowed them to continue their education even being home with their children. Several talked about how they were able to apply the skills they'd learned at the center and use them now in daily life.

"I feel this virus has made us persistent and things will not change, so we need to be persistent. Some people found alternatives, found a way to make money, making cakes, crafts. We have learned that there are many ways to earn a living. We learned to appreciate what we have like the children have with their school. They need their school, their friends and they need to socialize. We appreciate our job, even more, because we were complaining about how we were tired or bored with our jobs, but now we appreciate having one. Overall, I think that we have learned that things will not remain the same forever, and things change every day."

School Districts

District Perspective on Impact of COVID-19 and the Transition

The districts realized they needed to provide intensive training. Teachers learned how to use synchronous and asynchronous systems for learning. Professional development was provided on the following topics:

- How to instruct on a remote platform.

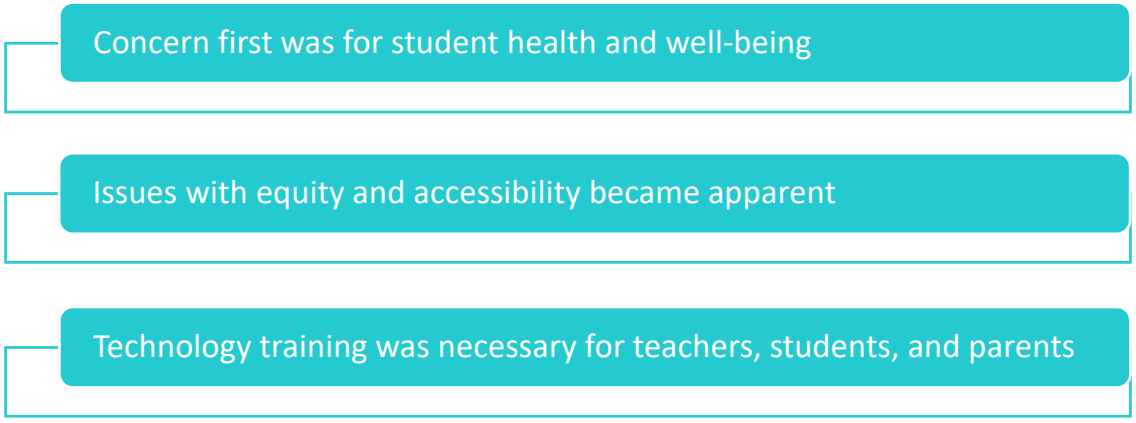
- Resilience and Self-Care
- COVID-19 specific training: PPE guidance
- Documents for lesson plan templates, curriculum guides
- Inclusive practices

Unexpected Benefits to the Pandemic

"What has happened was once the state shut down, the divide became apparent who has access and who doesn't. People became aware that we needed to do something about this. Now, all the students have the technology and have internet access. This is helping to promote digital learning for young children." The pandemic helped the teachers understand what some of the divides were.

Another benefit was that some of the teams grew closer and felt more connected. Coaching relationships improved and used their time better as coaches weren't driving to buildings. Learning something new invigorated teachers as they learned new technology and discovered new materials (i.e. Zora, books, PBS kids). There were great resources and didn't rely on "drill and kill" learning strategies.

An awareness noted was that there is a fear of COVID-19 in North Omaha and families don't feel comfortable sending children to school. There is an understanding that the parents are concerned about their child's health. The district's primary focuses have been on child safety and well-being including meals, physical safety, and social/emotional safety.



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.

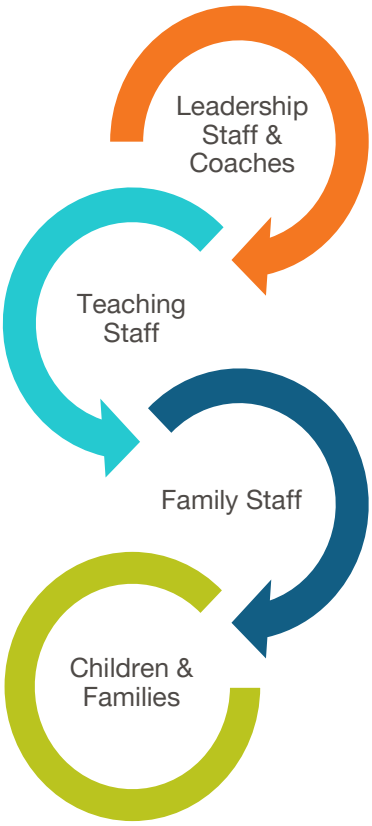
Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

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). Data was collected at all schools in the fall. Since the programs shifted to remote learning in March due to COVID-19, no spring data was completed. This limits the evaluation information available for this report.

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. After the spring break, in-person school did not resume. Since many parents did not have access to the internet or technology, teachers developed learning at home template activities that teachers shared with parents in any way that worked with their families. Most picked up as they picked up meals for their children. For families that had access to the internet, teachers connected them to applications for learning activities such as SeeSaw. The amount of time teacher-parent-student time was individualized by school. All teachers completed periodic checks with the families. Central office was instrumental in developing resources that could support children and families. They also helped teachers identify ways to best structure their day as they provided virtually learning opportunities for their students.

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. Coaching continued to play an important role during COVID-19, brainstorming with the team on meaningful ways to reach families and supporting the team to find applications that families could use with their young children. The coach-teacher relationships in some ways were enhanced during this unique time.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The teaching teams benefit from 11 days of additional professional development (PD) through the school year. PD sessions focus on the implementation of social skill development, resilience, and reflection as a teacher educating high needs students as well as on content knowledge in literacy and language strategies and math instruction to build the skills of teaching staff. 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 in the summer to support their skills in providing virtual learning for their students.

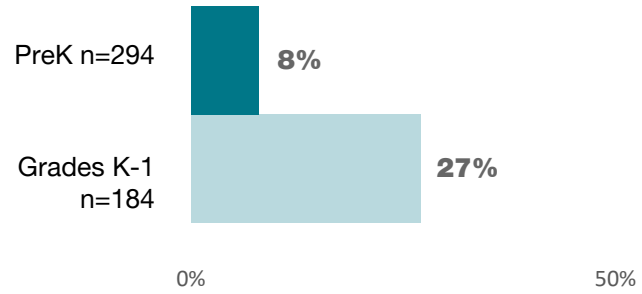
Implementing the Creative Curriculum is another key focus area. This curriculum targets the intentionality of vocabulary selection, repeated read-a-louds, selection of center materials, and alignment of literacy strategies (i.e. phonemic awareness and emergent writing).

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. The lack of access to remote education alternatives became very apparent during the pandemic. As one administrator commented in some ways it heightened teachers awareness of the divides that are in the community and the needs of the students and families they serve.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2019-2020, the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership served 478 PreK and Grade K-1 students. A total of 294 PreK students and 184 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, 16% of the children were ELL and 17% were on an Individualized Education Program (IEP). More special education students were served in PreK classrooms. There were fewer females (44%) than males (56%) served across all grade levels.

INTENSIVE EARLY LEARNING CHILDHOOD CLASSES SERVED STUDENTS WHO ARE ELL.



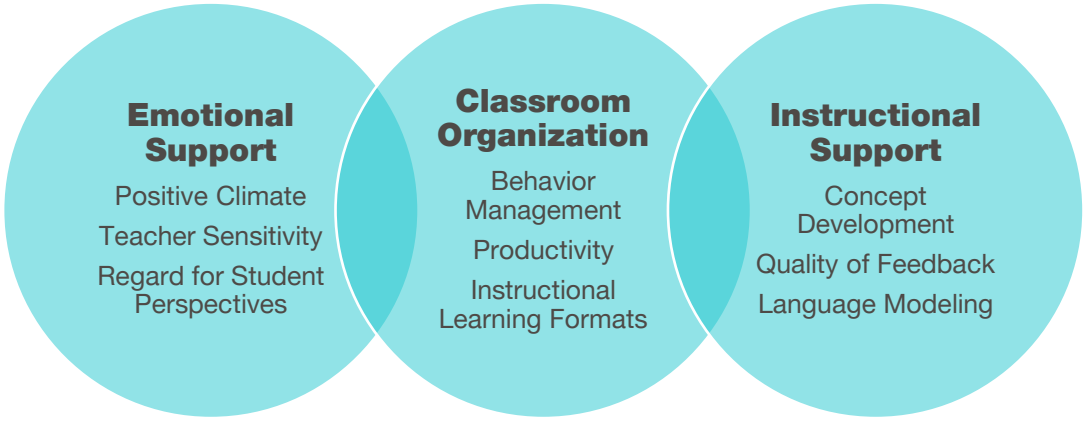
THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.

N=478

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 nine (six were from the expanded schools of Skinner and Minne Lusa) new preschool teachers out of the 18 total teachers observed. There were two new Grade K-1 teachers out of the seven total teachers observed. Information from this assessment is shared with the individual teacher and her coach to build on his/her strengths and identify strategies to improve instructional practices.

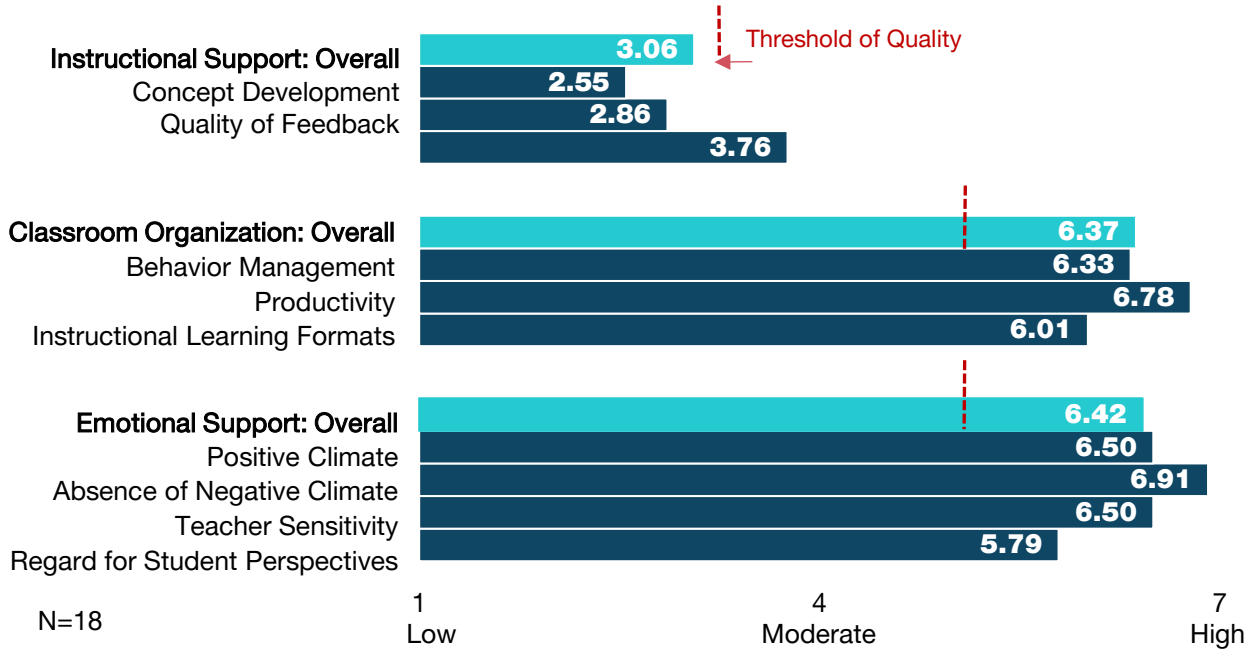
CLASS has three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organizational, and Instructional Support. Classrooms are rated on a one to seven scale with one to two indicated low ratings and six to seven indicating high ratings. Nationally, Instructional Support tends to be the domain with the most opportunity 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). Preschoolers in classrooms with higher quality interactions showed greater learning gains across school readiness domains, including executive functioning and early literacy (Vitiello, Bassock, Hamre, Player, & Williford, 2018).



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

Preschool classrooms met the threshold of quality in Classroom Organization and Emotional Support.

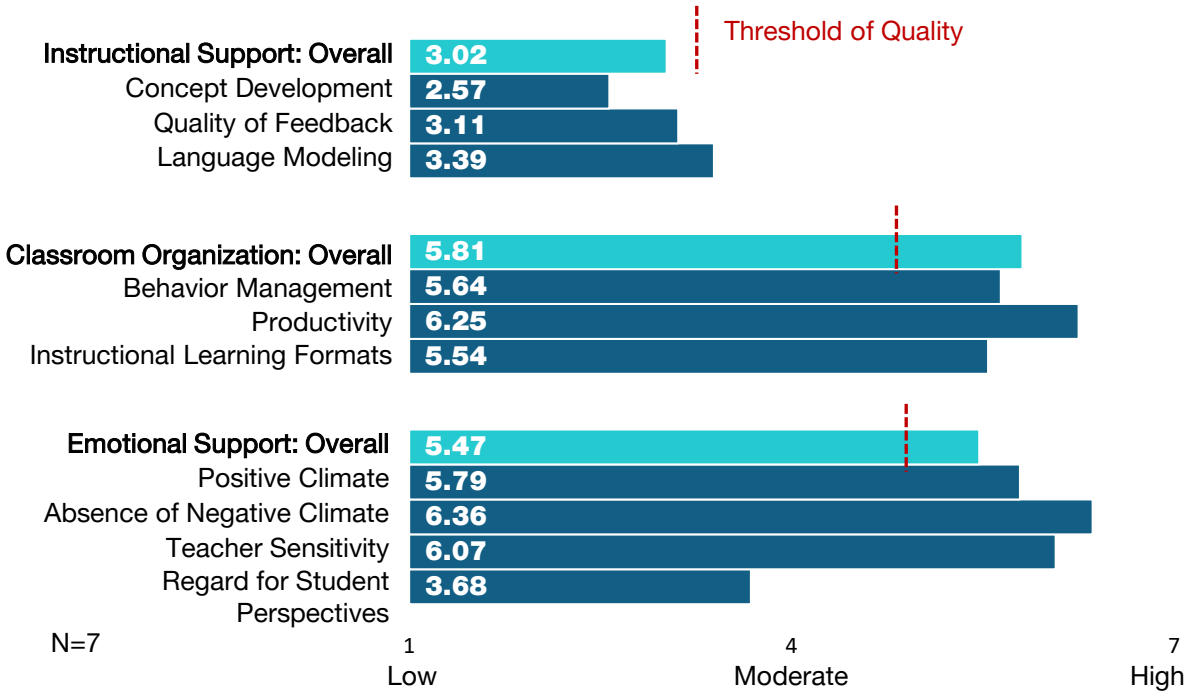


The Office of Head Start (OHS) used the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) during its on-site reviews of grantees. Data from this report, (https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/data-ongoing-monitoring/article/national-overview-grantee-class-scores-2019), was compared to the results of the Intensive 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=6.17) and Emotional Support (HS=6.38). They were slightly lower in Instructional Support (HS=3.45).

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 fourth year of collecting CLASS data for Grades K-1 classrooms at Kellom and Conestoga. 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, Absence of Negative Climate, and Teacher Sensitivity. 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.

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



CHILD OUTCOMES

Supporting young children's development in the early years has shown to be important in laying the foundation for later academic skills. Research has shown that high-quality Head Start children had higher cognitive scores than children in low-quality Head Start or center-based care (Lee, 2019). Further, 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). In recent years the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Blair & Razza, 2007). Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler's ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et. al., 2013).

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS

METHOD. Limited analyses could be performed as only fall data was collected since students were not in school during the spring data collection due to COVID-19. The following describes the children's skills as they began school.

Four areas were assessed in the fall including the areas of:

VOCABULARY SKILLS [PEABODY PICTURE VOCABULARY TEST–IV (PPVT-IV)]. The PPVT-IV measures students' vocabulary skills. The PPVT-IV was completed at all six schools with a total of 266 students assessed.

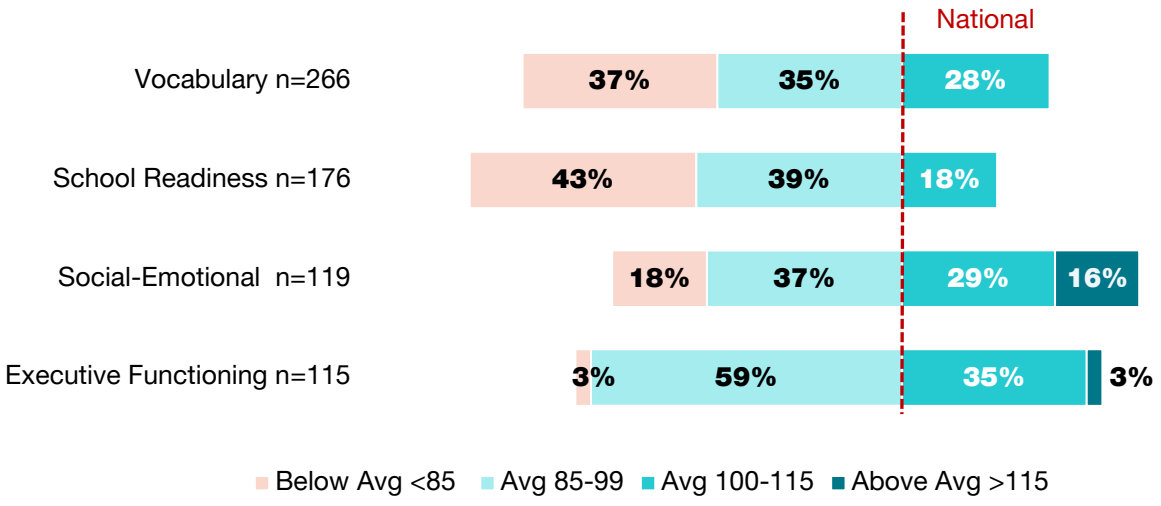
SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS [BRACKEN SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENT (BSRA)]. The BSRA measures the academic readiness skills of young students in the areas of colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, comparisons, and shapes. BSRA was completed at four schools with a total of 176 students assessed.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS [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 at two schools with a total of 119 students assessed.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS [THE MINNESOTA EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SCALE (MEFS)]. 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. This an online assessment for children two and older, was used in the fall and the spring. This assessment was completed with 115 children from two schools.

FINDINGS. The descriptive analyses found that the highest percentages of students scored within the average range in the areas of social-emotional development (82%) and executive functioning (97%). Social-emotional area also had the highest percentage of students performing at the mid-point of average or higher. School Readiness area had the most students that were in the below average range (43%).

STUDENTS SCORED HIGHEST IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.
Nearly half of the children were below average for School Readiness.



Did student factors impact fall scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' fall scores across developmental areas. The results of an ANOVA analyses found that girls scored significantly higher on vocabulary scores (m=94) compared to boys (m=89) [F(1,284)=4.661; p=.032]. Girls also scored significantly higher in social-emotional skills (m=52) compared to boys (m=46) [F(1,117)=12.478; *p*=.001]. Whereas, boys scored significantly higher on behavioral concerns (m=53) compared to girls (m=48) [F(1,117)=5.665; *p*=019)]. There were no significant gender differences in school readiness or executive functioning.

In the fall, girls outperformed boys in vocabulary and social-emotional skills. Boys demonstrated higher behavior concerns.

PREVIOUS PREK EXPERIENCE. Of interest was whether there were any differences between students who had been enrolled in IEC programs when they were three, differ from those who were newly enrolled in PreK. The results of an ANOVA analyses found that students with previous PreK experience had significantly higher scores (m=93) than those students that were newly enrolled (m=87) [F(1,182)=6.704; *p*=.010]. There were no significant differences in vocabulary, social-emotional, or executive functioning based on PreK experience.

Students with previous PreK experience outperformed their peers with no previous experience in the area of school readiness.

RACE/ETHNICITY. Of interest was whether there were any differences between student scores based on race and/or ethnicity. The results of the ANOVA analyses found there were no significant experience differences in any of the identified areas that were assessed including school readiness, vocabulary, social-emotional, or executive functioning.

PARENT PARTICIPATION IN PARENT UNIVERSITY. At all of the schools, parents had the opportunity to participate in Parent University. Seventeen percent of the parents (n=50) engaged in Parent University courses and activities across the six schools. An analysis of variance was 7completed to compare the fall scores for vocabulary outcomes of children whose parents participated in Parent University to those who did not. 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 results are reported in the Shared Program Outcomes section in this report.

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. In addition, this year the Parent University expanded its boundaries to provide services to families whose children participate in schools within the Subcouncil 2 boundaries.

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 virtual 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 or virtually 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. New this year is a pilot program with Metropolitan Community College whereby parents receive training in facilities management with a guaranteed interview in this field upon successful completion for jobs with a starting wage ranging from $17.00-23.00/hr.

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 at the center, 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. Based on feedback from parents the previous year Parent University began offering more courses in Spanish and implemented online courses prior to the pandemic. Therefore, courses were able to fully transition to a remote learning platform beginning March 2020.

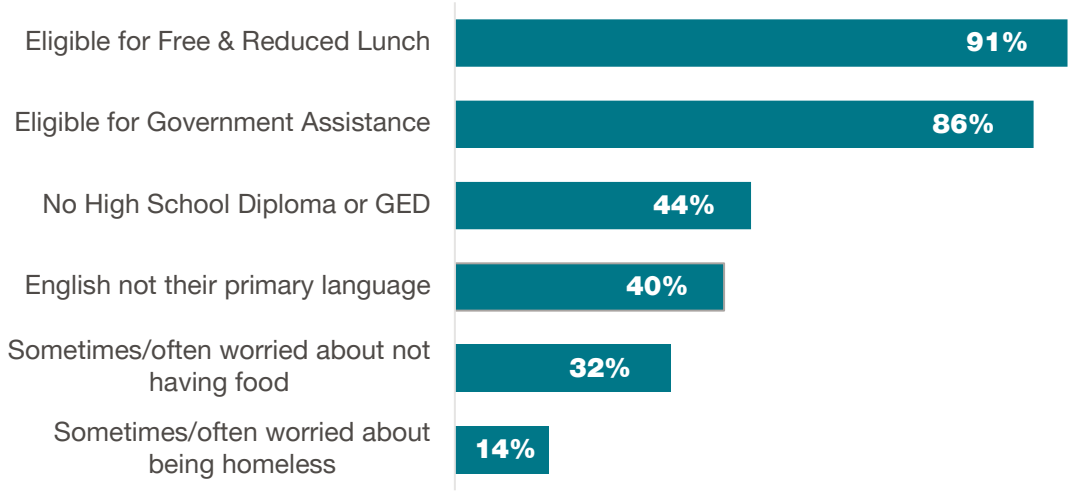
DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 248 parents were enrolled in Parent University, which was a similar number of participants from the previous year. There were more females (68%) than males (32%). The majority (93%) of the parents represent racial and ethnic diversity. Most of the parents were Black (53%) or Hispanic (30%). Most of the parents (61%) were employed either part (11%) or full time (50%). More than half of the parents had either less than a high school degree (44%) or a high school diploma (23%). The remainder of the parents had some college (18%) or a college degree (10%). The families had 470 children of which 271 were within the target age range (birth through Grade 3) for the program. Fifteen percent (15%) of the children were enrolled in one or more of the Intensive Early Childhood preschool programs.

THE PARENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.

Parents in the program reported facing a number of challenges. Many parents (86%) accessed some type of government assistance (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, TANF, and Title XX). Ninety-one percent (91%) had students who qualified for Free and/or Reduced Lunch. Food insecurity (worried about having adequate food for the family) (32%) or ran out of food (24%). Homelessness was of concern for many families with 14% worried about being homeless and 11% indicating they had been homeless during the past year. Over a third (40%) of the parents' home language was not English. Many (44%) did not have a high school diploma. 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.



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

Families wanting additional support were provided the support of a family liaison. They partner with families to set and achieve goals identified by the family. A total of 110 parents received this support and developed a service plan that helped the family in gaining stability while supporting the child's academic success. The 228 goals reflected on service plans were related to the majors within Parent University: School Success (38%), Life Skills and Wellness (45%), Parenting (13%) and Leadership (4%). High percentages of parents were continuing to work towards their goals with 46% having maintained progress, made progress towards goals (13%), or achieved their goal (13%). Only a small percentage regressed (10%) towards accomplishing their goals.

FAMILY OUTCOMES
FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

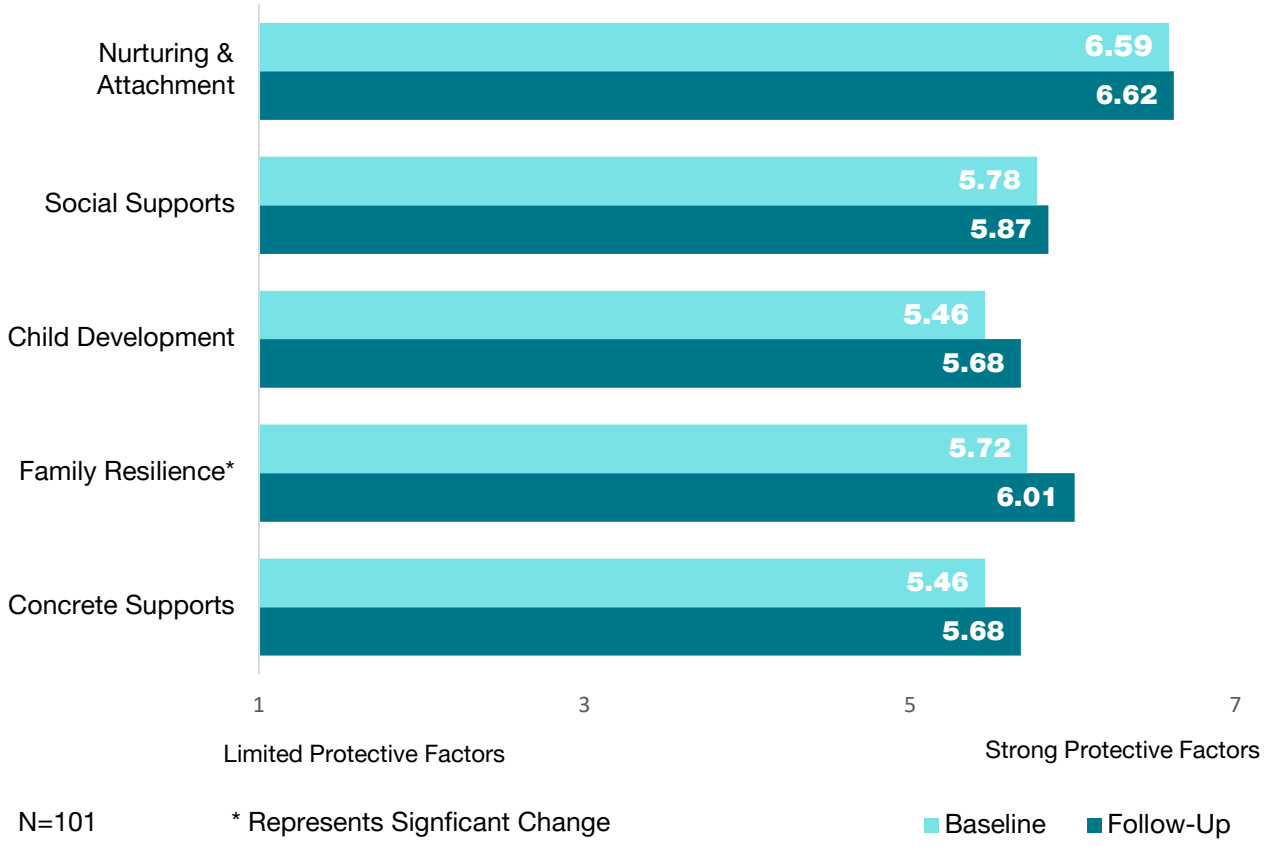
Protective factors are strengths that help buffer and support families who may face challenges. These attributes mitigate risk and promote healthy development and well-being.

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 navigators and liaisons. The survey assesses five areas: Family Resiliency, Social Supports, Concrete Supports, Child Development Knowledge, and Nurturing and Attachment. One-hundred and one (101) 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 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(99)= -2.407; p=.018), d=0.240)] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change in these areas.

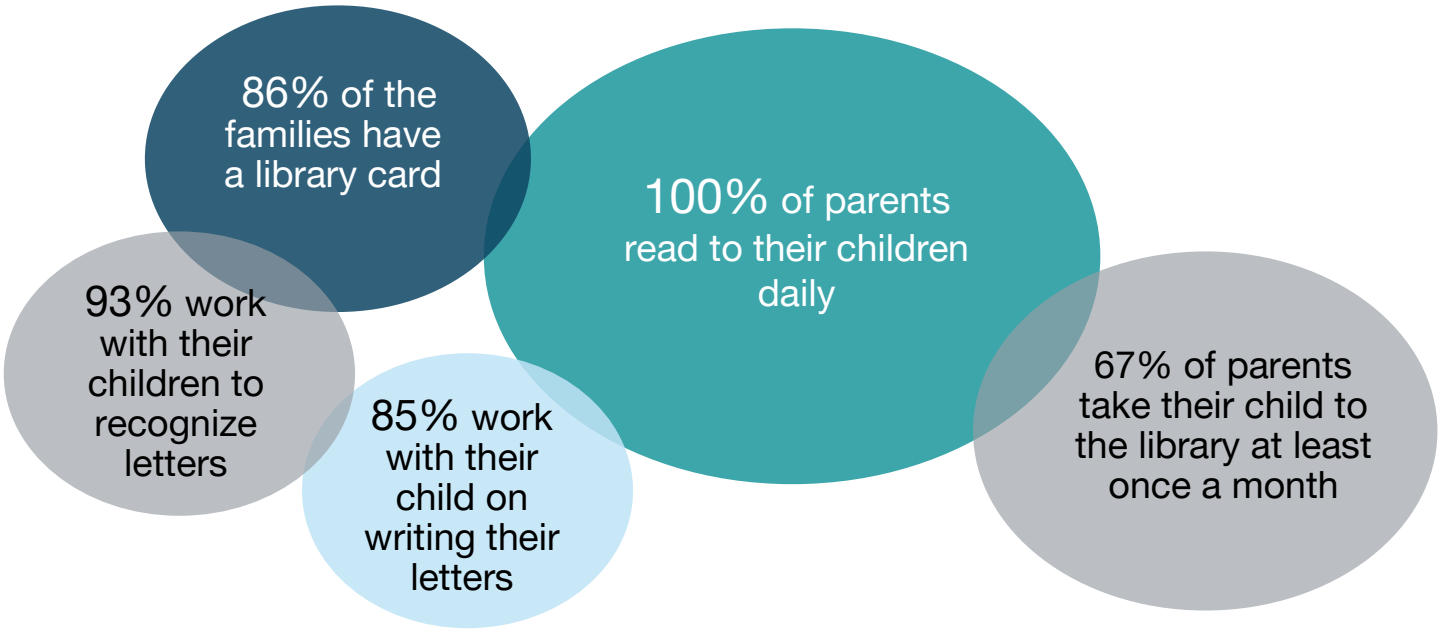
PARENTS DEMONSTRATED STRONG PROTECTIVE FACTORS ACROSS THE MAJORITY OF THE AREAS.

There were significant improvements in Family Resilience.



How did parents support their child's literacy skills?

DAILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES. Parents (n=184) 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 100% of parents read to their children daily and participated in a variety of other literacy promoting activities with their children. There were improvements in all areas over time. At baseline only 41% of the parents visited the library once a month (26% increase) and only 55% had a library card (31% increase).



READYROSIE. ReadyRosie, a comprehensive family engagement resource, uses video modeling to build school family partnerships to promote school readiness. The ReadyRosie Active Family Engagement System is built on the premise that *"every child can be ready to learn when schools and families work together."* ReadyRosie's Modeled Moment videos are the core of the ReadyRosie program and provides resources to support programs. The Parent University enrolled families into ReadyRosie. A weekly video playlist was sent to families via text or e-mail. Parent University staff supported the family's use of these video learning opportunities that focused on health and well-being, language and literacy, math and reasoning, and social-emotional learning for children from birth to age 8. Videos were available in English and Spanish. A total of 98 parents at Parent University viewed over 1,083 ReadyRosie video clips over the course of the year. This resource was very useful to parents during the pandemic.

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION. 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. Scores for the parents participating at LCCNO are included in the Shared Program Outcomes section of the report.

FAMILY EDUCATION

What are the educational hopes for their children?

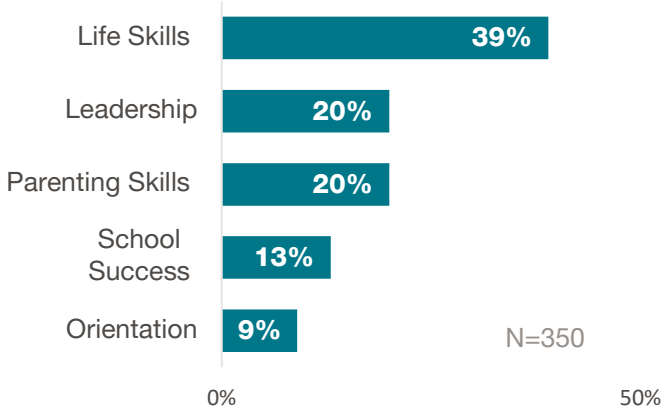
Parents were interviewed to determine their hopes for their child's future education. At the follow-up assessment, the majority of the parents reported that they expected their child to obtain a bachelor's or graduate degree. Only four percent reported their child would only receive a high school diploma. This data suggest that parents who participate in 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 23 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. Life Skills and Wellness courses had the highest enrollment. Throughout the year, many parents enrolled in more than one course. Across the 23 courses, 350 participants (duplicated count) were enrolled in courses. The courses with the highest participation were GED and ELL classes, Parent University Orientation, and Computer Skills. Completion status was completed on 280 participants. Of these participants, 28% either withdrew or cancelled their enrollment. Of the 203 that completed courses, 85% satisfactorily completed the class.

MOST PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN COURSES RELATED TO LIFE SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP.
Fewer participated in courses related to Orientation or School Success.



CIRCLE OF SECURITY™-PARENTING (COS-P)

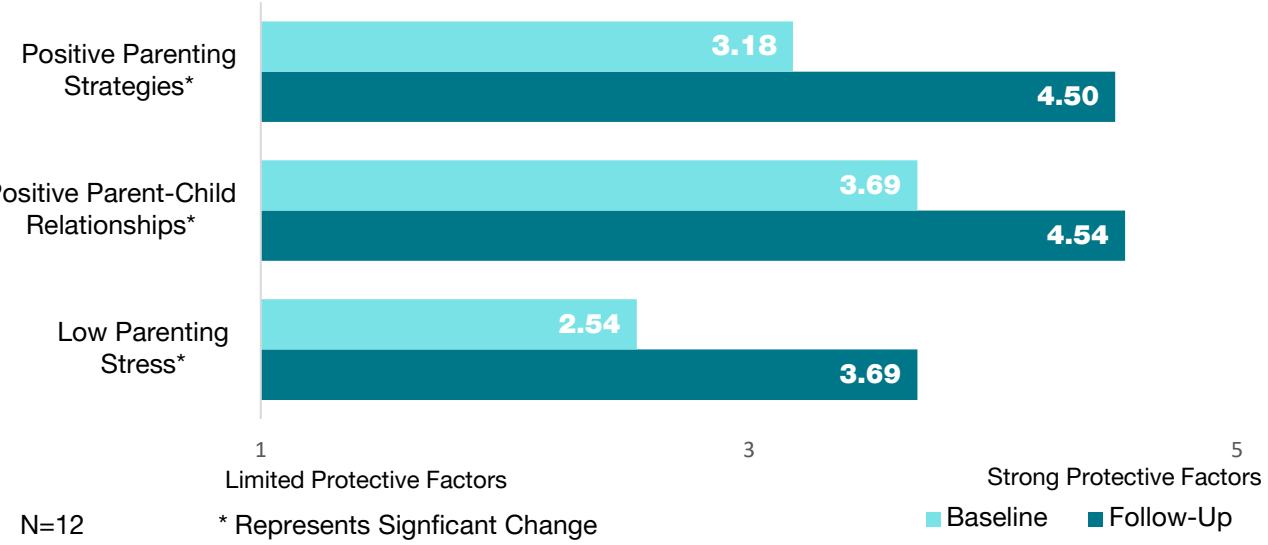
Circle of Security™-Parenting is an 8-week parenting program based on years of research about how to build strong attachment relationships between parent and child. It is designed to help parents learn how to respond to child needs in a way that enhances the attachment between parent and child. It is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

COS-P was another core parenting course provided at Parent University. A total of 19 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. Twelve individuals completed the survey.

FINDINGS. A paired t-test analysis was completed to evaluate participants' perception by the end of the COS-P series across the program identified outcomes. There were positive significant differences found between scores at the beginning of the group and scores at the groups' conclusion in all three areas including parenting skills [$t(11)= -6.417; p>.001, d=1.852$)], low stress [$t(11)= -2.56; p=.025; d=0.947$)], and positive relationships with their children [$t(11)= -3.395; p=.005, d=0.941$)]. These positive results represent strong meaningful change. 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.



N=12

* Represents Signficant 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-two parents participated in one of these two options, ELL (36) and GED (16). 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. A total of 18 students completed a second assessment. 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 ESL and enroll into GED.

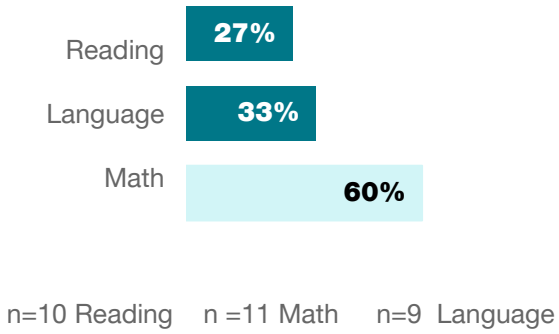
STUDENTS IN ELL CLASSES ARE GAINING ENGLISH SKILLS BY INCREASING AT LEAST ONE LEVEL.

ELL N=18

Mid-year English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS® as a replacement for BEST Plus. CASAS® is the nationally recognized assessment for English Learners and it is aligned with the English curriculum used at the center. Only baseline data was obtained this year, so it was not included in this report but will be reported in future years.

The Test of Adult Basic Education was used to complete the follow-up assessment of 11 parents' math, reading, or language skills who were enrolled in GED classes. The majority (60%) of the families increased at least one level in Math. Fewer (27%) gained a level in Reading or Language (33%).

MAJORITY OF STUDENTS IN GED CLASSES PASSED ONE OR MORE LEVELS IN MATH.
Fewer students made gains in Reading and Language.



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.

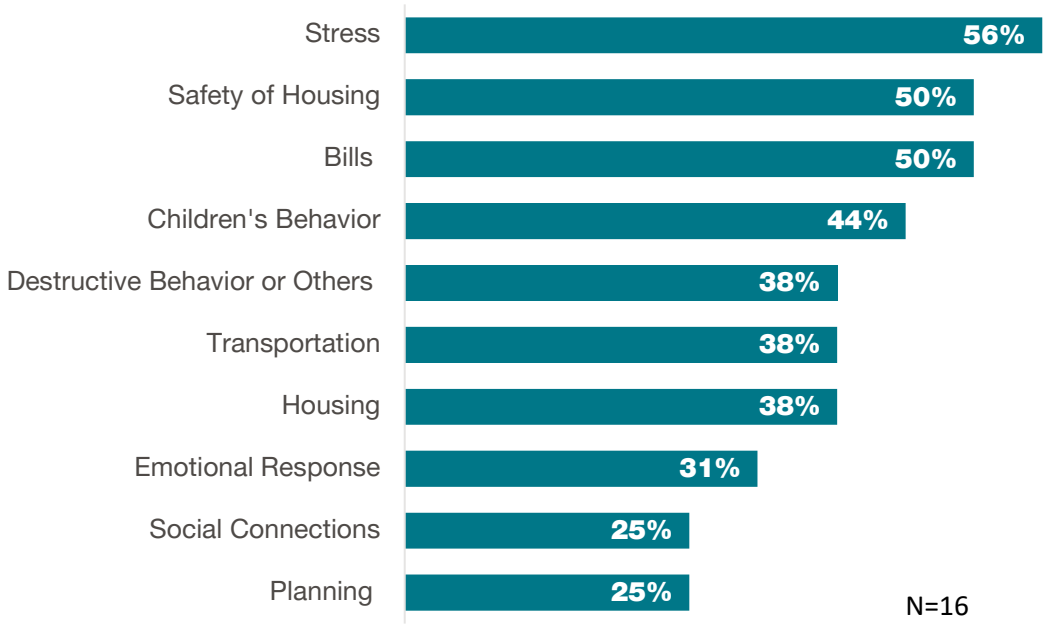
Four cohorts of parents for a total of 31 participated in the 10-week course offered at Parent University. Twelve months after graduation from the course, 52% of the 31 graduate parents completed a follow-up survey and the following outcomes were reported:

- An average 36% decrease in debt to income ratio
- An average increase in income of $1,044
- An average decrease in bill reduction of $980 per month
- An average increase in assets of $10,709

Parents' participation in Bridges Out of Poverty course improved their financial stability.

Many parents reported increased stability in multiple areas. These results suggest improved economic and social stability for their families.

MANY PARENTS REPORTED INCREASED STABILITY.
The highest percent of parents demonstrated stability in stress, safety, and bills.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

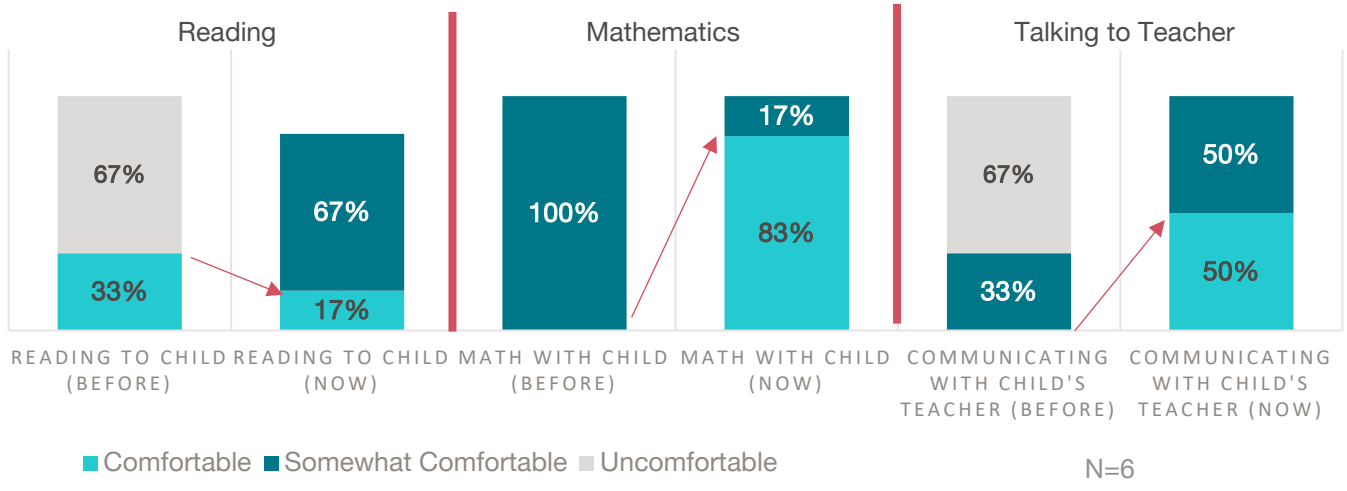
Parents showed marked increases in their levels of feeling comfortable engaging their children with math from entrance into the program to the present after participation in ELL classes. The percent of participants feeling comfortable decreased from 33% to 17% for reading (although somewhat comfortable increased) and 0% to 83% for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child's teacher and the school, from 0% comfortable to 50% comfortable.

"I am in the GED class now. My oldest daughter is in fifth grade right now. Before, she would speak to me about fractions and things and I would not understand a lot because I did not have a lot of practice with them and I did not know how to help her. But now, when she asks me, I know how to help her because I am in this class and I feel more confident and I know how to do it and how to answer the question."

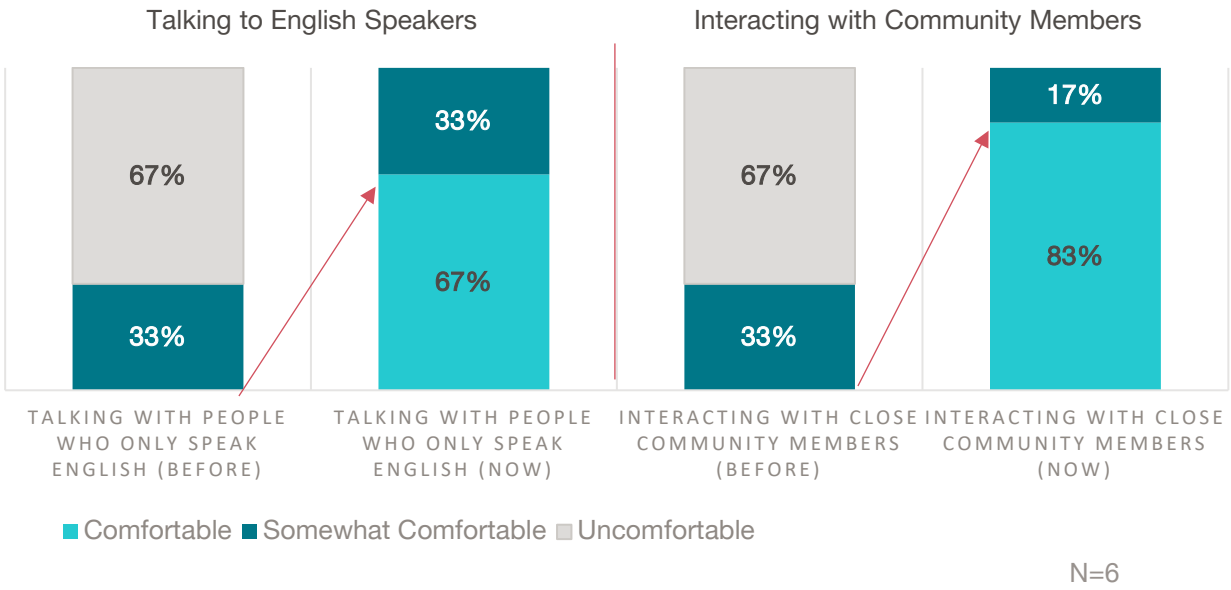
-parent at LCCNO

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 0% to 67%, while the percentage of participants who felt comfortable interacting with community members increased from 0% to 83%).

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



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



N=6

STUDENT OUTCOMES

PARENTS IN PARENT UNIVERSITY: STUDENTS (GRADES K-5) 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 results are reported in the Shared Program Outcomes section in this report.

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 10 parents (their primary home language was Spanish) who were enrolled in the English classes and six parents who had enrolled in other Parent University courses participated in one

of two focus groups to gather their input on how Parent University was working for them and to identify their recommendations for improvement.

KEY FINDINGS

EDUCATIONAL NAVIGATORS ARE A HELPFUL RESOURCE. Parents reported that the educational navigator/family liaison has been very helpful to them. As one parent indicated, "They help us a lot. They give us so much information or they recommend new resources for us to take...I have only been here a little while, but I like the way they guide you." Having set goals was helpful, and the family liaisons motivated them so that they "don't go backwards."

COURSES HAVE HELPED PARENTS GAIN NEW SKILLS. All of the parents reported that they have learned so much in their classes. Parents in the ELL classes described how they have learned new skills. Parents who participated in other classes noted several benefits. One parent commented on how the "The classes have helped me financially, and I have improved my well-being."

GROWTH IN PARENTS' SKILLS HELPS THEIR CHILDREN. Because of the work that parents do in their ELL classes, "I have been able to help my kids more." Many reported how they can now better support their children with their homework and talk with their child's teacher with more confidence. Many commented how the library at Parent University was a good resource for their family. As one parent commented, "Today I check out books, even if it's to read to my little one or to show them pictures."

Not only has it helped them support their children at school, several parents described how it has helped their relationship with their children. "It has had an impact and a big change in my life. It has helped me to build a more healthy and fortified relationship with my children and I can say I am delighted." Another described that the parenting classes have taught her patience and how to better interact with her children, helping them be more responsible. She commented that especially being home 24/7 (due to COVID-19), it has lessened her stress.

WHAT'S NEXT? Many of the parents would like to expand the classes they take to learn a skill to get a future job or enhance the one that they currently have. Other class suggestions were classes on cooking reasonably priced and healthy meals, additional financial classes, and first-aid classes. Several commented that they would like more classes available in Spanish. Other families talked about classes that would help them better advocate for their children at their schools, so that parents know they can have a voice. Several parents suggested that there needs to be better recruitment of parents, so more parents can take advantage of participating in Parent University.

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 by 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 childcare 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. Research has demonstrated the importance of director education as a strong predictor of gains in children's math skills (Hong, et al., 2019). This finding was related to their role in establishing the climate, curriculum selection and supervisor role of staff (Advisory Committee for Head Start Evaluation & Research, 2012).

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. Seven of the eight participating directors have enrolled in SU2Q.

The program provides an opportunity for directors to meet every two weeks throughout the school year for training. Beginning in April of 2020, virtual training sessions were offered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns. 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 14 training opportunities (10 in-person, 4 virtual) were provided for directors. On average, directors attended a total of 6 trainings (max attended=13, min attended = 3). 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 eight direct coaching hours (min hours received= 4, max hours received=17) provided by their assigned coach over the course of the 2019-2020 school year. The average direct coaching hours from the 2018-2019 (average 5 hours) school year to the 2019-2020 school year increased by 3 hours.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Eight community childcare directors participated in this project during the 2019-2020 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 eight 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 (32%), and school-aged children (31%).

OUTCOMES

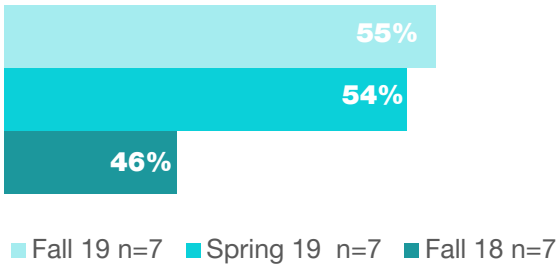
QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

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 typically used in this project to measure the quality of the classroom instruction at two points in time. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the measure was collected only once during the 2019-2020 school year and was used to inform practice. 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.

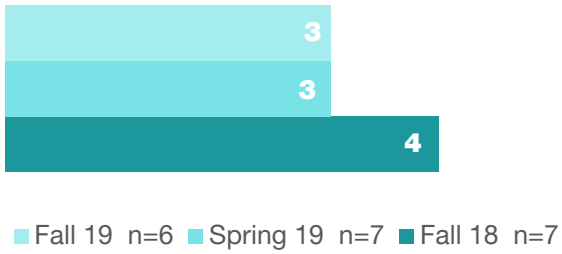
QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

FINDINGS. Due to staff turnover, six of the eight participating childcare classrooms were evaluated by trained raters. Results found that classrooms demonstrated improvement from the spring of 2019 to the fall of 2019. At the baseline observation in the fall of 2018, the preschool classrooms had on average 46% of Key Practices in place, which improved to 55% by fall of 2019. The number of red flags from spring of 2019 to the fall of 2019 did not change. At 2018 baseline, there were on average four red flags in place, which decreased to three.

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



TEACHERS MAINTAINED THE NUMBER OF RED FLAGS IN THEIR CLASSROOMS FROM SPRING 2019 TO FALL 2019.



CHILDCARE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

METHOD. Staff at each childcare center were asked to complete an environmental survey that reflected the climate of their childcare center. The survey's key environmental components included: 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 of 2019 and due to the pandemic, a spring workplace survey was not collected. The survey was collected in the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019.

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

FINDINGS. The results of the survey found that staff rated workplace environment positively with 4.22 (n=32) as the average score across centers. Results from the survey at each time point found the ratings were similar across time (spring 2019 n=43, mean=4.09; fall 2018: n=53, mean=3.88), but did minimally increase. Staff described their centers as being friendly, loving, and warm. Identified strengths included: caring and dedicated staff, program 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 childcare directors and coaches think about the Child Care Director Training program?

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 the coaches and childcare directors.

THE TRAINING PROGRAM PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT AND RESOURCES. Directors commented on the amount of knowledge in the group from the facilitator, coaches, and other directors. The directors appreciated the information and resources provided by the program, as well as the opportunities for learning and discussion amongst the group. While they found the facilitator to be knowledgeable and engaging, the directors indicated that they would have like to have had guest speakers and heard more from the coaches in terms of leading group trainings. The coaches also reported the facilitator to be a strength of the coaching program in terms of providing information and resources. "We've (coaches) got a lot of collective experience coming in from a lot of different places and the facilitator does a good job of tying everything together."

"There is a lot of knowledge in the room and a lot of education - everybody knows different things and you can bounce ideas off of each other."

-childcare director

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND ZONING WERE VALUABLE COACHING TOPICS. The majority of directors indicated social-emotional topics were beneficial topics for themselves, their teachers, and most importantly their children. "Social-emotional skills are a huge component for the whole childcare. When you have some children, who struggle with social-emotional skills your whole program can be chaotic. The kindness jar was a popular activity helped staff recognize the positive things children were doing "help see kids for kids." Directors reported that zoning helped staff give children a choice in what activity they wanted to do and helped children feel important.

THE COACHING RELATIONSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO BUY-IN AND ENGAGEMENT. Feedback from directors regarding their coaching experiences over the course of the year revealed how important the relationship is to program buy-in. Some directors experienced shifts in coaches and had to begin relationship building again which decreased their participation and engagement with the program. A few directors reported that their coaches were not meeting their needs in regard to what is going on in their center and wanted to know who was holding the coaches accountable for carrying out activities. Some directors indicated that their coach was a good source of information and provided support to help them and their staff understand that there are better ways of learning. "Our teachers have learned so much from our coach and I am really proud to say that."

MULTIPLE LONG-TERM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CREATE CONFUSION AND BURNOUT. A number of the directors involved in the training are involved with a variety of trainings and projects that include the same coaches and facilitator, some directors indicated that the information provided in the training was a "regurgitation of information" from other trainings. Coaches reported that "They are doing all of these other things (trainings, PD) and it feels like there are relationship challenges because there are so many cooks in the kitchen." In addition, directors reported short-staffing, timing of meetings, and number of

meetings per month made it difficult to attend. "Everything is very time consuming with training and coaching, then training/coaching staff, and dealing with management and licensing."

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES AND MODELING.
Feedback from directors regarding training activities were positive and they appreciated having tools to take back to use with their staff. Coaches indicated that adjusting the training format from lecture style to hands-on learning during this year was beneficial for directors. Directors did report that they would like to have coaches model some of the topics and behaviors discussed in their centers because hearing and seeing the information in action are two different things.

"When people's needs aren't met, they aren't going to continue to engage. I never felt there was a point in time I could go to my coach about things going on in the center and say this is what is going on what do you think we should do. "

-childcare director

How were childcare 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 childcare programs in Nebraska. Seven of the eight 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 the first year of participation, 55% of the centers were at Step 1, 22% at Step 2 and 11% at Step 4. One center did not sign up for SU2Q. At the end of the second year, six of the eight childcare centers participated in SU2Q. The majority of childcare centers were on Step 1 (33%) and Step 2 (33%), and fewer sites were on Step 3 (17%) and Step 4 (17%). Even though few sites were on Steps 3 and 4, sites did experience growth from Step 1 to 2 and Step 2 to 3.

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 topics on trauma, diversity, and needs unique to the community would be beneficial.

Expanding training topic to include more information on infants and toddlers, in addition to the preschool age group across a variety of childcare arrangements may be helpful to director understanding. It is recommended that input from directors regarding needs and interests of programs be identified to 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 2019-2020 school year, MCC had a total of 63 students that were enrolled in 11 early childhood courses. Of the 73 (2016-2019) 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 a Qualtrics survey with recent graduates of MCC Early Childhood program who attended at least one early childhood class 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 15 students with Early Childhood associate's degrees and 1 student with an Early Childhood Certificate. Of these graduates, five students had all attended at least one early childhood class at LCCNO during their program.

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 17 students since graduating in 2016-2019 that have enrolled in a 4-year institution. The majority of those have enrolled at University of Nebraska at Kearney (40%), Bellevue University (18%) or University of Nebraska at Omaha (24%). Other schools have included Creighton University (6%), Buena Vista (6%), and Capella (6%).

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

Recent graduates of students enrolled in MCC Early Childhood classes at LCCNO were invited to participate in an online survey to capture their experience with the technology and instruction at LCCNO. The following represents the key findings from the feedback from recent graduates of MCC, who attended at least one early childhood class at LCCNO during their program. Respondents included students who graduated in the fall of 2019 (n=1) and the spring of 2020 (n=2).

TECHNOLOGY AND UNDERSTANDING OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM PRACTICES.

Few students (33%) strongly agreed that the on-site classroom technology provided a real-world view of an early childhood classroom, enhanced their classroom learning experience, and benefited their understanding of early childhood classroom practices. Focus group data from the previous year indicated that some technology issues may have diminished some of the potential benefits of the real-time classroom technology. The majority of recent graduates (67%) somewhat agreed that they would recommend classes at LCCNO to other MCC early childhood students. Recent graduates (67%) strongly agreed to being motivated to work or continue working in the early childhood field, and 33% indicated that they were currently looking for work in the early childhood field.

FINANCES ARE A BARRIER TO CONTINUING EDUCATION.

Results were mixed on whether students were prepared to continue their education. The majority (67%) somewhat agreed to being motivated to continue their education and 33% of students strongly disagreed that they understood the options available to them to continue their education. The majority of students (67%) were aware of the partnership between MCC and Creighton to continue their education, but cost and class times prohibited them from applying to the Creighton A+B program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MCC and LCCNO have implemented an innovative clinical approach for student training that was viewed somewhat 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 available avenues to continue their education.

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. 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 five 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 three certificates including 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.

This year the program also offered GED and workforce certificate programs in partnership with Metropolitan Community College. Classes were provided to graduates of the program as well as those with strong English language skills. The goal of the classes is to help stabilize and support families through the 2 Generational workforce and secondary education strategy.

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 at least 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

Sample Parent Classes and Workshops

Facilitated by Partners

- Circle of Security® (Child Saving Institute)
- Money Management (First National Bank)
- Domestic Violence Prevention (Women's Center for Advancement)
- How to Support Your Struggling Child (PTI Nebraska)

Facilitated by Staff

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

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.

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 collaborate 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 College of Education, Health and Human Services). 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: Farm to School (The Big Garden) Story Time (Omaha Public Library), nutrition classes for children (Center for Reducing Health Disparities), and gardening programming (City Sprouts).

In addition to the primary components, support services were provided for families struggling with significant needs through a family liaison. 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 2019-2020, the Family Learning Program served 307 families and 528 students (472 target students, birth to 8). Of the families served, 251 were enrolled in the comprehensive program while 56 families participated in the auxiliary program. Of the families attending the Family Learning Program, 77% needed child care to attend programming, 81% reported that their students qualified for free-reduced lunch.

OUTCOMES

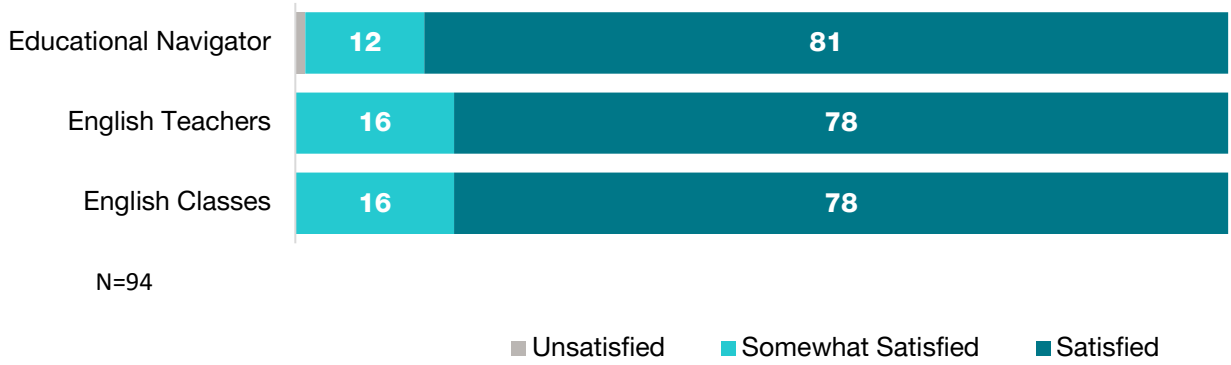
QUALITY OF PROGRAMMING

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 2020 to allow participants (N=94) 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 and with their English teachers. Less than one percent of the participants reported being unsatisfied with the services provided by an Educational Navigator. Overall, participants were pleased with the programming offered. These are results are consistent with the results from 2018-2019. One participant's remarks mirrored others, "It's an effort, but the results of that is reflected on our homes, all the classes have helped us to be a better person, improve our finances, understand and care for our children and learned how to express ourselves to them."

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



English classes were viewed as core to learning how to communicate with the school and the community. Multiple participants mentioned knowing minimal to no English when beginning the program and how they've progressed due to the English classes and teachers. A participant shared their experience stating, "For me it's been good. Before coming to the center, I wasn't able to communicate as much. I don't know a lot, but it has helped me to better communicate at work and with my children."

As far as improvements, participants inquired about having more focus on learning to speak rather than just reading/writing, having additional days and hours, extending the time for participants to be in the program and adding evening classes.

Educational Navigators provided a valued support for families participating in the group. Participants noted that the navigators were dependable and accessible to the families in providing resources and assistance. One participant stated, "They are very helpful, there are many programs and assistance in the community that we do not know and they help us find the resources we need." 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.

Additional benefits participants noted were the on-site childcare center/classroom and the parenting classes offered by the center. Participants mentioned how the childcare center has helped them prepare their child(ren) for starting PreK by teaching academic and social emotional skills. The participants also talked about how the no cost childcare allowed them to be able to attend the English classes. Participants discussed how the parenting classes have impacted how they interact, communicate, and discipline their children. Many of the comments indicated a feeling of having more tools in their parenting tool box. "They have taught us how to adequately discipline our children. Before it was yelling and demanding our kids. They have taught us how to use the right words and phrases to better communicate with our children so that they do not feel attacked and/or like we have no authority. It has been a good experience."

The program continued to have impact on families at home, with their children, with school, and within the community. Other benefits noted by the participants included learning more about community/school resources, women's health, activities to engage their children, and communication skills with their families.

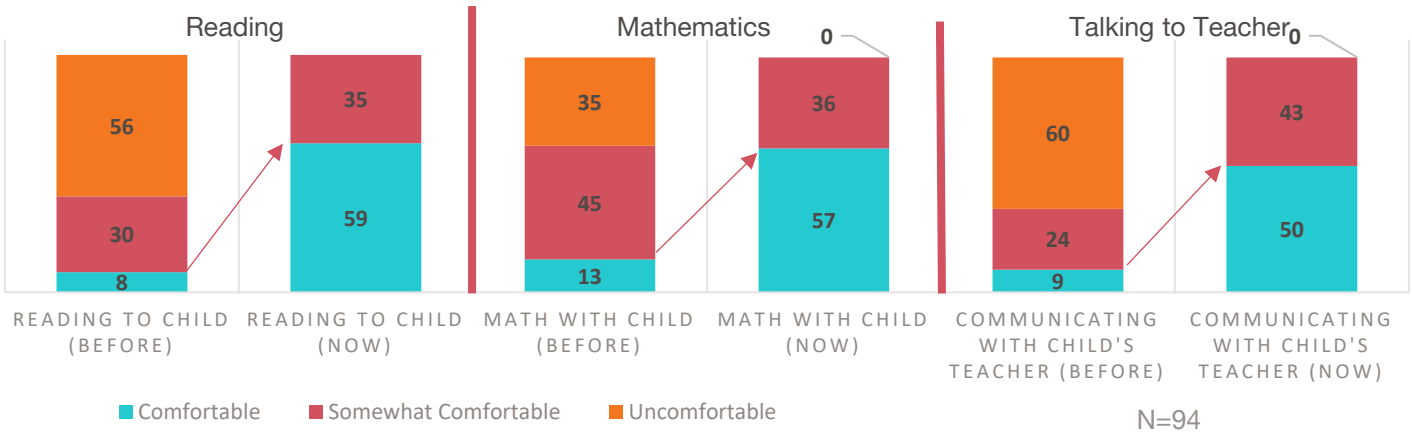
"All this education at the end is for them, so they can have a better quality life. I feel it is a cycle, we are working on ourselves, so they can be successful in the future and they can do the same with their children."
-LCCSO parent

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 reading to their child increased from 9% to 63% (+54% increase) and from 14% to 61% (+47% increase) for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child's teacher and the school, from 10% comfortable to 53% comfortable (+43% increase). At the time of the focus group, zero parents reported feeling uncomfortable reading, working on mathematics with their child(ren) and talking to the child's teacher.

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

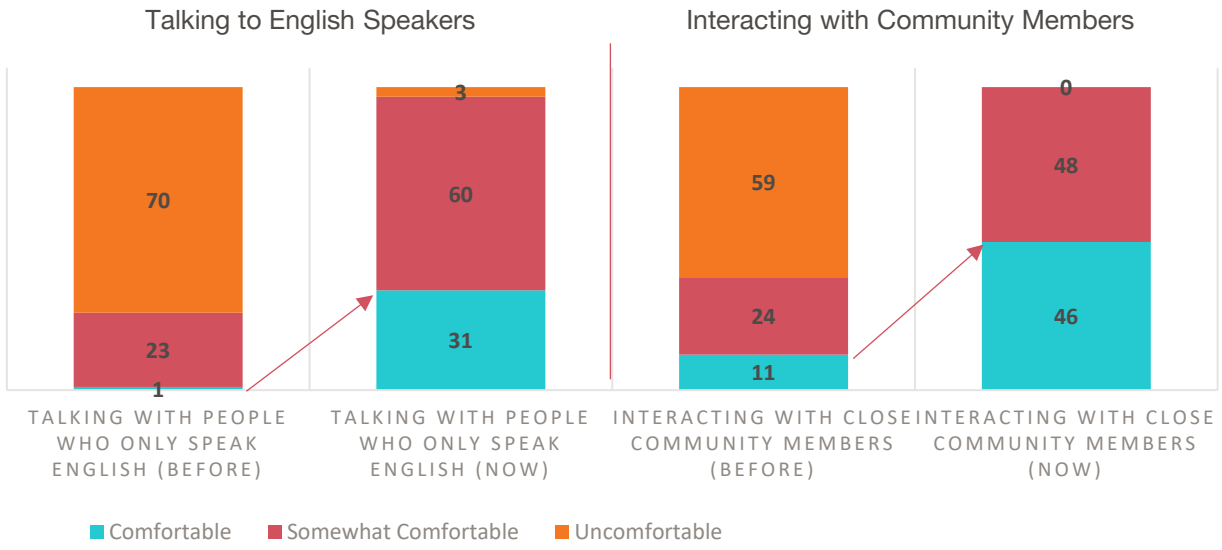


The current results are a part of consistent four year pattern of responses dating back to the 2016-2017 evaluation year.

Participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. Participants reported higher levels of comfort during 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 33% while the percentage of participants who felt comfortable interacting with community members increased by 37% (from 12% to 49%).

The pattern of responses have remained consistent with those reported in the previous three 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 INTERACTED MORE WITH ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND THE COMMUNITY AS THEY GAINED ENGLISH SKILLS.



N=94

Suggestions for Future Programming

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 conversation. They would like more days/hours during the week as well as the option of some evening classes.

In addition, the participants would like to see more classes on finances, technology, sex education, GED in Spanish and physical/exercise classes. They suggested increasing the number of family nights, starting family art classes and providing more information about family events in the community and free/reduced cost programs and sports for their children.

Parents valued the home visits and services provided by the Educational Navigators and view them as a resource and in some cases as an extension of their family. Suggestion for improvements included being able to meet at places other than homes, allowing navigators to accept acts of hospitality during the home visit (i.e. coffee or a glass of water) and for the navigators to expand their knowledge and training in working with children with special needs and/or disabilities.

PARENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

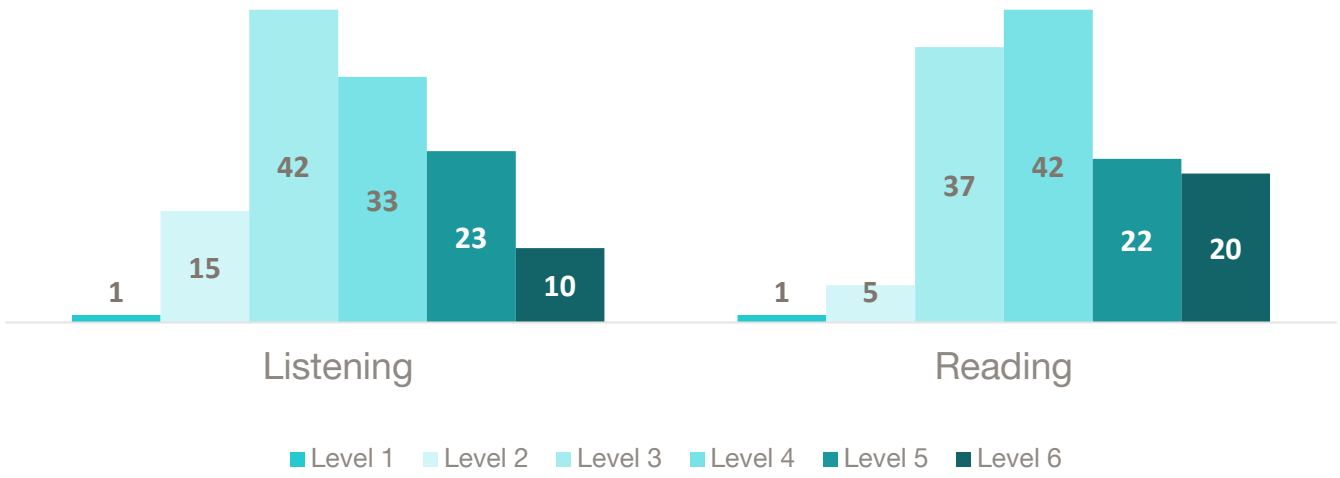
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

METHOD. English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS®. CASAS® was selected to replace the BEST Plus for a number of reasons 1) CASAS® is the nationally recognized assessment for English Learners; 2) It is aligned with the English curriculum used at the center; 3) It provides information that informs classroom instruction; and 4) Participants can easily transition to the GED subtests using the same format. This online assessment was administered for the first time during the 2019-2020 evaluation cycle jointly by UNMC program evaluators and staff from the center.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FINDINGS. As 2019-2020 was the first year for this assessment and COVID-19 interrupted English instruction only initial scores (N=124 for Listening and N=127 for Reading) are reported.

BASELINE CASAS® LEVELS FOR SOUTH OMAHA PARTICIPANTS SHOW A WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF SKILLS IN LISTENING AND READING.



The levels of the CASAS® indicated increasing level of skills and comfort in being able to listen, understand, and read English. For example at ESL Level 2 a participant understands basic greetings, simple phrases and simple questions but may require the speaker to speak slowly and repeat the items. A person at this level would have difficulty with any direct communication even when simplified. Upon reaching an ESL Level 5, a participant understands common vocabulary across familiar subjects. At this point the person can find information in text, follow simple written directions, and understands the language on basic computer applications.

Individual reports were provided to the participants and ESL teachers at the centers. Teachers used these scores to group students and to inform instruction. The CASAS® is aligned with the current curriculum used so the teachers have found the information to be useful for planning instruction and monitoring the progress of the students.

PARENTING PRACTICES

METHOD. Navigators provided video observations of parents and their children to the evaluation team. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPSTM) was used to provide feedback to parents and help navigators determine which skills to focus on with parents. 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. Scores for the parents participating at LCCSO are included in the Shared Outcomes section of the report.

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 30 parents attending the programs.

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

1. Customer Service (7)

2. National Career Readiness (3)

3. Work Ethics Proficiency (22)

Finally, 27 participants enrolled in two onsite GED classes in partnership with Metro Community College. Of those participants, four participants passed the math portion, one participant passed math, science and social studies and one participant passed the reading/writing portion.

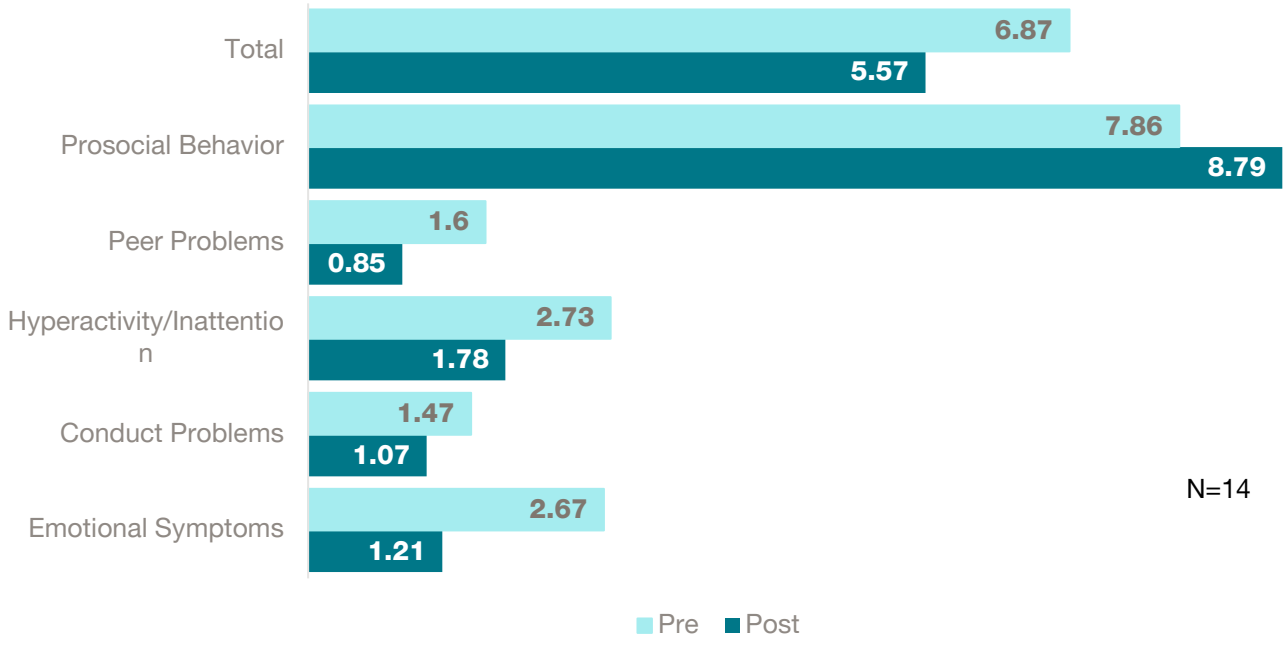
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

METHOD. Data were collected from parents who received additional services and resources through the social assistance navigator. Data were collected from families pre and post services on selected measures and on their goals.

FINDINGS. A total of 96 families were referred to participate in services with the social assistance navigator. Of those families, 62 were simple referrals and the remaining 29 were complex referrals. Service plans were developed with families who chose to engage 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, 45% were able to close their case successfully while 24% were still active. The remaining families chose to not participate or disengaged from the process. 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=14).

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR DECREASED IN CHILDREN FOR FAMILIES WORKING WITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE NAVIGATOR.

Prosocial Behaviors had a slight but not significant increase.



With intervention, the desired outcome would be decreased scores 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=2.895, p<.05). As in 2018-2019, all of the scales trended in the desired direction with peer problems, conduct problems, and emotional symptoms all decreasing and prosocial behaviors increasing.

PARTICIPANT STORY

Reason for referral: A participant wanted his/her son to be referred back to Munroe-Meyer Institute as he cut his clothes every day and was sent home from school as a result of his behavior.

The social assistance navigator assisted the participant in understanding and navigating the school system during Individualized Education Plan meetings and enhancing communication with insurance.

Son was admitted to Munroe-Meyer Institute for the Severe Behavior Program to help with severe autism. During this time there, the participant was taught how to assist son with his behavior better. At the end of services that son no longer cut his clothes and had learned to better behave himself. The participant was also referred to PTI to get additional support during IEP meetings and to understand her child's rights at school. Per Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), it was noted that son improved his scores in his hyperactivity, prosocial behaviors, and conduct and went from having 11 difficulties to 9 difficulties in 3 months.

The family's stress level started at a nine; this was due to the parent receiving constant calls from the school asking her to pick up her son. At discharge, the parent identified a stress level of six.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

PARENTS IN LCCSO: STUDENTS (GRADES K-5) READING AND MATH SKILLS

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

METHOD. In order to assess the academic outcomes of the children whose parents participated in programming at LCCSO, the MAP® Growth™ was used. The NWEA-MAP® Growth™ assessment provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time. **The results are reported in the Shared Program Outcomes section in this report.** No statewide assessment (NSCAS) was administered during the 2019-2020 school year so those scores are not available.

ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

School Attendance data was collected on students of school-age. For those students with parents attending programming **88% missed fewer than 10 days of school.** The attendance data for 2019-2020 is consistent with data from the previous three years.

In summary, students of parents at LCCSO are entering school with skills and family support needed to succeed.

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, an assessment (CASAS) was selected for the English classes in order to align with national and state standards. Family

navigators asked for more and longer KIPS for families as they have helped them work with parents on parenting practices and in setting other goals. Information gained from the burden of having participants complete multiple and sometimes repeated assessments has helped the evaluation and management team streamline the process particularly for families working with the social assistance navigator.

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 continued to need the supports provided by the center including on-site child care and transportation.

Parents view education as important for themselves and for their children. Finding ways to continue developing and strengthening the workforce development and GED program could continue to enhance this belief. Additionally, older students may see the benefit of their parents attending classes and have enhance motivation to continue their own education post-high school.

Finally the information gained during the pandemic has led the center to expand its classes in computer and online literacy as well as to pursue funding options to purchase additional devices for participant use. It has also allowed the staff to explore new ways of engaging families and their children. This year a recommendation would be to collect data specifically around these efforts.

Shared Outcomes across Learning Community Programs

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: RESULTS ACROSS LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

It was important to evaluate student's academic outcomes across multiple Learning Community programs including: 1) students Grades K-5 whose parents were enrolled in Learning Community Center of North Omaha (LCCNO: Parent University) and Learning Community Center of South Omaha (LCCSO) and 2) students in Grades K-1 in schools participating in the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership. The Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress Growth (NWEA-MAP®) was used to assess students' academic achievement and growth. MAP Growth is a norm-referenced assessment that measures student proficiency and growth in the areas of Reading and Mathematics. In 2019-2020, this assessment was administered by the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) in the fall and winter. Due to COVID-19 and the subsequent shift to remote services, the MAP was not collected in the spring. The purpose of these data was to provide information to the program on how well the students were doing in these two academic areas and to plan future supports to parents to engage and support their student's learning.

Demographics

PARENT UNIVERSITY. Data was received on 106 students whose parents were participating in Parent University. There were equal numbers of females (50%) versus males (50%). The primary race/ethnicity represented were students who were Black (42%) or Hispanic (40%). A majority of the students were English Language Learners (ELL) (44%) and Exited ELL students (16%). The students who were ELL represented both Spanish-speaking children and children from a refugee population with a variety of languages represented. The students ranged across Grades K through 5, with the majority of the students in Grades K through 2 (78%).

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA. Data was received on 223 students whose parents were participating in LCCSO. There were nearly equal numbers of females (49%) versus males (51%). The primary race/ethnicity represented were students who were Hispanic (98%). A majority of the students were English Language Learners (ELL) (56%) and Exited ELL students (31%). The students who were ELL represented mainly Spanish-speaking children and some children from a refugee population with a variety of languages represented. The students

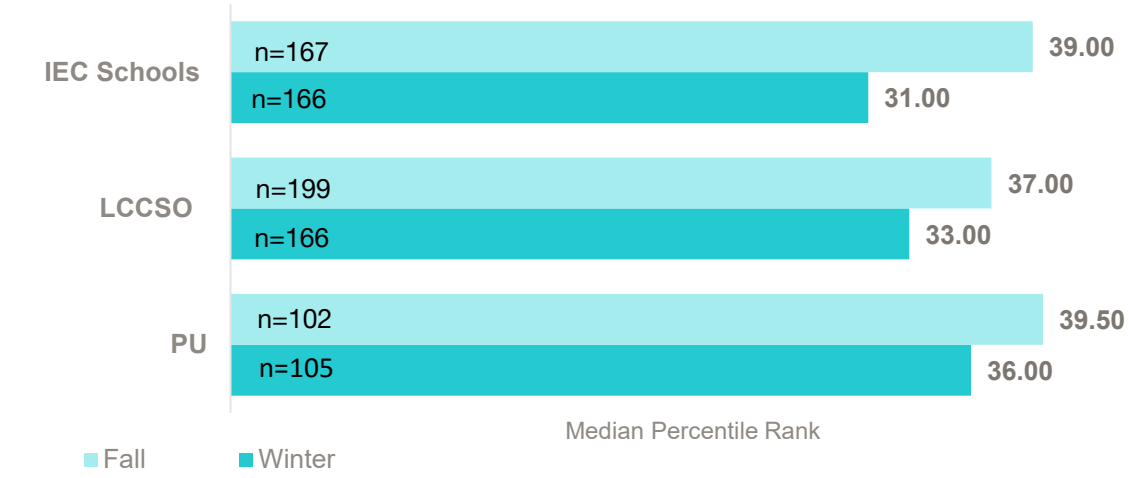
ranged across Grades K through 5, with the majority of the students in Grades K through 3 (76%).

SCHOOLS IN THE INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP. Data was received on 184 students whose parents were participating in the two schools participating in the IEC partnership. There were nearly equal numbers of females (47%) versus males (53%). The primary race/ethnicity represented were students who were Black (62%), followed by Hispanic (16%). A majority of the students were native English speakers (67%), followed by English Language Learners (ELL) (27%). The students who were ELL represented both Spanish-speaking children and children from a refugee population with a variety of language represented. The students ranged across Grades K through 1, with the majority of the students in Kindergarten (52%).

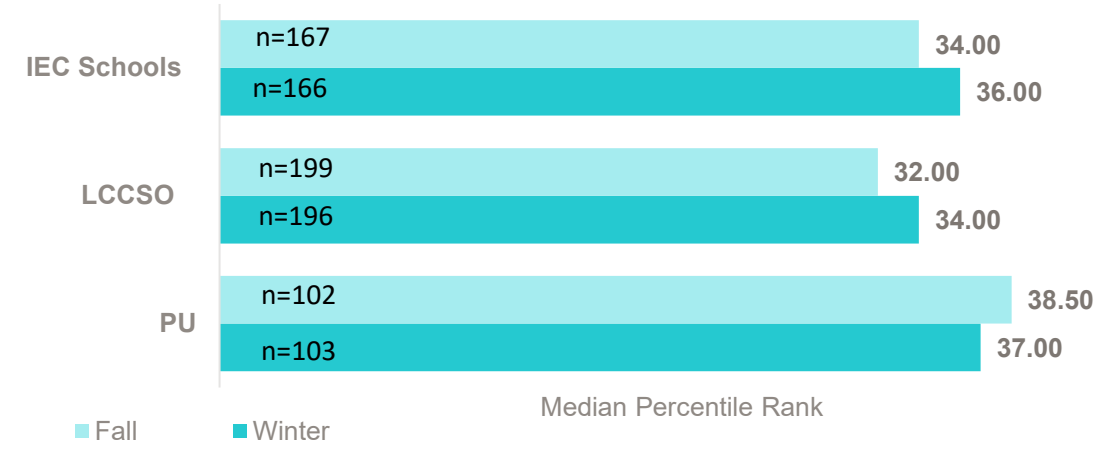
Student Achievement Status Results

ACHIEVEMENT STATUS BY PROGRAM. The NWEA-MAP® Growth™ assessment provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time. For this report, fall and winter median percentile scores were used to evaluate the status of Reading and Mathematics achievement of students across time. For interpretation purposes, a percentile of 50 indicates a student performed at the mid-point of similar students across the United States. The following section provides a descriptive analyses of the findings. The figures below summarize the Reading and Math median percentile rank for each of the three Learning Community programs for fall and winter. The results found that MAP median percentile scores were in the slightly below range (between the 30.5 and 42.5 percentile value) across both academic areas and across all programs. At the winter assessment, Reading achievement status declined in all programs. At the winter assessment, Math achievement status improved for students in the IEC and LCCSO programs.

MEDIAN PERCENTILE RANKS DECREASED AT THE WINTER ASSESSMENT PERIOD IN READING ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS.

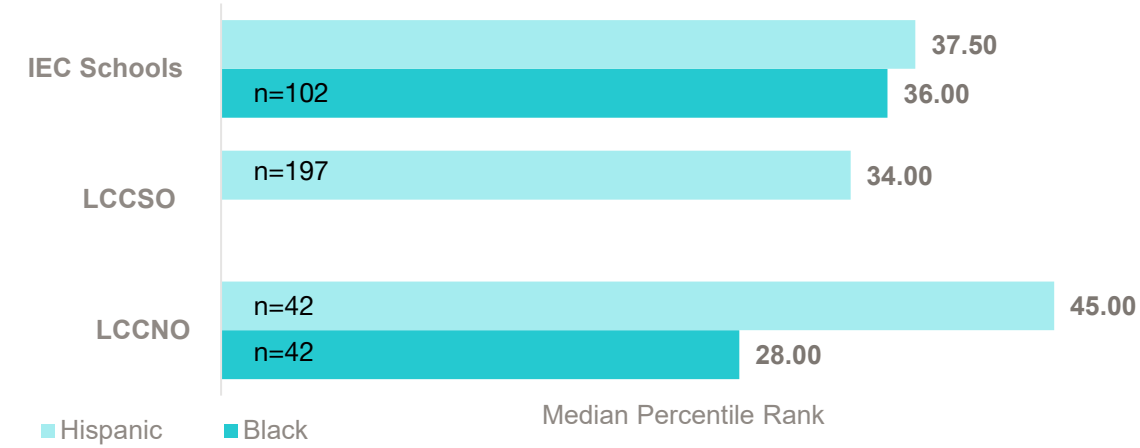


STUDENTS ENROLLED IN LCCSO AND IEC SCHOOLS HAVE HIGHER MEDIAN PERCENTILE RANKS IN MATH AT THE WINTER ASSESSMENT.*



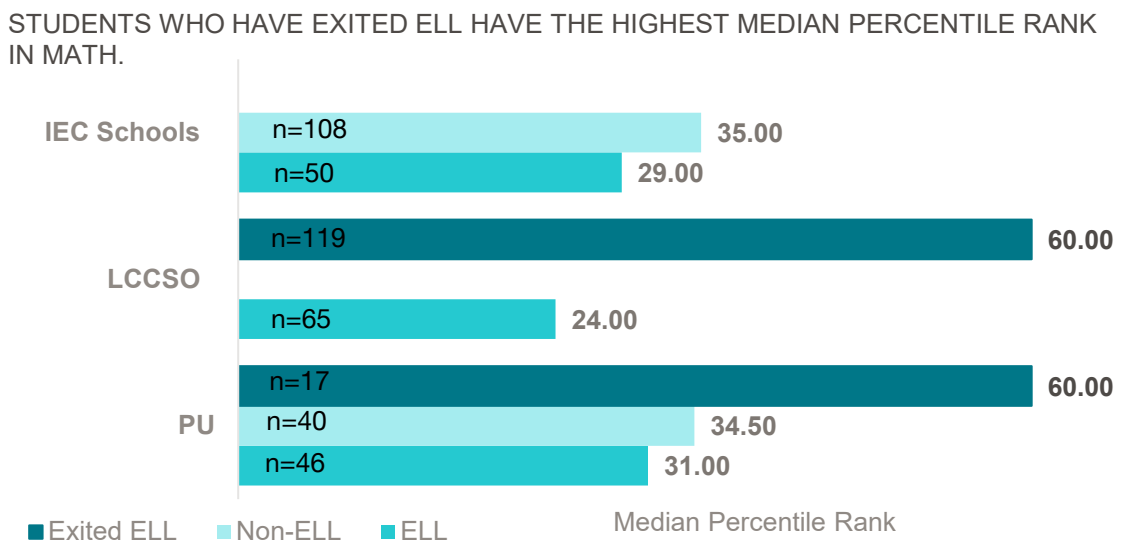
ACHIEVEMENT STATUS BY RACE/ETHNICITY. To provide further insight to students' progress, the data was disaggregated by race and ethnicity when examining the winter assessment. For these programs the majority of the students identified as Black or Hispanic. The sample size for all other racial groups was too small to report for meaningful interpretation. The results of the descriptive analyses found that in both Reading and Math, students who were Hispanic demonstrated higher median percentile ranks. The majority of the students across both groups scored in the slightly below range with the exception of Black students in Parent University who scored moderately below average (range of 21.5 to 30.5) in Reading and Math. Hispanic students at Parent University scored higher in Math with student scores with the average range (42.5 to 57.5). An ANOVA was used to determine statistically if there were significant differences between students based on race or ethnicity. The results found that there were no statistical difference between students in either Math or Reading.

STUDENTS WHO ARE HISPANIC HAVE THE HIGHEST MEDIAN PERCENTILE RANK IN MATH.



*Note: Sample size for all other racial groups was too small to report.

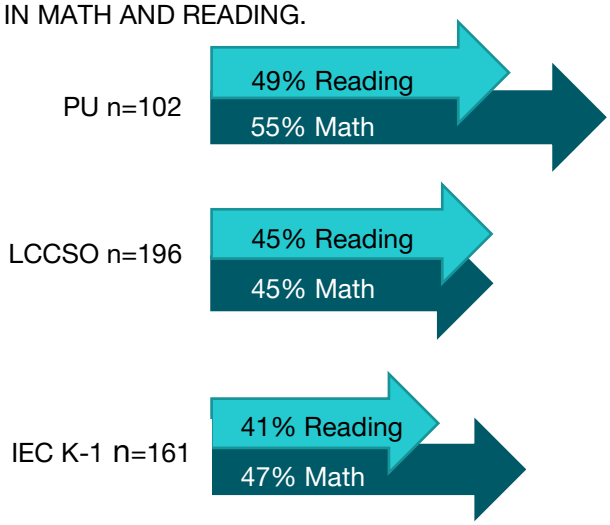
ACHIEVEMENT STATUS BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) STATUS. To provide further insight to students' progress, the data was disaggregated by ELL status. The students were identified as either ELL, exited ELL or non-ELL. The results of the descriptive analyses found that in both Reading and Math, students who were exited ELL demonstrated the highest median percentile ranks, scoring within the slightly above average range. The remainder of students across both groups scored in the slightly below range with the exception that the ELL students at IEC schools or LCCSO scored moderately below average. An ANOVA was used to determine statistically if there were significant differences between students based on ELL status. The results found that the exited ELL students demonstrated significantly higher median percentile rank scores in both Math and Reading then those students who were ELL or Non-ELL.



Student Projected Growth to Observed Growth Comparisons

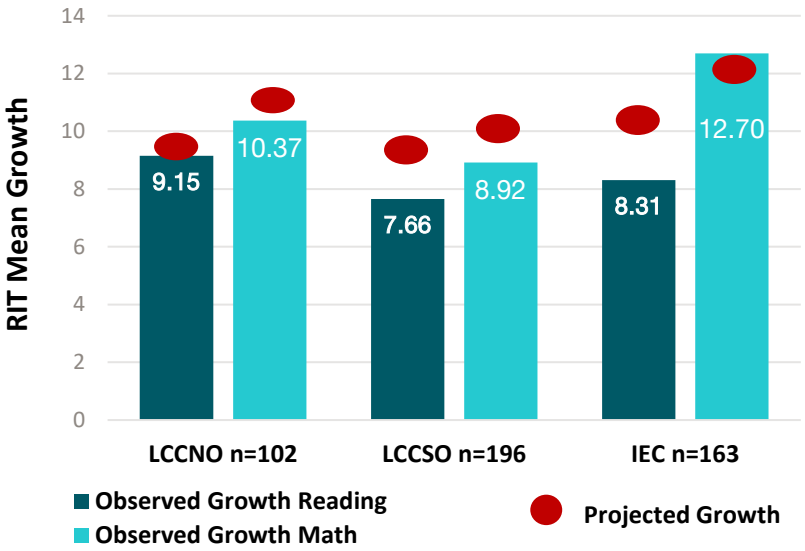
PERCENTAGE THAT MET GROWTH GOAL. In addition to monitoring a student's achievement status, it is equally important to assess a student's growth in skills. NWEA-MAP® calculates a projected growth score that allow schools to compare to the students' observed growth. The first descriptive analyses completed examined the percent of students at each of the programs that met their projected goal. The results found that the students whose parents were at Parent University had the greatest percentage that met their growth goals, both in Math and Reading. For most programs, slightly more students met the growth goal in Math than in Reading.

PARENT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAD THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING THEIR GROWTH GOAL IN MATH AND READING.



COMPARISON OF MEAN OBSERVED GROWTH WITH PROJECTED GROWTH. A second way to view the data is to calculate the mean observed growth score for students in each program and compare it to their projected growth. The results found that for Parent University students the average observed growth was just slightly below the students' projected growth. IEC students had fewer children meet the projected growth in Reading, but exceeded the projected growth in Math. LCCSO had the most discrepancy between the observed and projected growth in both Math and Reading.

COMPARISON OF MEAN OBSERVED GROWTH TO PROJECTED GROWTH FOUND MOST IEC STUDENTS MET ON AVERAGE MET THEIR PROJECTED GROWTH IN MATH.



READING AND MATH GROWTH FALL TO WINTER, 2019-2020			
	Subject	Observed Growth	Projected Growth
PU (Grades K-5)	Reading n=102	9.15	10.05
	Math n=100	10.37	10.71
LCCSO (Grades K-5)	Reading n=196	7.66	9.31
	Math n=196	8.92	10.02
IEC (Grades k-1)	Reading n=163	8.31	11.03
	Math n=161	12.70	12.28

Student Attendance

STUDENTS WHO MET THE OPS ATTENDANCE GOAL.

Learning Community Program students (Grades K-5) demonstrated fewer absences than their OPS peers.

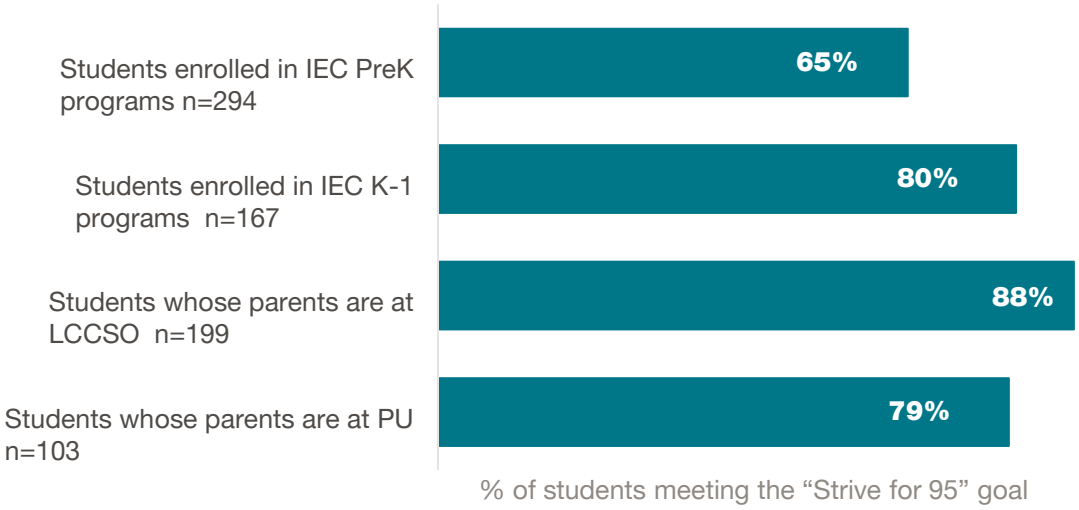
Research has found that students who were chronically absent in early grades demonstrated weaker reading skills, with Latino children suffering the worst effects (Chang & Romero, 2008). This points to the importance of attendance in schools especially for those children living below the poverty line and students who are Latino. Omaha Public Schools has recognized the importance of attendance and established “Strive for 95”, a program that promotes reducing students’ absenteeism. They are promoting that students should have less than 10 absences per year or a 95% attendance rate. The results of the descriptive analyses found that children in Grades K-5 had the highest rates of attendance, with preschool children having fewer children that met this goal. Students in Learning Community programs had fewer absences than the Omaha District students in Grades K-5 (78%) and students in Douglas County that were eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (75%) or whose race or ethnicity was Black or Hispanic (75%).

Of interest was the extent that absenteeism predicted MAP Reading or Math outcomes for students in the Learning Community. The results of a regression analyses found the fewer

absences that a student had the higher the Math or Reading MAP scores [F(1,299)=27.809; p>.001].

GRADE SCHOOL STUDENTS HAD THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES THAT MET THE 95% ATTENDANCE RATE.

Students in Learning Community Programs out-perform OPS District students.



PARENTING: RESULTS ACROSS LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

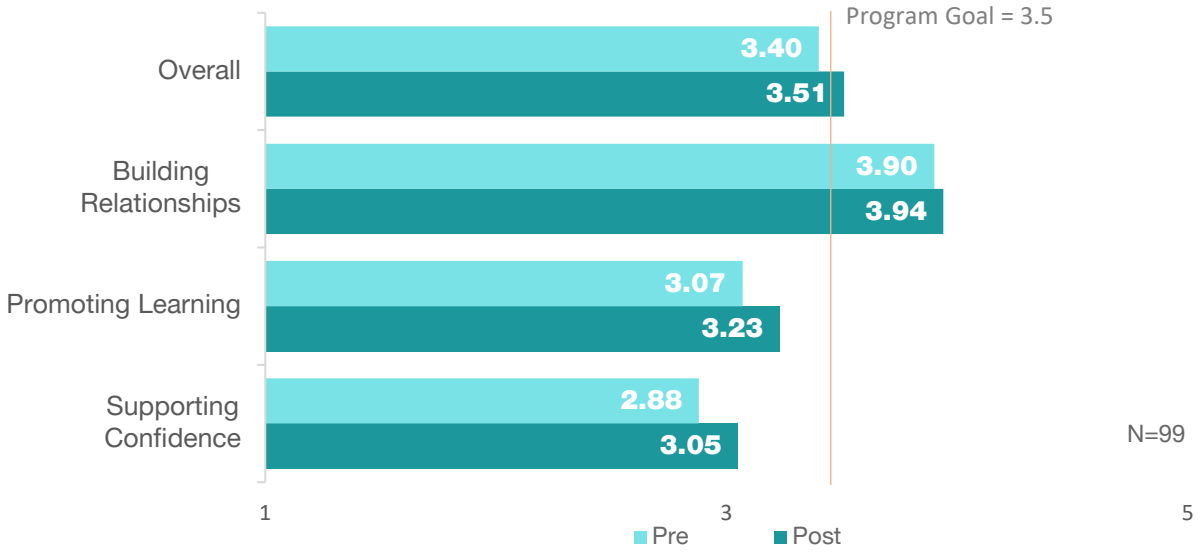
Positive day-to-day interactions between parents and children lay the foundation for better social and academic skills. Enhancing parenting skills is a goal of both LCCSO and Parent University programs. Family support workers assist and encourage parents to have high-quality interactions with their children.

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. This year, 99 parents enrolled across the two programs have had at least two KIPS evaluations.

FINDINGS. On average, families demonstrated parent-child interaction skills in the moderate range of quality. Parents showed the greatest strengths in Building Relationships with their children. There were slight improvements both in parents supporting their child's confidence and promoting their learning. A paired t-test analysis found that there were not significant changes in interactional skills, suggesting skills were stable over time.

The program and evaluation team set a score of 3.5 as the program goal. Average scores met or exceeded the program goal in Building Relationships (3.94) and Overall (3.51). At baseline, 56% of parents met the program goal. After participating in parenting programs at LCCSO or Parent University, 56% met the goal. The following graph shows parent-child interaction results across both programs.

PARENTS DEMONSTRATED MODEST IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR CHILDREN.
They showed the greatest strength in the area of Building Relationships.



PARENT UNIVERSITY

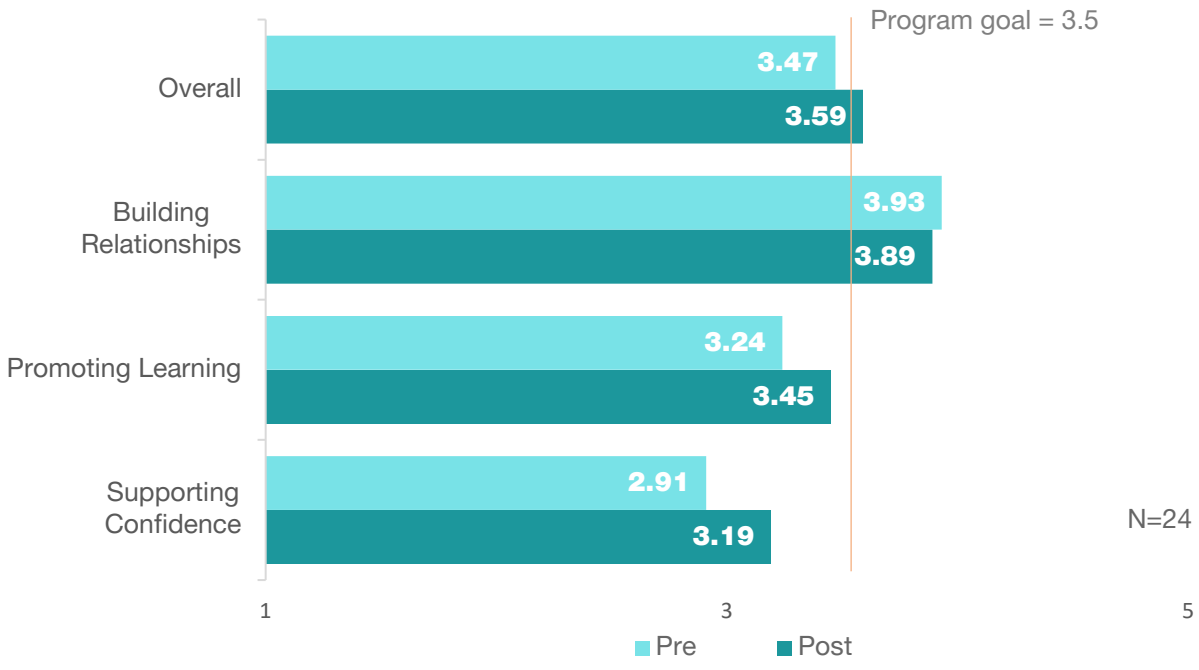
FINDINGS. On average, families met or exceeded the program goal in Building Relationships (3.89) and Overall (3.59). They came close to meeting the goal in Promoting Learning (3.45). The most gains were made in Supporting Confidence (.28 increase on average). A paired t-test analysis found that there were not significant changes in interactional skills, suggesting skills were stable over time.

The majority (58%) of parents met the program goal at baseline and at their most recent KIPS assessment. The following graph shows parent-child interaction results for Parent University.

"It (LC) has had an impact and a big change in my life. It has helped me to build a more healthy and fortifed relationship with my children and I can say I am delighted."

-parent at Parent University

PARENT UNIVERSITY PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERALL.
They nearly met the goal in Promoting Learning.

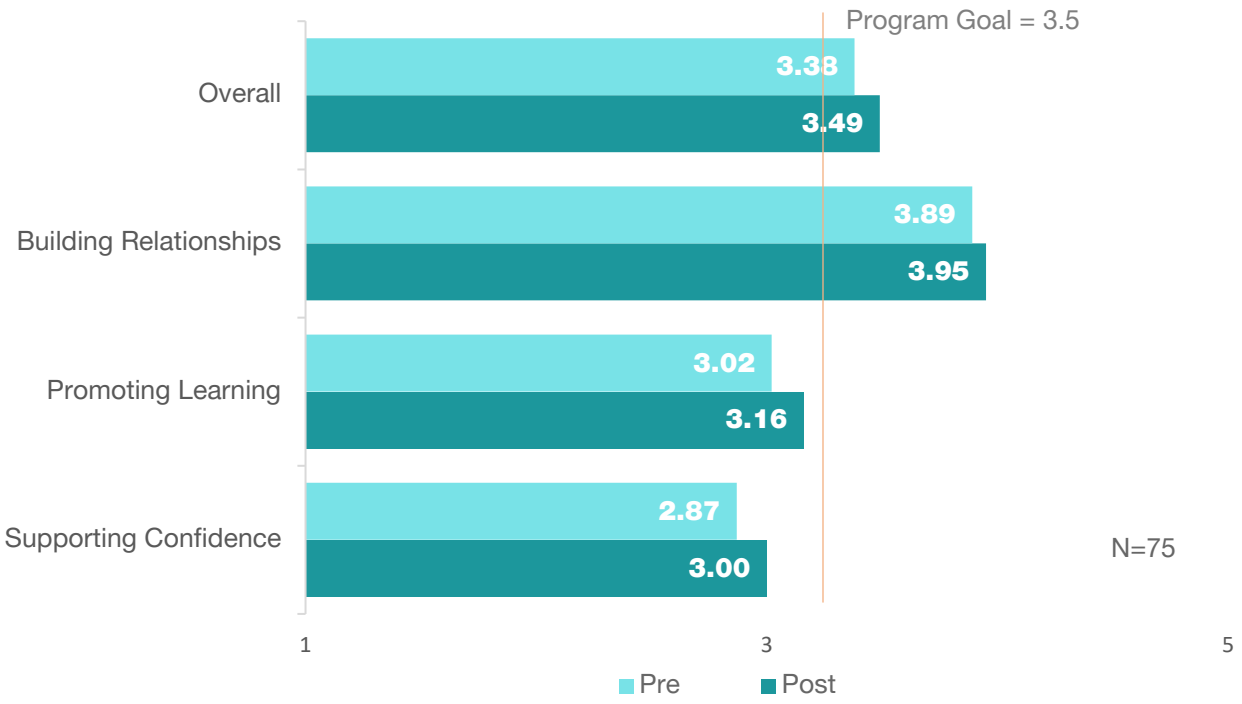


LCCSO

FINDINGS. On average, families met or exceeded the program goal in Building Relationships (3.95). They nearly met the goal Overall (3.49). The most gains were made in Promoting Learning (.14 increase on average). A paired t-test analysis found that there were not significant changes in interactional skills, suggesting skills were stable over time.

Slightly less than half (48%) of parents met the program goal at baseline. After participating in LCCSO activities, 55% met the goal. The following graph shows parent-child interaction results for LCCSO.

LCCSO PARENTS MET THE PROGRM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.
They grew the most in the area of supporting their children's confidence.



SCHOOL DISTRICT **INITIATIVES**

Instructional Coaching

The Learning Community supported three school district initiatives: Instructional Coaching, Extended Learning, and Jump Start to Kindergarten. The descriptions of each program and a summary of their evaluation data are found in this section. Due to COVID-19 the evaluation does not include student outcome data as neither spring assessments nor the state assessment (NSCAS) were administered for the 2019-2020 school year.

Instructional Coaching has been an ongoing district initiative since 2012-2013 and has grown to include five Learning Community school districts (Bellevue Public Schools, Millard 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 Schools 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 113 teachers and approximately 1,907 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. Sixty-five teachers and 880 students were impacted by coaching.

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Millard Public Schools implemented instructional coaching at two buildings during 2019-2020. Two instructional coaches served 30 teachers and 586 students across two elementary buildings.

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 115 teachers and 2,620 students were impacted in 2019-2020.

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. Forty-five teachers and 662 students were impacted by Instructional Coaching.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2019-2020, approximately 368 teachers and potentially 6,655 students were served across the five participating districts by 17 Instructional Coaches. All of the schools funded by the Learning Community for Instructional Coaching were elementary buildings.

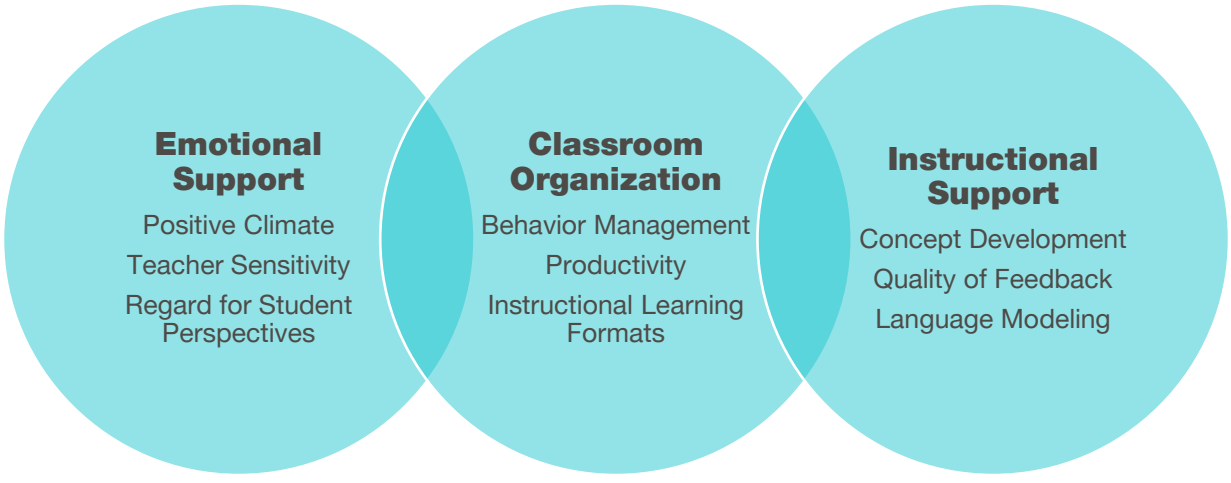
OUTCOMES

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was used to measure the quality of classroom instruction at two points in time. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, each district submitted videos of selected teachers in the fall 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.

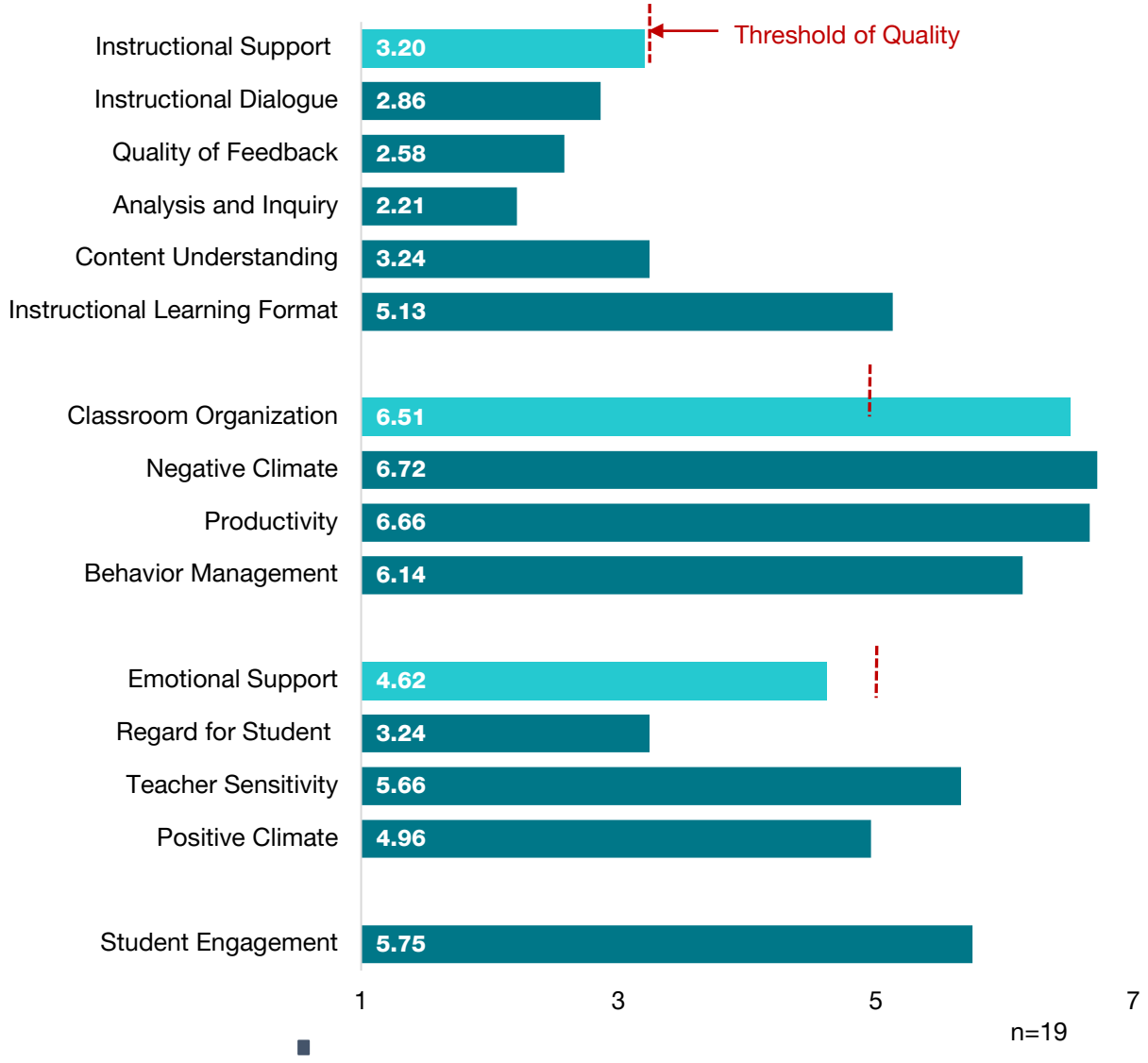


Research on the CLASS supports ratings of 5 or higher within the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and 3.25 or higher within the domain of Instructional Support, as

being necessary to have impacts on student achievement (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010). Individual teacher reports were produced for fall only this year due to the pandemic. 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.

FALL SCORES FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY TEACHERS DEMONSTRATED STRONG SKILLS IN CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT.

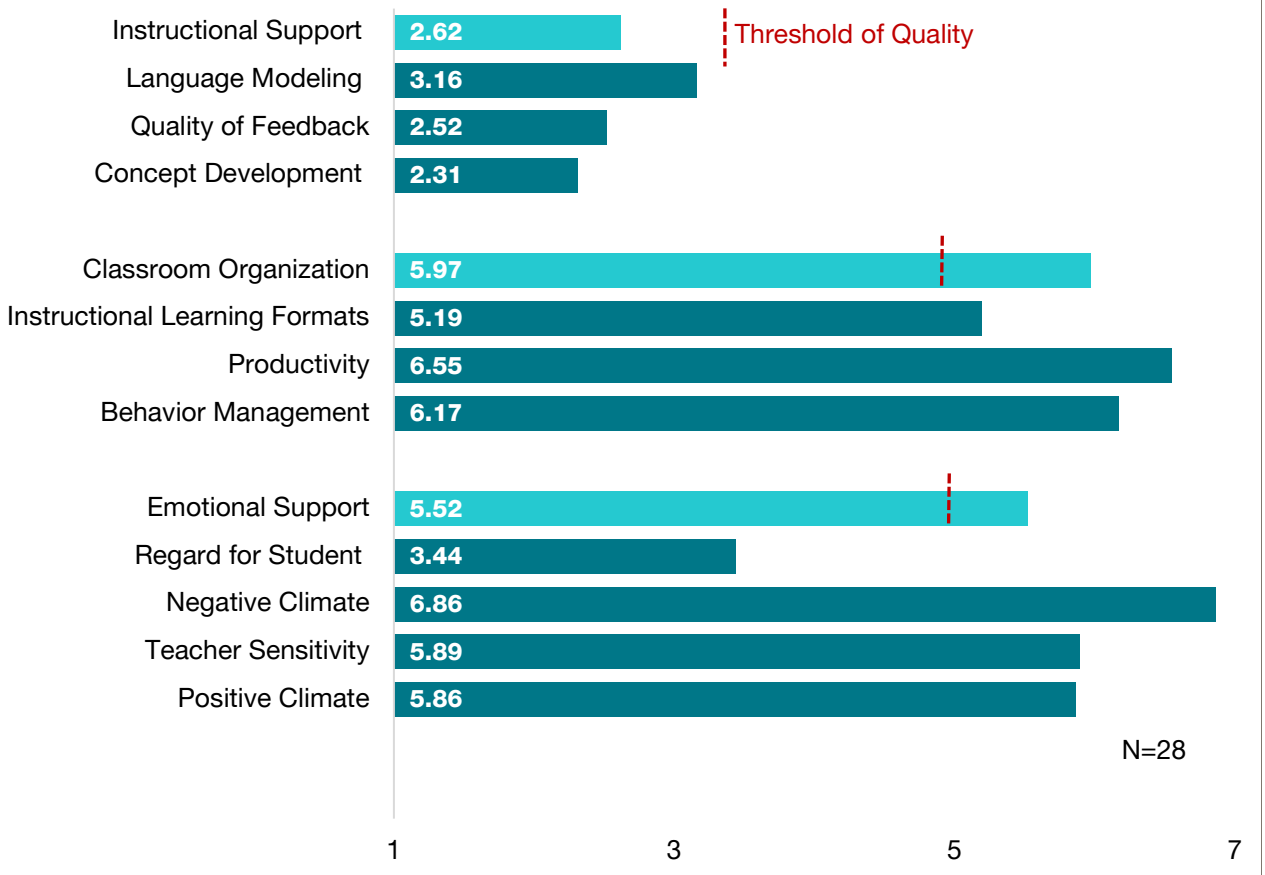
Intructional Support approached the threshold of quality.



Upper elementary teachers met the threshold of quality in a number of dimensions particularly in the domain of Classroom Organization as each area was rated in the range of high-quality. Student Engagement approached high-quality indicating that across the lessons observed, the students were actively engaged in the instruction being provided.

FALL SCORES FOR K-3 TEACHERS DEMONSTRATED STRONG SKILLS IN CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.

Instructional Support was below the target score for effective instruction.



K-3rd grade teachers demonstrated skills in the high range in the domains of Classroom Organization and Emotional Support. The domain of Instructional Support continue to show a need for improvement. Unlike previous year's data no spring comparison data were collected.

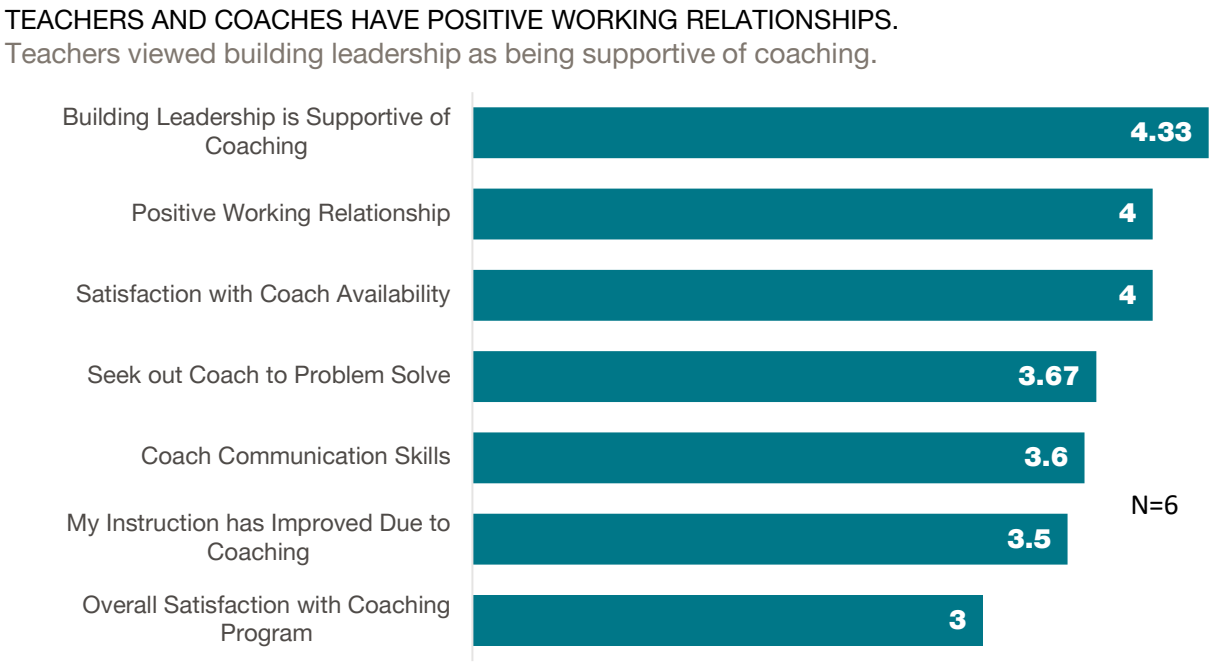
COACH AND TEACHER FEEDBACK ON INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

METHOD. A combination of teacher surveys, instructional coach surveys and instructional coach interviews were used to gather information on how both teachers and coaches perceived the instructional coaching programs across the five districts. For 2019-2020, districts were allowed to customize this part of evaluation depending on their need. Additionally due to COVID-19 fewer surveys were administered and completed due to district choice.

FINDINGS

District 1

Of the teachers completing the survey, 49% were in their first three years of teaching, 33% were in years 4-10 and the remaining 16% had 10 years or more of teaching experience. Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated they had worked with their instructional coach at least twice a month over the year while the remaining 33% indicated they worked with the coach at least quarterly.

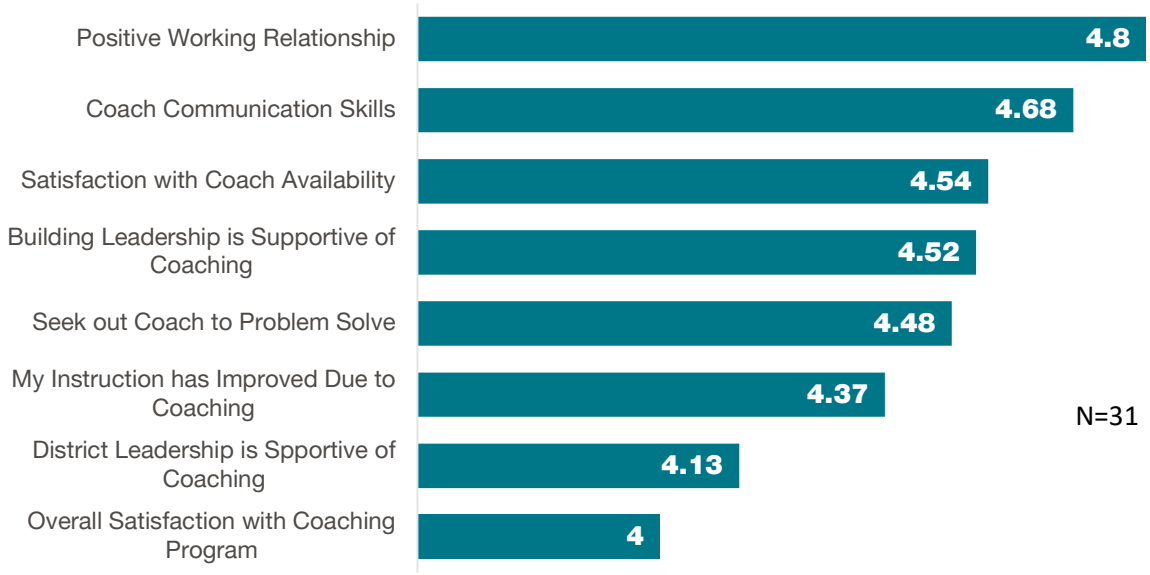


Teachers rated their items on a 5 point scale (*1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree*). Teachers valued the relationship with their coach, most indicated they were satisfied with the availability of their coach, and most felt that the building leadership was supportive of the coaching model.

When asked to rate the utility of coaching activities, responses varied with most rated between slightly to moderately useful (1=Not useful at all to 5=Extremely useful). Coaching/feedback (M=2.83), Other (*M*=2.83) and Professional Development (*M*=2.8) were rated as the most useful of the coaching activities. Co-teaching (*M*=2.0) was rated as least useful.

District 2

TEACHERS AND COACHES HAVE STRONG POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS.
Teachers viewed building leadership as being supportive of coaching.



District 2 teachers rated all components of the coaching program favorably but in particular, their relationship with their coach (*M*=4.8). Teachers rated their items on a 5 point scale (*1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree*). Additionally, teachers sought out the coaches to problem solve and reported their instruction had improved due to coaching. Teachers reported receiving coaching a frequent basis with 67% receiving coaching at least weekly and 78% either "strongly or somewhat agreed" with the statement, "I have resources/opportunities from the district/building available to me to improve my instruction".

Below are comments from teachers on the instructional coaching happening in the district.

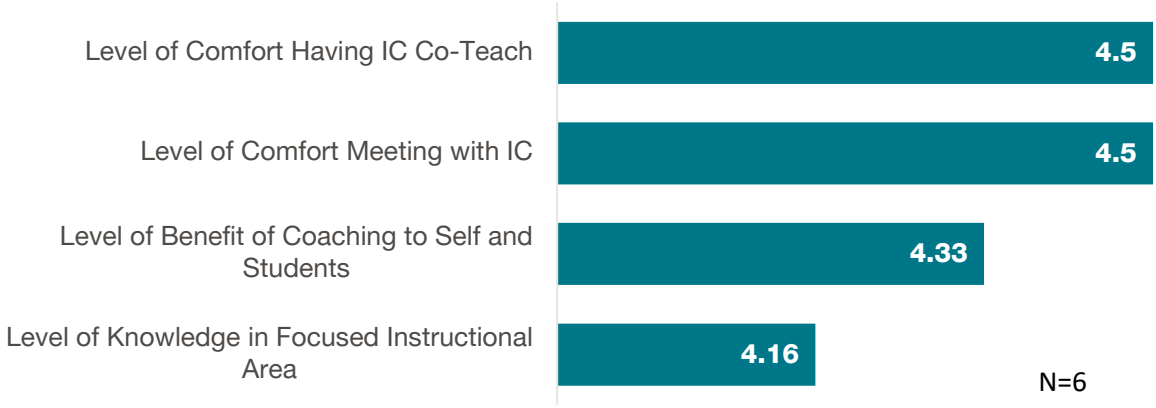
"Our coach is a treasure of instructional knowledge, how to deliver our lessons successfully, and always sharing ideas for teacher success."

"Having taught without access to an instructional coach, I feel I have benefited and grown as an educator through the work I have done with my building coach."

"I feel like our staff needs a coach with extensive behavior/classroom management background. Also new teachers and teachers with weak classroom management need the most support."

Teachers who previously had access to a coach talked about missing that support. Those teachers in buildings without coaches mentioned how they wished they had one and felt they didn't have access to all the supports of other buildings. One second-year teacher commented, **"It is exhausting to try and handle the behaviors, new and changing curriculum, and effective small and large groups, all on my own with little experience."**

TEACHERS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF COMFORT MEETING WITH AND CO-TEACHING WITH THE INSTRUCTIONAL COACH.



District 3

District 3 developed a survey with the evaluator to complete with teacher pre and post coaching cycles. The district leadership and coaching team felt this would assist in beginning a coaching cycle. The pre data helped the coach determine where to start and focus with teachers. The post data helped improve practices of the coaching program. As shown above teachers reported positive outcomes post coaching experience.

Teachers were also asked to provide input on the effect of coaching in their classroom and what they would change if they could. Some of the benefits teachers mentioned included having another resource both for themselves and for students, having a person model effective practices, and helping with organizational practices. If they could change one thing almost all teachers asked for more time especially those whose coaching cycle had been cut short due to COVID-19.

COACHES INPUT

Districts were offered the option to have coaches interviewed around their roles in the classroom and with teachers. Coaches were asked questions about successes, strategies, who seems to be benefitting the most, lessons learned, and challenges. Coaches were also asked how their role had changed and/or how they anticipated it would change due to more virtual instruction. Three coaches from two districts participated in the interviews. Below is a summary of the interviews.

Successes: All three coaches discussed the gratification of working with teachers who viewed coaching as an asset and benefit to their teaching. Coaches from one district talked about the success of continuing to work more on foundational skills and how they were able to successfully differentiate for teachers in the upper grades. Coaches discussed how important it was to have “secure time” to work with the teacher in their two years. However, even veteran teachers appreciated the coaching and other curriculum supports implemented. One 20 year veteran teacher commented, “I’ve never felt so confident teaching reading.”

Implementation of a set coaching model (Diane Sweeney) was viewed as beneficial as the focus is student-centered. The model was easier to begin implementation as it is more tangible and has more of a flow/process to it. The process was more laid out and transparent so teachers knew what to expect. Particularly, the third year teachers seemed to grasp the model and utilize it successfully in classrooms. Coaches discussed how for teachers who were willing to invest the time and believe in the process that change and improvement was possible.

Finally, the coaches in one district stressed how effective it had been creating and piloting reading guides. The reading guides include materials to help students gain background knowledge through videos and articles. Although it was a significant amount of work to put together one coach shared that "It makes it easy for new teachers to know what to do". Both coaches were excited to see the reading guides be available district-wide as the teachers using them found them to be extremely beneficial to their instruction.

Challenges: For two out of the three coaches having to step out of a coaching role and become substitute teachers took away from their coaching roles. Due to substitute shortages, both coaches understood but commented how the extra duties take away from the time with teachers and didn't allow for instruction to be pushed forward. Coaches talked about how teachers leaving at semester and teachers being on leave disrupted the building culture and ability to complete coaching cycles even before COVID-19 was a factor.

A second challenge was having teachers who were more resistant to the idea of coaching. Coaches mentioned how it was helpful to work with teachers who had a growth mindset about their instruction. Being able to connect and build the relationship with teachers to allow growth is something that takes times. One coach commented that after 3 years she finally felt like she was able to "get in a groove" with coaching and that teachers understood her role.

Finally, working in buildings with students who have high needs and trauma is a challenge. Teachers didn't have access to the supports needed to serve the students effectively so the coaching conversations often turned into discussions on behavior strategies making it difficult to work on academics.

Ideas for Improvement: The ideas for improvement varied by district. One suggestion was for the coaching model to be aligned with the district's initiatives and improvement goals. Another was to focus on how to use and integrate high leverage instructional practice across curriculum areas. The second district's coaches had several suggestions. They suggested having more structure to the coaching cycles knowing that the beginning of the year will be more complete. They also discussed the need to support teachers in the area of classroom management and maybe piloting this process with a couple of teachers first. Finally the coaches talked about needing to be in classrooms more often to assist in implementing resource at a building-wide level.

COVID-19 influence on role: The instructional coaches were unsure what their role(s) would look like but discussed several possibilities. First, they talked about the transition to remote learning and how they were asked to help teachers navigate different platforms and investigate a variety of digital tools that could be used to engage student learning and show progress. Second,

coaches discussed how after teachers felt comfortable with the technology then the coaches could support them with both the content and with elements of effective instruction.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Data on student outcomes will not be reported as part of this evaluation. Due to the pandemic and schools not being in person, districts did not collect spring data nor was there a statewide assessment for students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Instructional coaching is viewed as a valued resource by teachers and coaches. Coaches are instrumental in helping support curriculum implementation as well as effective instructional practices. One recommendation is to continue to measure the impact of coaching cycles both on change in teacher instructional practices and on student learning.

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. Due to COVID-19 some programs had to shift delivery of services while others pushed back their time frame to allow in-person attendance.

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Students are provided instruction in reading, writing, and math during this summer 10-day 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 attended three hours per day. The goal of the program is to help students maintain their academic skills from spring to fall. Forty-seven 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 twenty-three students participated in programming with 89% participating in 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-four students participated with 11% qualifying for free reduced lunch.

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. Six students participated in the program with 13% qualifying for free reduced lunch.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 240 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 11-89%.

OUTCOMES

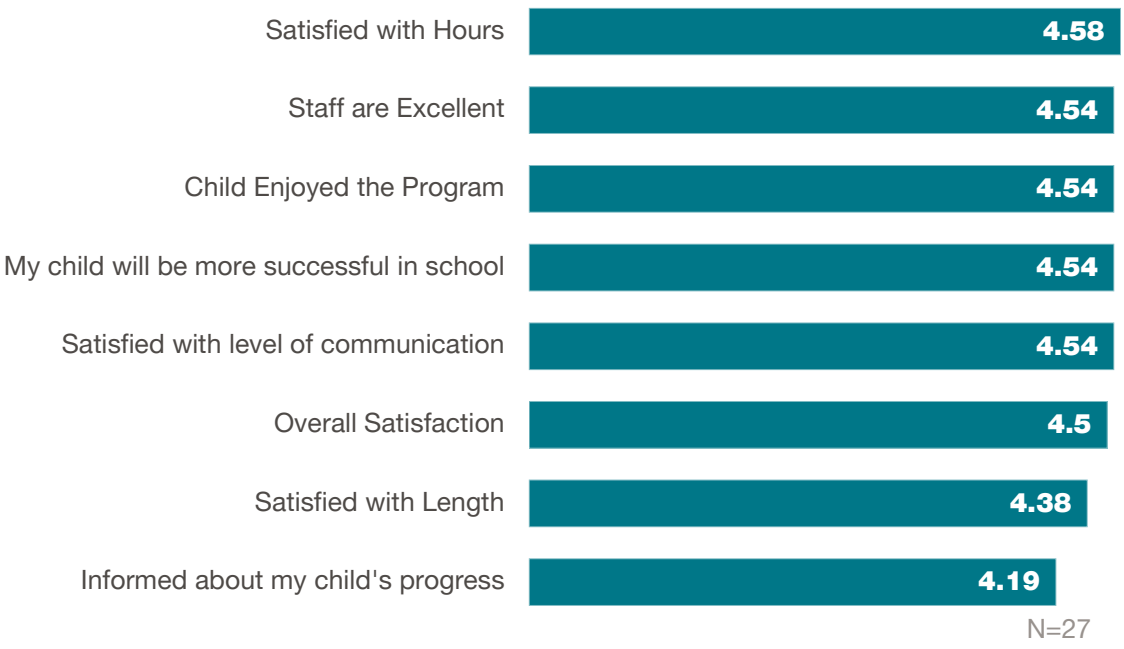
PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Twenty-seven parents completed the survey. 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*=4.50) with the extended learning programs. The item with the highest level of satisfaction was hours of the program (*M*=4.58) followed by several other items. One area of improvement was being informed about their child's progress (*M*=4.19).

PARENTS WERE HIGHLY SATISFIED WITH THE OVERALL PROGRAMMING.

Parents believed their child would experience more success after attending the program.



In general, parent comments around programming reflected the quantitative findings of the survey. Parents commented on the small teacher to student ratio and the individualized attention as being beneficial for their child's learning. Several also commented on how organized both the overall program and classroom teacher were.

"They made the kids feel safe despite what is going on in the world."

"I could really tell my child was learning and having fun."

"My son enjoyed the program and felt more confident starting 2nd grade."

-parents of students

The impact of COVID-19 was noted by the parents as they mentioned they were grateful the program could continue, that the kids felt safe and that the summer school was helping to acclimate students back to school. Some were thankful that the program occurred as their child had fallen behind after school had to go virtual in March. Parents were happy their students had the opportunity to catch up in their skills and be ready to go back in the fall. One parent noted, "It all seemed to be so successful which is important with the decision to go back 100%."

Parents were satisfied with the quality of the program and noted that even with the COVID-19 implementation strategies their children were engaged in programming. Many appreciated that it was in person and that the program led up to the school year which helped establish school routines. Very few parents mentioned any improvements. The only consistent improvement was that some parents would have liked more feedback on their child's progress.

Summer School 2020

An abbreviated program evaluation was conducted to examine the effectiveness and practicality of a virtual summer school program. The summer school program targeted students scoring below the 25th percentile using scores from FastBridge. Invitations were sent to children and families to attend the summer school program. Each child had technology and internet services provided. As part of the evaluation, teacher surveys were administered pre/post, focus groups were conducted post-summer school and videos were submitted by eight teachers. Videos were for formative purposes only (focused on student engagement, instructional practices in a virtual format, and behavior management).

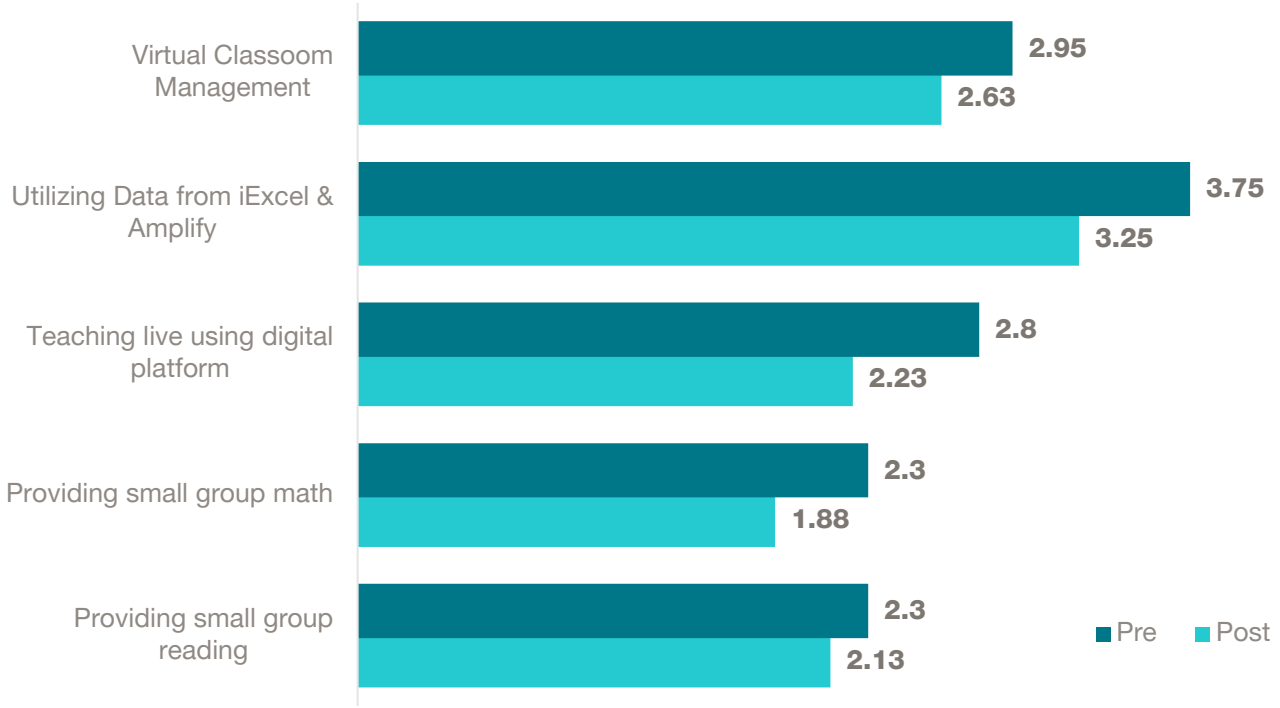
Teacher Survey Data

A brief teacher survey was administered pre and post summer school. Twenty teachers completed the pre survey and eight teachers completed the post survey. The difference in the number of teachers completing the post survey could account for some of the difference in the mean scores.

Teacher comments were collected on the post-survey only. Below are the direct comments from teachers who responded to the question. Teachers commented on the need for platforms to be user friendly and engaging for students. A common theme across teachers was the need to build relationships with students and their parents prior to remote learning.

"I can 100% guarantee that my confidence would have been 'a lot' or 'a great deal' if I had a relationship with my students. They were all kiddos that I had never met before. Although, they were great kids with fun personalities, I would just have been more successful with this if I had known them previously. I also tested out Nearpod and I do like that. It would be amazing with one on one virtual learning."

TEACHER CONFIDENCE ACROSS ALL AREAS DECREASED FROM PRE TO POST.
The need to establish relationships and understanding the platform prior are likely reasons.



"I am a special education teacher. Finding my place and how to best support during summer school was difficult. I have found new ways to help students and be part of their virtual classroom learning. One thing I found to be difficult was the management of students staying in the classroom meeting. Utilizing WebEx and all the features will require more practice for me. When teaching math it would have been helpful to have technology that allowed me to display my notebook rather than holding it up to the camera. A big struggle is when there is a technical issue and trying to work with kids virtually to figure it out, for example if they are not able to log into an app trying to determine why without seeing the screen was really challenging."

“Virtual teaching is absolutely not conducive to learning, especially with younger grades. WebEx was not user friendly and caused a lot of headaches for teachers and parents.”

“Teachers don't need lessons on how to teach virtually, but we need platforms that work, that are user friendly, and materials that are meaningful and can be done with minimal extra help for all grade levels. It is not fair to expect parents to be in these meetings with their children when they have their own jobs to do.”

Based on the summer school data and additional feedback from teachers and administrators, the district required all teachers to complete training on the multiple platforms they would be using in the fall.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

METHOD. No student data were collected for this evaluation as programs were altered due to COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

Investigate the effect of COVID-19 on how many students need extended learning programs in the summer of 2020.

Jump Start to Kindergarten

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

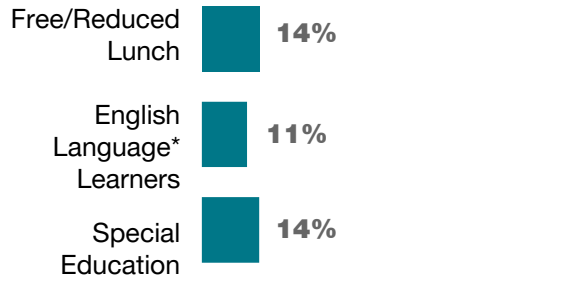
Jump Start to Kindergarten began in 2011. Programming is designed for low-income students who have limited or no previous educational experience. The opportunity to participate in a kindergarten setting and daily routines prior to the first day of school is a significant contributor to school readiness.

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.

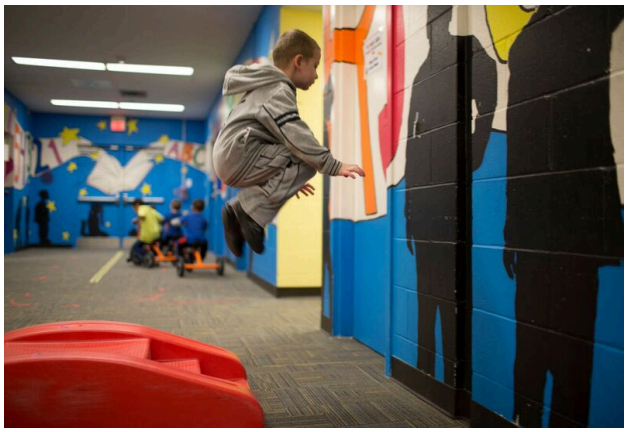
DEMOGRAPHICS

In the summer of 2020, Jump Start to Kindergarten was implemented in one district due to COVID-19. A total of 36 Kindergarten students were served. The program was implemented in-person, but because of the added safety measures due to COVID-19, in-person child testing was not completed by MMI. 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.

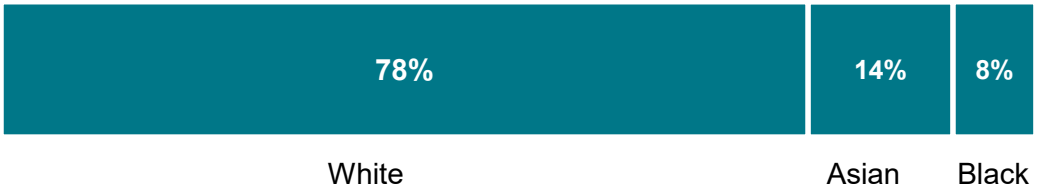


N=36



Jump Start to Kindergarten served six classrooms in two schools across the participating district. The program served more females (67%) than males (33%). The majority of children served were five years of age.

SOME OF THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.
There were 11% of students who were Hispanic.



N=36

OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION

What did parents report about the Jump Start Kindergarten Programs?

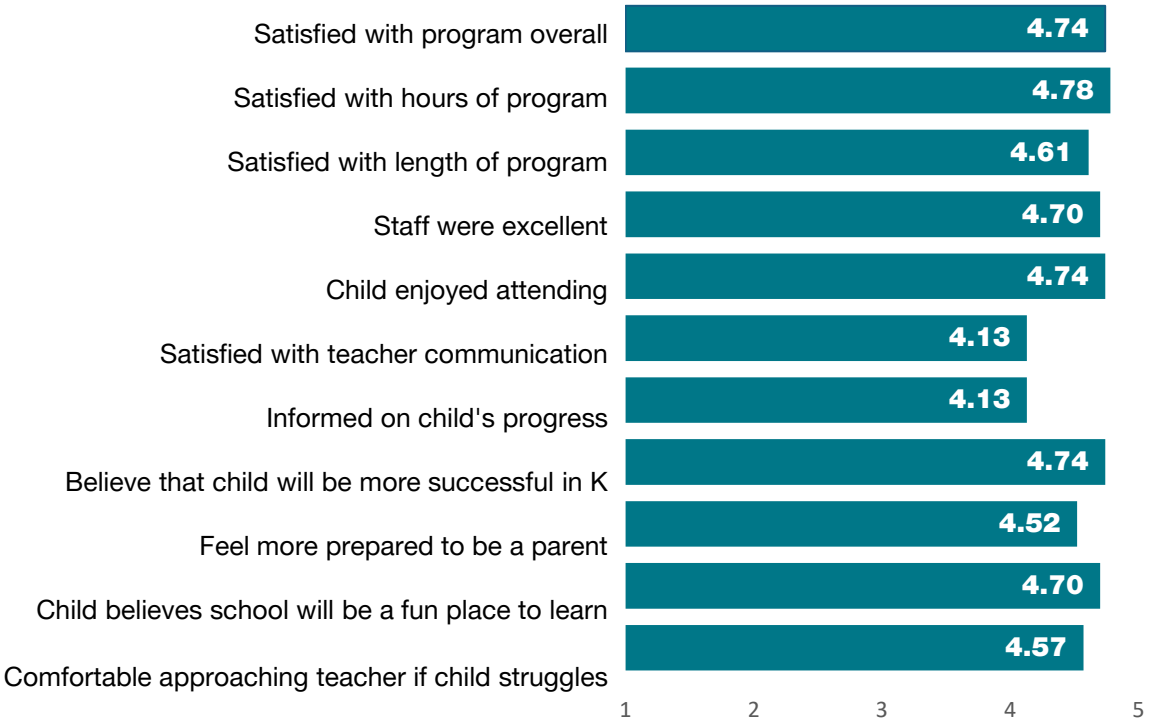
METHOD. Parents provided feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program. Using a collaborative process across all districts and agencies, a master parent survey was developed. Districts or agencies were then able to choose which sections they would use for their program. Parent survey data was received from the participating district. Parent survey results are displayed in the following tables (N=23).

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 and teacher communication.

N=23

PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS.



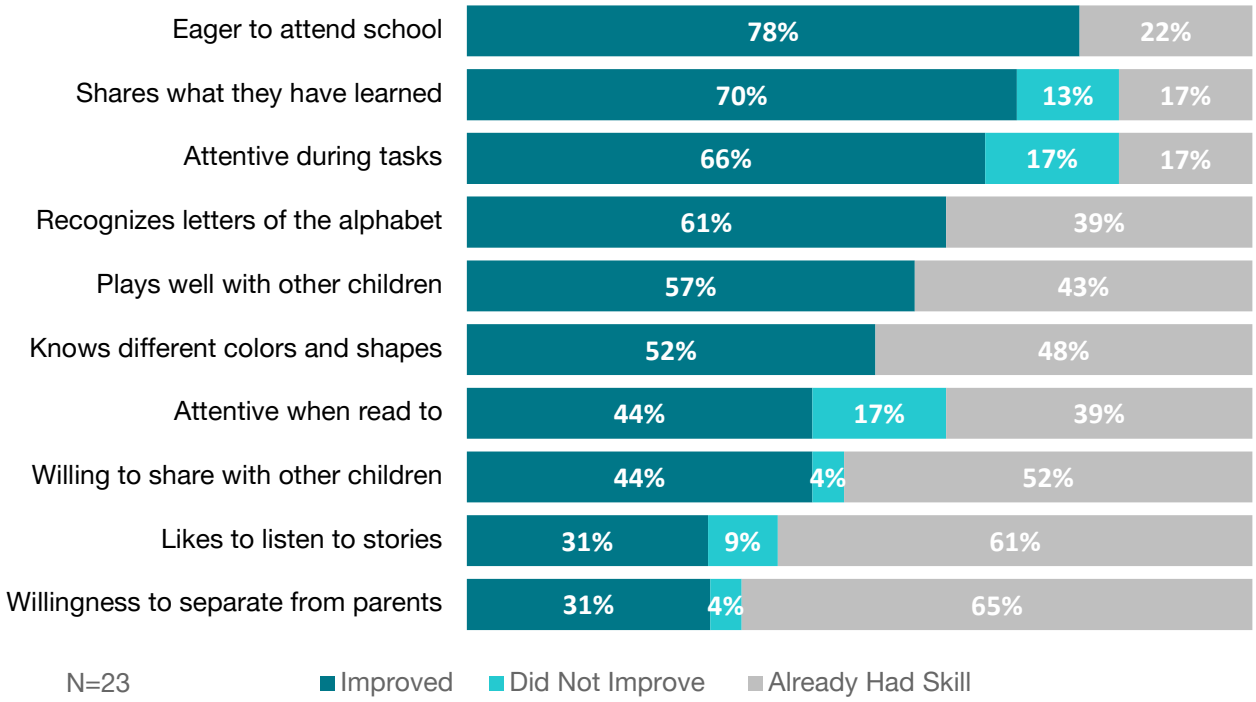
N=23

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. Over half of respondents reported child improvement in the following areas: recognizing letters of the alphabet, knowledge of colors and shapes, playing well with other children, 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; willingness to separate from parents, shares well with others, and likes to listen to stories. Attentiveness during tasks and when read to had the highest percentage of "did not improve" (17%).

NEARLY THREE OUT OF FOUR PARENTS FELT THEIR CHILDREN'S EAGERNESS TO ATTEND SCHOOL IMPROVED THROUGH JUMP START.



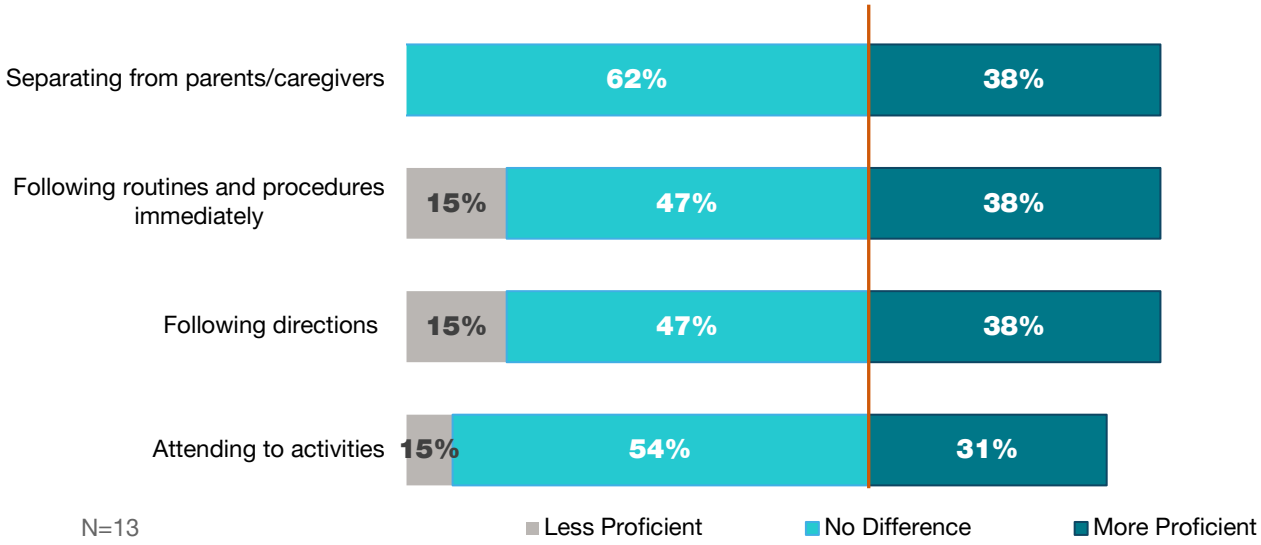
What did teachers report about students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. In the fall of 2020, all kindergarten teachers who had 20 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. Of the 13 teachers that were surveyed, 3 taught Jump Start to Kindergarten this year, and 10 (77%) 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 PROFICIENT 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

- 294 and 184 Grade K-1 students were enrolled
- Majority are low income & represent diverse populations
- Classrooms were of very high quality in Classroom Organization & Emotional support
- Girls outperformed boys in Vocabulary and Social-Emotional skills
- 41% (Reading) & 47% (Math) of the K-1 students met or exceeded their expected growth goals

Parent University

- 248 parents were enrolled with majority representing low income & culturally diverse populations
- Enrolled parents had 470 children of which 271 were within the targeted age range
- Parents participated in 23 different courses which focused on parenting, school success, leadership, and life skills
- Parents demonstrated gains in Protective Factors
- Parents learned new parenting strategies, and improved their financial stability

Future Teacher Clinical Training

- 63 students were enrolled in early childhood classes.
- 15 students graduated with an associate's degree this year
- Since 2016, 17 students have enrolled in 4-year institutions to continue their education

Child care Director Training

- 8 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
- 7 of the directors were also enrolled the state quality initiative, SU2Q
- Directors reported that the training was valuable.
- The majority of the teachers reported the child care workplace environment was positive

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA:

FAMILY LEARNING

- 307 families were enrolled
- 472 0-8 year old children
- Two generation programming yielded positive effects Workforce Development with 32 participants earning at least one certificate
- For the fifth year in a row, parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement
- 27 participants enrolled in GED classes

PARENTING OUTCOMES

- Parents reported parenting classes helped to reduce parental stress, improved their understanding of school processes and helped prepare children for school
- Parents met the overall program goal in parent-child interaction and demonstrated improvements in promoting learning and supporting confidence.
- For parents working with the social assistance navigator, significant decrease occurred for hyperactivity/inattention symptoms
- 45% of parents were able to close their cases with the social assistance navigator

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Students missed on average 6.82 days of school while 88% missed fewer than 10 days
- 45% met their growth goal for reading on NWEA-MAP™
- 45% met their growth goal for math on NWEA-MAP™

SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

- 368 teachers, and 6,655 students were served across 5 districts
- Teachers met the threshold of quality for Classroom Organization, Emotional Support and Student Engagement
- Instructional Support continues to be an area for improvement
- Most teachers reported having a positive working relationship with their instructional coach

JUMP START

- 36 kindergarten eligible students enrolled in Jump Start across one district
- 14% qualified represented low income households and 11% were ELL
- The majority of the parents (100%) 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

- 240 students were enrolled in Extended Learning with 11-85% qualifying for FRL
- 4 districts and 1 community agency participated
- Parents were highly satisfied with the program
- Parents appreciated that the program occurred even with COVID-19
- Overall satisfaction with the program was 4.5 on a 5-point scale

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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
CASAS®		THE CASAS® provides a measure of a participants English language skills in reading and listening.
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 Parenting 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.

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SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN

BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation: 2019-20

FIFTH YEAR REPORT

Buffett
Early Childhood
Institute
at the University of Nebraska

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation is a collaborative effort 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. The following teams and individuals contributed to this program evaluation report:

University of Nebraska Evaluation Partners
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Home visiting evaluation team at CYFS, led by Lisa Knoche and Belle Scheef

Buffett Early Childhood Institute Staff
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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: 2019-20

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Executive Summary

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan offers an approach for reducing opportunity and achievement gaps based on systemic and structural inequities 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 by the Nebraska Legislature 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 areas with 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 in 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 areas with high concentrations of poverty that are impacted by structural racism and systemic inequities. Translating research into practice, the plan provides for a comprehensive systems approach that transforms learning opportunities for children placed 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 well.

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 family 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 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 2019-20 school year, the Ralston school district 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 parents who work with young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. Professional Development 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 2019-20 school year, sessions on executive function and self-regulation were offered in English and Spanish.

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan entered its fifth year of implementation and evaluation across six school districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the fall of 2019. During this year, the evaluation continued to assess school-level change, program quality, family processes, and child learning and development with a focus on program quality and child development and learning. However, this year was unlike any other in the history of Omaha metropolitan schools and the Superintendents' Plan. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led districts to close school buildings through the end of the academic year and transition to distance learning strategies and suspend year-end assessments. Families were engaged in home visiting that was virtual, rather than in person. These changes impacted schooling for children, families, and teachers, as well as the Superintendents' Plan implementation and evaluation. Throughout this report, details are provided regarding modifications in programming and how evaluation captured learning from adaptations to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the 2019-20 year, evaluation activities were intended to address 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 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 engage in creating contexts that support children's learning and development and how schools can be supported in leading that engagement. Evaluation to address these questions was incomplete due to disruptions in programs and assessments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings related to program quality, family processes, and child learning and development that could be examined are highlighted below.

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

- ***Home visiting and personal visit*** participation has remained stable. While implementing home visiting can be challenging for schools, efforts to engage families are increasing and shifted to virtual home visiting in the spring of 2020.
- ***Classroom quality*** has improved over the first five years of the full implementation and was significantly higher in 2019-20 relative to 2015-16 for classroom organization, instructional quality, and emotional support.

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 Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (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***, assessed using an adapted version of the 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. The majority of children enrolled in home visiting were developing typically, according to parents.
- ***Academic achievement in Kindergarten through Grade 3*** was assessed using school-based achievement assessments in fall and winter, but not in spring due to the pandemic. 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. However, the absence of an end-of-year data point renders this conclusion premature at best.
- ***Executive functioning in PreK – Grade 3*** was evaluated using a standardized assessment. Children's executive functions were in the average range.

How are schools implementing School as Hub?

- ***Schools and districts are increasing their leadership of the Superintendents' Plan.*** Schools are shifting their perspectives related to engaging families from birth onward and learning what it means to prioritize this work amidst the landscape of competing priorities.
- ***School and district leadership have shifted their perspectives to integrating a birth – Grade 3 approach to learning***. This is manifest in increased ownership of School as Hub, greater engagement with families, and a growing value for community partnership.
- ***Leadership has been instrumental in responding to the pandemic to provide instructional supports for families.***

The work of influencing the perspectives of school systems is complex and labor intensive and made more complex and difficult in the context of an unprecedented pandemic. As the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan enters its sixth year, program and school staff have learned to identify essential elements of school systems change. Schools and districts are engaging families and communities from children's birth through Grade 3 with varying intensity across schools and districts. Evaluation efforts are capturing how efforts are implemented and how they are manifest in program quality and family engagement.

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: Overview

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan offers an innovative, comprehensive approach for reducing opportunity gaps based on systemic and structural inequities 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 by the Nebraska Legislature 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 areas impacted by 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 gaps for young children impacted by structural racism and systemic inequities. Translating research into practice, the plan provides for a comprehensive systems approach that aims to transform learning opportunities for children who are put at risk for school failure, starting at birth and continuing through 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 well, not just those impacted by poverty.

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 targeted at increasing educational opportunities and reducing 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, birth to Grade 3, and their families to a pathway of continuous, high-quality, and equitable learning experiences. This continuum includes home visiting for children birth to age 3, 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 full implementation schools.

On March 13, 2019, the staff of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute transitioned to working remotely due to the pandemic. One by one, each of the 11 school districts in the Superintendents' Plan closed their buildings and offered online learning, suggested at-home practice activities, and supplied take-home curriculum packets. The 10 full implementation schools varied in their support of students and families, based on district decisions and/or available resources. The Buffett Institute staff specialists, educational facilitators, and program administrator supported each school based on the needs of the school and community, providing:

Direct Support

- Adaptation of home visitation
- Food and curriculum distribution
- Grade-level transition support
- Coaching for home visitors/family facilitators, teachers, and paraprofessionals
- Professional development for home visitors/family facilitators

Resources

- Training and materials for social-emotional learning
- Best practices for supporting children's learning remotely
- Child care connections
- Child development guidelines

Planning

- Professional Development for All went online
- Professional development for full implementation schools, related to remote learning
- Instruction
- Social-emotional learning
- End-of-year and summer learning

TABLE 1. | SCHOOL AND DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS: FULL IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOLS 2019-20

District and Schools	2019-2020 Student Enrollment	2019-2020 % Free/ Reduced Lunch	2019-2020 % Students of Color	% At or Above Proficient Grade 3 Language Arts*	% At or Above Proficient Grade 3 Math*
Bellevue	**9,689**	**41.49%**	**33.41%**	**53%**	**52%**
Belleaire	305	71.48%	44.59%	47%	50%
DC West	**975**	**30.67%**	**11.08%**	**60%**	**61%**
DC West	486	30.66%	8.44%	58%	63%
Millard	**24,038**	**21.99%**	**23.24%**	**65%**	**65%**
Cody	318	45.28%	37.74%	55%	59%
Sandoz	366	43.17%	40.44%	31%	32%
Omaha	**53,483**	**73.67%**	**74.43%**	**33%**	**30%**
Gomez Heritage	816	83.70%	92.40%	29%	23%
Liberty	695	85.90%	89.78%	17%	19%
Mount View	355	85.92%	87.61%	16%	20%
Pinewood	221	73.76%	80.09%	33%	28%
Ralston	**3,378**	**56.99%**	**49.79%**	**40%**	**41%**
Mockingbird	390	67.95%	70.51%	33%	36%
Westside	**6,094**	**32.08%**	**30.69%**	**60%**	**59%**
Westbrook	558	42.83%	45.70%	42%	40%
Total school enrollment	***4,510***				
Total district enrollment	***97,647***				

*Based on 2018-19 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 2019-20 school year, the Ralston school district participated in customized assistance projects and related program evaluation. The Ralston school district made efforts to continue fostering child care partnerships and high-quality PreK practices, particularly around language development.

Level 3: Professional Development for All

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 parents[1] 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 2019-20 PD for All series was "Executive Function and Self-Regulation." Five institutes were scheduled, three in English and two in Spanish, to provide professional development to more than 500 early childhood education professionals. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather and COVID-19, only two of the five scheduled events occurred. Over the summer, three live webinars of an hour to 1.5 hours in length were presented.

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

School as Hub for Birth – 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 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 disparities in opportunity and achievement based on structural racism and systemic inequities.

According to the tenets of change for the School as Hub for Birth – Grade 3 approach, 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 disparities in opportunity and achievement based on structural racism and systemic inequities.

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 et al., 2017; Takanishi, 2016).
Quality refers to the commitment to implement practices with families, children, and educators that are evidence-based, produce positive developmental and educational outcomes, and are informed by continuous improvement. (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; Pianta, Downer, & Hamre, 2016).
Equity refers to the commitment that every child receives what is needed to succeed in school and life (Blankenstein & Noguera, 2016). An explicit focus on equity

[1] The term "parent" is used in this report to refer to the family member (parent, grandparent, guardian) who served as the primary contact and participant in the evaluation.

throughout School as Hub practices and policies provides an essential catalyst for progress toward the goal of preventing and eliminating disparities in opportunity and achievement based on structural racism and systemic inequities 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 child 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 et al., 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. Table 2 describes the three dimensions and their components.

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

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 schools. 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 at 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 2019-20 year, evaluation activities addressed the following questions, though not all questions were fully answered due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic:

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 (and funded by the levy associated with LB 585) 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 the 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.

The quality of home visiting and classroom practices was assessed using the same observational measures as in previous years. 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 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 sections that follow.

Birth – Age 5

Families of children under 5 years who were enrolled in either home visiting (birth – 3 years) and/or in family facilitation (3 – 5 years) who 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 examination of a similar "starting point" or baseline for all children enrolled in home visiting, direct assessments of academic skills, language, and social-emotional (executive function) were performed for children at age 3 who were transitioning out of the home visiting program into one of the 3 – 5 pathways (school PreK, community child care options, or home-based education).

PreK – Grade 3

Evaluation staff used school-based child assessments, direct child assessments, video observations of classroom practices, and a family survey. All children in PreK through Grade 3 were asked to participate in the evaluation through a passive consent process, which consisted of a letter sent to each school family providing an overview of the evaluation activities and the use of student assessment data. Families could decline participation in the evaluation by signing and returning the opt out form to schools within the required time frame. This process resulted in 2,820 PreK through Grade 3 children across 10 full implementation schools participating in the evaluation, with 170 declining to participate.

Following Children From Previous Cohort Design

Children included in the original design and any additional children for each of the following years continue to participate in the evaluation. Children from all the cohorts will be followed through third grade. For children enrolled in birth – age 5 programming (e.g., home visiting and personal visits), future evaluation 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, when possible, as well as to account for clustering of data (e.g., children and teachers within schools). Sample sizes (of classrooms and students) were often insufficient for determining the statistical significance of group differences and change over time.

Program Quality: Home Visiting and Classroom Practices

BIRTH – AGE 5: HOME VISITING AND FAMILY FACILITATION

Schools Continue to Learn How to Engage With Families From Birth

School-based, voluntary home visiting is a key program component for the School as Hub Birth – 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 when they are 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 facing higher barriers to opportunities. Early and continuous engagement with families was encouraged by the school staff; therefore, schools prioritized recruitment of families with children under age 1 or those expecting a child. Other recruitment priorities 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 2019-20 year focused on the process of home visitation and parent-child interaction.

The metro Omaha area felt the effects of the global pandemic, and by mid-March 2020, all area schools, including the 10 full implementation schools, were closed. Home visitors and family facilitators worked closely with families to support basic needs. Food insecurity, loss of child care, unemployment, and the overall stress of the unknown weighed heavily on these families. Home visitors and family facilitators were quick to respond. They connected with families via phone calls, text messaging, and video conferencing to support each family's individual needs. The Institute's family engagement specialists, working with the school-based home visitors and family facilitators, provided additional support, including increasing the monthly community of practice to twice a month and increasing one-on-one coaching sessions with each home visitor and family facilitator.

An important decision for parents includes the milestone of their child turning 3 and making a family choice of a preschool experience. The Buffett Institute defined these choices as pathways. By age 3, parents informed the home visitor and family facilitator of their child's pathway. Will the child be enrolling in school-based PreK or Head Start, community child care, or staying at home with family, a friend, or a neighbor? Parents who chose the pathway of community child care or staying at home with family, a friend, or a neighbor continued receiving monthly personal visits with the family facilitator. As of May 31, 2020, 41 children turned 3 years old and transitioned from traditional home visiting into one of the pathways. Of this group, 28 children were accepted into school-based PreK or Head Start classrooms, and the remaining 13 children stayed home or attended community programs.

School-based home visitors and family facilitators implemented the Growing Great Kids curriculum (GGK; Eliot, Flanagan, Belza, & Dew, 2012). Growing Great Kids focuses on understanding family assets, building secure attachments, and cultivating resilience. Home visitors engaged and empowered parents in their role as educators of their children. To ensure a smooth transition and building upon home visitation, the family facilitators continued supporting families in a reciprocal partnership using Growing Great Kids for those families who continued with personal visits.

For professional development and coaching purposes, the Home Visiting Rating Scales (HOVRS; Roggman et al., 2017) was used to assess the quality of home visits and personal visits. 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 visit and personal visit quality is typically evaluated twice per year. Because of the pandemic, the home visit and personal visit quality was assessed just once.

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 two family facilitators for a total of 12 school-based professionals. Fifty-three completed observations included 51 from home visitors and two from family facilitators. Fifty-one different families participated in these recorded evaluation observations.

TABLE 3. | CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ENROLLED IN HOME VISITING

	ENROLLED		CONSENTED TO EVALUATION	
School	Families	Children	Families	Children
Belleaire	12	13	10	10
Cody	7	8	1	1
DC West	6	7	6	6
Sandoz	12	17	11	14
Gomez Heritage	13	14	11	11
Liberty	13	15	11	11
Mockingbird	15	16	11	12
Mount View	7	8	3	3
Pinewood	7	8	7	7
Westbrook	11	15	9	12
Totals	**103**	**121**	**80**	**87**

The home visiting practices subscale was used to assess the behaviors of home visitors based on four scales, each of which is assigned a rating of 1 to 7. The scales include: responsiveness to family, relationship with family, facilitation of parent-child interactions, and non-intrusiveness and collaboration. The four subscale scores are summed to provide the summary score. Most summary mean scale scores were within the "adequate" range (11-18). Mean home visit practice quality summary scores were 15.74 (*SD*=3.63) at the fall data collection. Scores for the individual item relationship with the family, a foundational element for building trust in the context of home visiting, was positively rated in the "good" range at 5.04. Home/personal visits from 29 families were observed and scored in fall 2018 and again in fall 2019. For these 29 families, the home visit practices demonstrated by their visitors remained consistent (t(28)=-0.09, p>.05) from fall 2018 (*M*=15.17; *SD*= 3.97) to fall 2019 (*M*=15.10; *SD*=3.29).

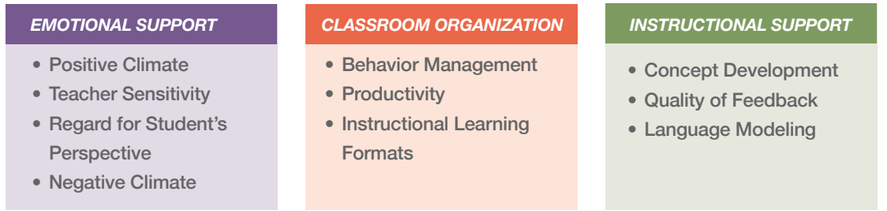
PREK – GRADE 3: CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICES

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 1). CLASS scores (scaled from 1 to 7) are correlated with student achievement (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). Preschoolers in classrooms with higher-quality interactions based on CLASS observations showed greater learning gains across school readiness domains, including executive functioning and early literacy (Vitiello, Bassock, Hamre, Player, & Williford, 2018). PreK through Grade 3 classrooms across all 10 full implementation schools participated in the CLASS assessment and were videotaped for an hour during November 2019 through January 2020. Trained evaluators reviewed and scored the video, and teachers received their score reports and had access to video to observe their teaching. Classroom teachers and educational facilitators work collaboratively to reflect and set goals using the CLASS data.

FIGURE 1. | CLASS DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS



Teacher Practice Scores Surpass National Benchmarks

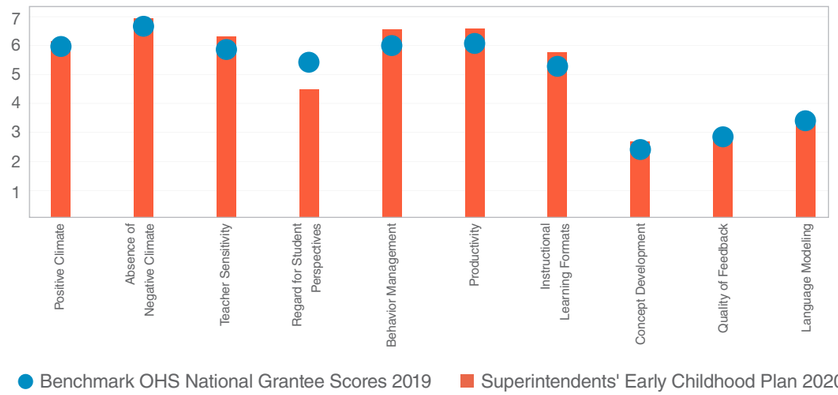
PreK through Grade 3 classrooms overall were of high quality. To situate the quality of classroom interactions in a national context, CLASS domain and dimension scores from the 2019-20 academic year were compared to national Head Start grantee national average scores from the national Office of Head Start (Data & Ongoing Monitoring, 2020). Although these data from Head Start represent the preschool population, they were used to compare to the PreK to Grade 3 classrooms, as no other national comparative K – Grade 3 data is available. Overall, classroom quality, as measured by CLASS, outperformed national averages across domains and the majority of the dimensions. Figure 2 represents PreK and K – Grade 3 CLASS dimension scores compared to the Head Start national averages, represented by blue dots.

- Emotional Support reflects positive teacher-student relationships and communication patterns. Kindergarten through Grade 3 teachers in the full implementation schools exceeded Head Start national grantee average scores on three of four Emotional Support dimensions including positive climate (*M*=6.13, *SD*=.78), absence of negative climate (*M*=6.94, *SD*=.20), and teacher sensitivity (*M*=6.32, *SD*=.83).
- 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 exceeded Head Start grantee average scores for behavior management (*M*=6.55, *SD*=.73), productivity (*M*=6.58, *SD*=.61), and instructional learning formats (*M*=5.77, *SD*=.88).

- Instructional Support reflects how the teacher uses language and activities to scaffold children's learning. Instructional Support scores in the full implementation Kindergarten – Grade 3 classrooms are mid-range and reflect national trends (Hamre, 2014; Moiduddin, Aikens, Tarullo, West, & Xue, 2012). These scores exceeded national benchmark scores across all dimensions, including concept development (*M*=2.69, *SD*=1.13), quality of feedback (*M*=2.93, *SD*=1.02), and language modeling (*M*=3.45; *SD*=1.07).

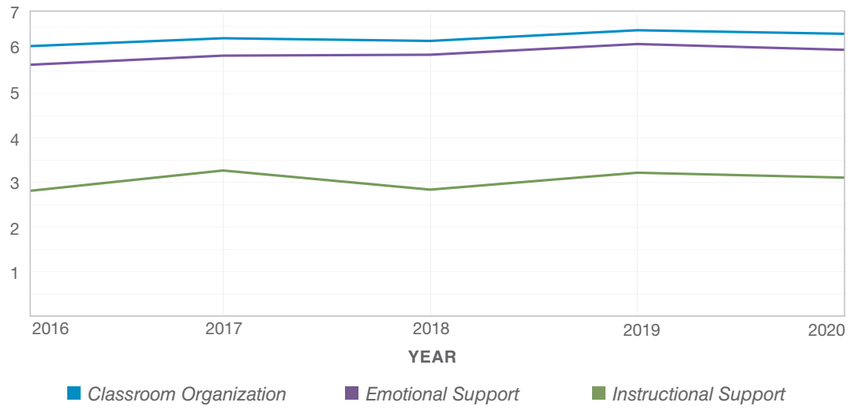
FIGURE 2. | PREK AND K – GRADE 3 CLASS DIMENSION SCORES COMPARED TO NATIONAL BENCHMARK, *N*=142



Classroom Interactions and Instruction Trends Are Strong and Increasing Over Time

CLASS scores in all three domains improved over the first five years of the full implementation and were significantly higher in 2019-20 relative to 2015-16 across all three domains. Current year scores were also significantly higher relative to 2018 in Instructional Support and Classroom Organization, while Emotional Support was rated lower in the current year, relative to 2018-19. All three domains showed an overall positive directional trend (See Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. | PREK – GRADE 3 CLASS DOMAIN SCORES ACROSS TIME, *N*=94



Family Processes

The Superintendents' Plan works with schools to address support of 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). Research shows that welcoming, embracing, and supporting parents and other caregivers central to children's lives supports the development of the trusting relationships needed to promote true partnerships with families (Pecaski, McLennan, & Howitt, 2018). 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, birth to Grade 3, in the full implementation, we examined parent-child engagement and interaction and surveyed families about their engagement with schools.

HOME VISITING AND FAMILY FACILITATION FOSTER POSITIVE PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

Connecting families to early education knowledge, other families, and the schools in their communities are the sources of family engagement and a major goal of home visiting in the School as Hub Birth – 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 scale assesses the degree to which the home visitor supports developmentally appropriate parent-child interactions. Home visitors (*n*=10) and family facilitators (*n*=2) video recorded parent-child-home visitor/family facilitator interactions as part of the home visit, and these were coded by trained evaluators.

The three family engagement scales: 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. At baseline, family engagement subscale scores were approaching the "good" range of engagement (*M*=13.77, *SD*=3.56). Home/personal visits from 28 families were observed and scored in fall 2018 and again in fall 2019. These families demonstrated consistent (t(28)=-.92, p>.05) parent engagement behaviors from fall 2018 (*M*=14.04; *SD*= 2.82) to fall 2019 (*M*=13.14; *SD*=3.68).

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 observe how the parent and child interacted in play and use 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). In the fall of 2019, 51 observations were recorded and rated for 50 families; one family had multiple children enrolled in the program. Most families participating in home visiting demonstrated moderate to high-quality parent-child interactions (*M*=3.62, *SD*=.60), suggesting that on average, parents are responsive and supportive of their children's development and learning (see Figure 4). Of these 50 families, 23 had also been observed previously in the spring of 2019. These families demonstrated slight (non-significant; p = 0.69) improvement from the spring of 2019 (*M*=3.50; *SD*=0.60) to the fall of 2019 (*M*=3.73; *SD*=0.55). This slight improvement in parenting skills over this six-month period of time (see Figure 5) may indicate that cumulative time spent in home visitation activities prompts positive growth in parents' observed interactions with their children.

FIGURE 4. | QUALITY OF PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS IN HOME VISITING FAMILIES, FALL 2019

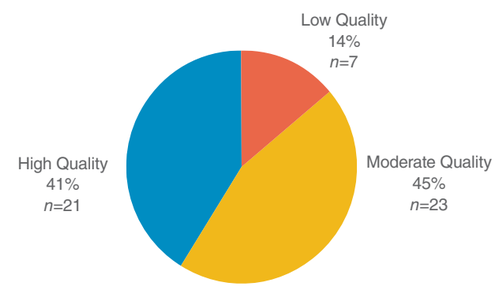
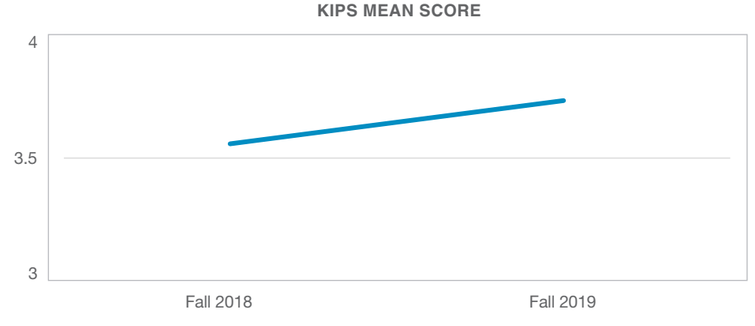


FIGURE 5. | CHANGE IN QUALITY OF PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS, FALL 2018 TO FALL 2019



ASSESSING FAMILY PERCEPTIONS INFORMS FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

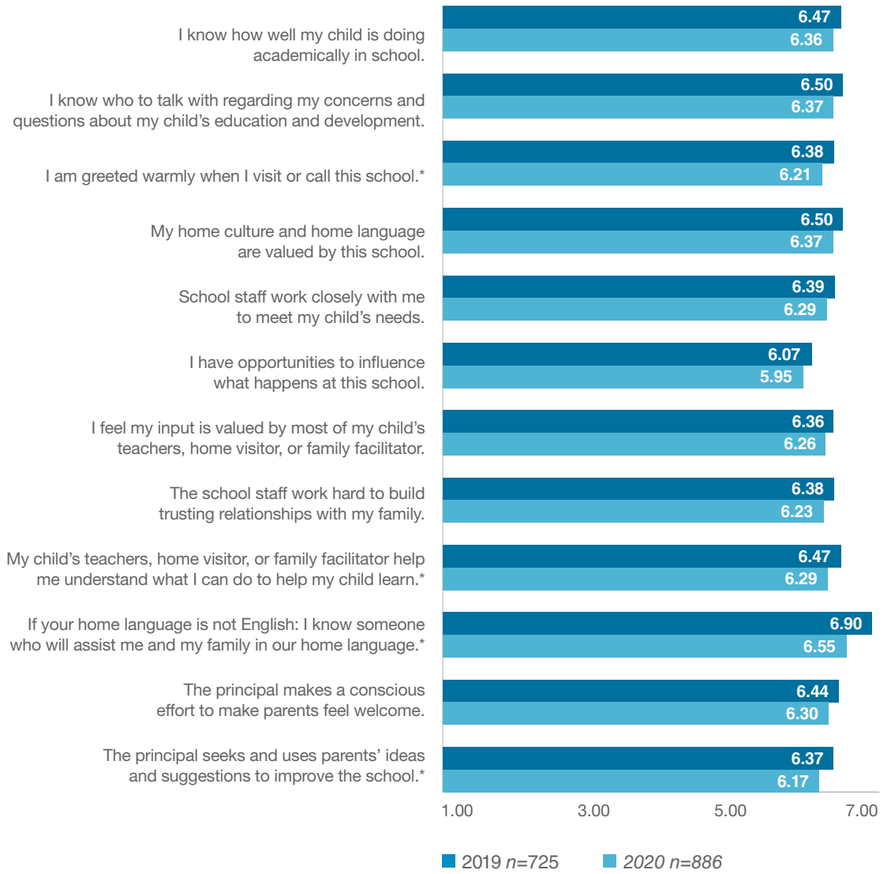
When schools engage meaningfully with families, children demonstrate better educational achievement and social outcomes (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). To support schools' practices engaging families for continuity, quality, and equity, an adaptation of the Road Map Family Engagement Survey (Ishimaru & Lott, 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 in full implementation schools in PreK to Grade 3, 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 889 families responded to the FES across all 10 schools, with 258 (29%) of these families reporting speaking a language other than English in the home. The majority of the families reported their race as White (*n*=541; 72%) with the next largest race categories reported being "Two or more races" (*n*=83; 11%) or Black (*n*=73; 10%). A majority of the families (*n*=545; 65%) reported qualifying for the Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program. Across the schools, families responding to the survey ranged from 37 (low) to 258 (high) per school, with an average response rate of 10% across each of the 10 schools.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high), families rated schools very positively, with item means ranging from 5.95 (*SD*=1.83) to 6.50 (*SD*=1.56). The highest-rated item across the schools was "I know someone at (school) who will assist me and my family in our home language in resolving questions and concerns regarding my child." The lowest-rated item, while still very positive, was "I have opportunities to influence what happens at (school)." Descriptive analyses were completed that compared parent responses based on race, ethnicity, eligibility for FRL, and family language.

A longitudinal analysis examined changes between parent responses to individual survey items in 2019 compared to 2020. While all items were rated lower than the previous year, there were few significant differences. Parents rated four items lower in the current school year, including: "I am greeted warmly when I visit or call" (school) (t(1606) = 2.04, p = .041); "My child's teachers, home visitor, or family facilitator help me understand what I can do to help my child learn" (t(1603) = 2.21, p = .027); "If your home language is not English: I know someone (school) who will assist me and my family in our home language in resolving questions and concerns regarding my child" (t(839) = 2.98, p = .003); and "The principal at (school) seeks and uses parents' ideas and suggestions to improve the school" (t(1602) = 2.36, p = .019). Figure 6 displays the families' ratings for each item across the two years.

FIGURE 6. | RATINGS OF FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



*Denotes statistical significance at p<.05

Child Development and Learning

Over time, a focus on continuity, quality, and equity in the context of the School as Hub Birth – Grade 3 is expected to manifest in an increase in opportunities for all children to receive a dynamic and engaged educational experience and a subsequent reduction in the development and learning gap between children of different racial and economic backgrounds. Children's development and educational achievement are examined annually. Measures used in the 2019-20 school year were intended to (1) identify development concerns in the birth to 3-year-old population participating in home visiting, (2) examine 3-year-olds' language skill and early academic skill related to math and reading, and (3) examine 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 to 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), 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 recruitment of families into home visiting and family facilitation, children's ages at first assessment varied. A total of 177 children were assessed at least one time (*M*=18.67 months, *SD*=11.03 months), with the youngest child measured at 1 month and the oldest child measured at 60 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 (86% – 92% across five areas), and a very small number presented developmental concerns (0 – 4 children across five areas). Figure 8 illustrates the proportion of children rated in each developmental category.

FIGURE 7. | CHILDREN BIRTH – AGE 3 ASQ SCORES BY DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAIN

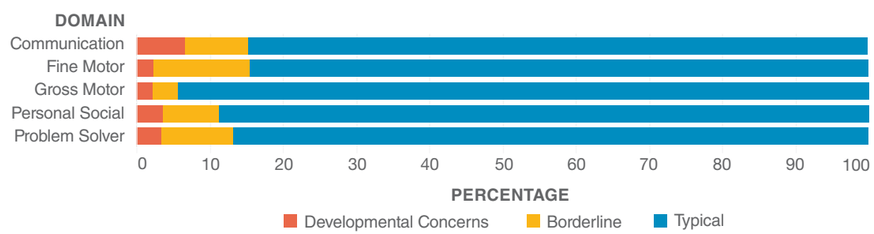
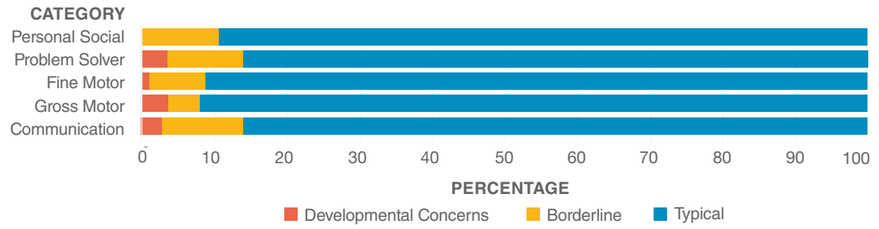


FIGURE 8. | CHILDREN BIRTH – AGE 3 ASQ SCORES BY DEVELOPMENTAL CATEGORY, *N*=114



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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

The Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress Growth (NWEA MAP) was used to examine students' academic achievement and growth. 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, and spring) in Kindergarten through third grade. 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., fall). For this report, fall 2019 data will be reported for status. Growth refers to how much the student progressed across multiple points in time (e.g., fall to spring). Due to COVID-19, students were only assessed in the 2019-20 school year in the fall and winter. NWEA growth metric (conditional growth percentile) was calculated based on two points of time, fall 2018 and fall 2019 assessments and spring 2019 and fall 2019. Data for nine of the 10 Superintendents' Plan schools were provided for Kindergarten and Grades 1 through 3; one school provided only data for Grade 3.

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 that 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). Fall 2019-20 RIT scores were used to evaluate the status of reading and mathematics achievement of

students in Kindergarten through Grade 3. Achievement percentiles were calculated based on a national norm sample. For interpretation purposes, an achievement status percentile of 50 indicates a student performed at the midpoint of similar students across the United States. Norms were developed by NWEA (Thum & Hauser, 2015 Student and School RIT Norms Research Update 1; 4/9/2015). Table 4 summarizes the median student achievement across Superintendents' Plan schools and grade levels. Achievement status data was available for 2,160 students across all 10 schools. Median percentile scores were in the "slightly below" range (between the 30.5 and 42.5 percentile value) across all grades and academic areas, with much variance in median percentile ranks across schools.

TABLE 4. | KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 3 MAP FALL READING AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT STATUS SCORES

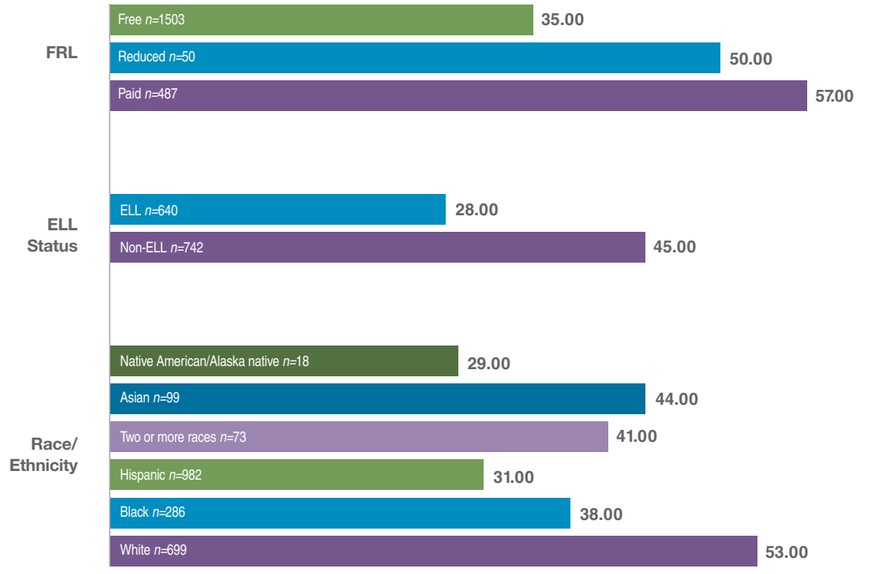
	READING			MATHEMATICS		
Grade	*N*	*Median Percentile*	Effectiveness Level*	*N*	*Median Percentile*	Effectiveness Level*
Kindergarten	507	41.00	Slightly Below	507	34.00	Slightly Below
Grade 1	561	36.00	Slightly Below	561	37.00	Slightly Below
Grade 2	548	38.00	Slightly Below	548	41.00	Slightly Below
Grade 3	543	39.00	Slightly Below	544	37.00	Slightly Below

*NWEA uses these labels to describe achievement and growth of students.

Analyses were completed to determine if selected demographic characteristics were associated with MAP RIT scores. Only English Language Learner (ELL) status predicted fall MAP scores, such that English-speaking students scored higher in both MAP reading and math than English Language Learners. Race, ethnicity, and Free and Reduced Lunch status did not predict math or reading scores. The median achievement status scores by subpopulations are summarized in Figures 9 and 10. Percentile score patterns were similar across academic areas, with highest median scores demonstrated by students who were White, had a paid lunch status, and were English speakers. Those with the lowest scores were Hispanic or Native American, were eligible for free lunch and were English Language Learners.

FIGURE 9. | MEDIAN MATH ACHIEVEMENT STATUS PERCENTILE SCORES BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS

FIGURE 10. | MEDIAN READING ACHIEVEMENT STATUS PERCENTILE SCORES BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS



Longitudinal Data

Math and reading MAP achievement RIT scores were compared from spring 2019 to fall 2019. Across the full implementation schools, students' MAP math scores decreased significantly and reading scores increased significantly. These results suggest that students' math scores were negatively impacted by the gap in services over the summer, whereas reading scores actually improved.

Student Growth Status

The Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP) indicates how a student's growth compares to the 2015 NWEA student growth norms (https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1642). Table 5 provides the median CGP for reading and mathematics by grade level for fall 2018 to fall 2019. For interpretation purposes, a CGP of 50 indicates a student performed at the midpoint of similar students across the United States. A total of 1,561 students in Grades 1 to 3 had growth scores. Overall, in both reading and math, students' scores ranged from slightly below range (between the 30.5 and 42.5 percentile value) to the about average range (42.5 to 57.5 percentile). Students in Grade 3 had the highest CGP median scores (at the about average range) and students in Grades 1 and 2 scored in the slightly below range. The lowest CGP median score was for Grade 1 students in reading. It should be noted there was much variance in median percentile ranks across schools.

TABLE 5. | GRADES 1 – 3 MAP FALL 2018 TO FALL 2019 READING AND MATHEMATICS CGP SCORES

	READING			MATHEMATICS		
Grade	*N*	*Median*	Effectiveness Level*	*N*	*Median*	Effectiveness Level*
Grade 1	513	35.00	Slightly Below	513	41.00	Slightly Below
Grade 2	497	42.00	Slightly Below	498	41.00	Slightly Below
Grade 3	450	48.00	About Average	450	46.00	About Average

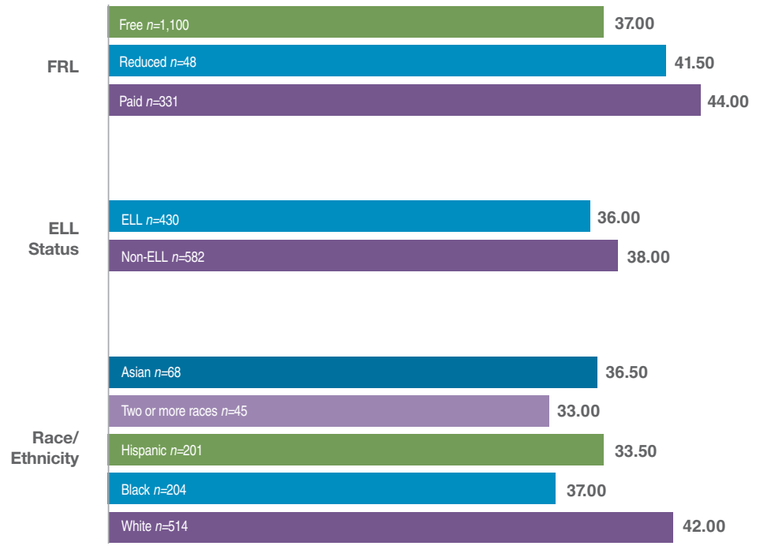
*NWEA uses these labels to describe achievement and growth of students.

Students' math and reading status were also analyzed by demographic groups. Figures 11 and 12 present the demographic breakdown of fall percentile ranks across race/ethnicity, ELL, and Free and Reduced Lunch status. There was little variability in math CGP median scores between students who were Hispanic, White, or Black or between non-ELL and ELL students. Paid lunch status and Asian students demonstrated the highest median math CGP scores. A different pattern emerged for CGP scores in reading with more differences demonstrated between subgroups. Students who were White, had paid lunch status, and were English-speaking demonstrated the highest median CGP. Students with the lowest CGP reading scores were Hispanic, ELL, and were eligible for free lunch.

FIGURE 11. | MEDIAN MATH CONDITIONAL GROWTH PERCENTILE SCORES BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS

Native American students were not reported as n < 10

FIGURE 12. | MEDIAN READING CONDITIONAL GROWTH PERCENTILE SCORES BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS



Native American students were not reported as n < 10

Achievement Status and Growth Summary

It is important to examine student progress by reviewing both student achievement status and conditional growth. Ideally, one would see students demonstrate both high achievement and high growth. Figures 13 and 14 summarize the data from 1,652 students based on achievement and conditional growth data. The results found that students in Grades 1 through 3 were demonstrating both math and reading scores within the low achievement-growth quadrant. Students in Grade 3 were in the low achievement-growth quadrant; however, they were just slightly below the scores needed to be in the low achievement-high-growth quadrant. No Kindergarten growth scores (i.e., CGP, Observed Growth, Projected Growth) are available because those students were not tested in fall 2018.

FIGURE 13. | READING OUTCOMES: ACHIEVEMENT STATUS AND GROWTH SUMMARY BY GRADE LEVEL

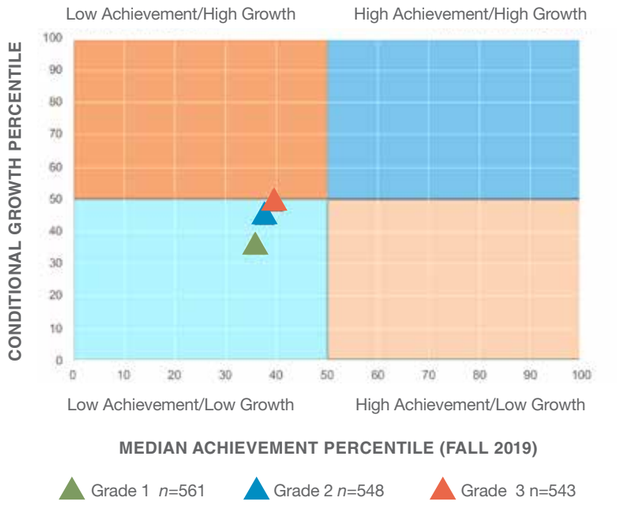


TABLE 6. | READING ACHIEVEMENT STATUS AND GROWTH SUMMARY

Grade	*N* Achievement Percentile (Fall)	Median Achievement Percentile (Fall)	*N* Conditional Growth Percentile (Fall to Fall)	Conditional Growth Percentile (Fall to Fall)
Kindergarten	507	41.00	--	--
Grade 1	561	36.00	513	35.00
Grade 2	548	38.00	497	42.00
Grade 3	544	39.00	450	48.00

FIGURE 14. | MATH OUTCOMES: ACHIEVEMENT STATUS AND GROWTH SUMMARY BY GRADE LEVEL

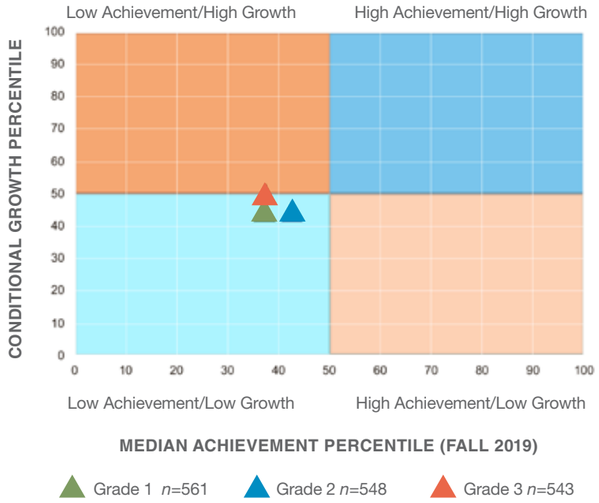


TABLE 7. | MATH ACHIEVEMENT STATUS AND GROWTH SUMMARY

Grade	*N* Achievement Percentile (Fall)	Median Achievement Percentile (Fall)	*N* Conditional Growth Percentile (Fall to Fall)	Conditional Growth Percentile (Fall to Fall)
Kindergarten	507	34.00	--	--
Grade 1	561	37.00	513	41.00
Grade 2	548	41.00	498	41.00
Grade 3	544	37.00	450	46.00

Student Projected Growth to Observed Growth Comparisons

NWEA MAP calculates a projected growth score that represents the change in RIT score that half the U.S. students will make over time, which are based on the student growth norms. An important analysis is to determine how the student's actual change in RIT scores compared to the projected growth. The descriptive analyses were completed with students (1,653 math scores and 1,654 reading scores) across the schools. In third grade only, reading and math growth scores on average met or exceeded the projected growth. The highest number of students met their projected growth in reading (ranging from 40.40 to 59.50%). Fewer students met their projected growth in math (ranging from 44.10 to 48.70%). Third grade students had the highest percentages meeting their projected growth in both math and reading. Second grade students had the lowest percentages meeting their projected growth. Results by grade are summarized in the following figures and tables.

FIGURE 15. | READING GROWTH FALL 2018 TO FALL 2019 PROJECTED VS. OBSERVED GROWTH BY GRADE LEVEL

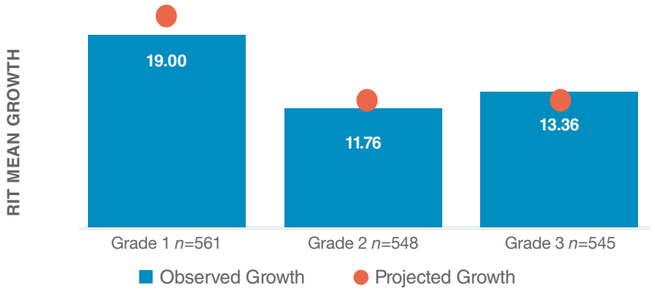


TABLE 8. | READING GROWTH FALL 2018 TO FALL 2019

Grade	*N**	Fall 2019 Mean RIT	Observed Growth	Projected Growth	% Meeting Projected Growth
Kindergarten	508	138.41	--	--	--
Grade 1	561	156.95	19.00	21.56	53.10%
Grade 2	548	171.25	11.76	13.53	40.40%
Grade 3	545	183.86	13.36	13.64	59.50%

*The sample size reported is the minimum sample size available across all measures.

FIGURE 16. | MATH GROWTH FALL 2018 TO FALL 2019 PROJECTED VS. OBSERVED GROWTH BY GRADE LEVEL

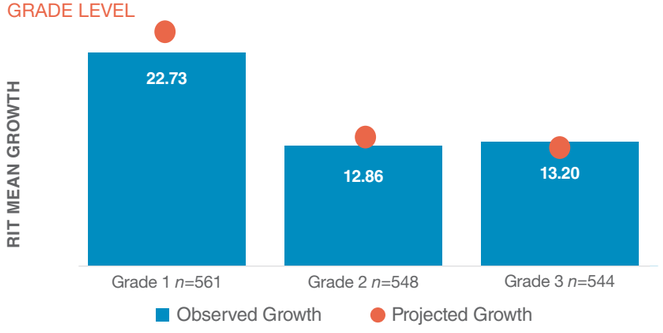


TABLE 9. | MATH GROWTH FALL 2018 TO FALL 2019

Grade	*N**	Fall 2019 Mean RIT	Observed Growth	Projected Growth	% Meeting Projected Growth
Kindergarten	507	134.45	--	--	--
Grade 1	561	157.07	22.73	24.67	47.20%
Grade 2	548	173.39	12.86	14.40	44.10%
Grade 3	544	185.36	13.20	13.57	48.90%

*The sample size reported is the minimum sample size available across all measures.

Social-Emotional and Executive Function Development

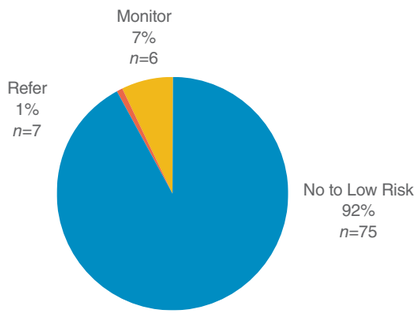
Social-emotional and executive function development in early childhood is strongly associated with children's academic progress through the school years. Learning to express and regulate emotions, develop empathy for others, develop relationships, make responsible decisions, and adapt to challenging 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 preschool 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 – 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 provide guidance for action: Refer, Monitor, or No to Low Risk.

During the 2019-20 school year, data were available for children whose families participated in home visiting in the 10 full implementation schools, for a total of 177 children, aged 1 – 48 months. At the first visit of the school year, 75 children (91.5%) scored in the No to Low Risk category, six (7.3%) scored in the Monitor range, and one (1.2%) scored in the Refer range. Children enrolled in home visiting were developing typically in terms of their social and emotional development (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 17. | NUMBER (%) OF CHILDREN WITH REFER/MONITOR OR NO TO LOW RISK ASQ-SE SCORES



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: 3 YEARS – GRADE 3

In the first 8 years, children's executive function skills develop rapidly and are associated with how well children participate in activities and engage in learning. Executive functioning supports 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 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).

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 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 PreK through third grade completed the MEFS in the 2019-20 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 – 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 PreK through third grade, 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.

Three 3-year-olds and 2,604 PreK – Grade 3 children completed the MEFS in the 2019-20 school year. Note, the sample size for 3-year-old children who transitioned from home visiting is too small to report. Across the full implementation schools, children's executive function skills were in the average range across ages, with slightly lower scores for third-graders (see Table 10).

A longitudinal analysis was completed to determine if there was change in scores across years. A significant increase in MEFS scores from 2019 to 2020 was found when controlling for race, ethnicity, grade, English Language Learner status, and Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) status. Race, ethnicity, language, and grade were predictive of MEFS scores, such that White children scored higher on MEFS than Black or Hispanic children. Native English speakers scored higher on MEFS than English Language Learners. Younger students were found to demonstrate higher MEFS scores than older students. Free and Reduced Lunch status was not predictive of MEFS scores. Mean MEFS scores are summarized by these selected demographic variables in Figure 18.

TABLE 10. | PREK — GRADE 3 MINNESOTA EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SCALE RESULTS: FALL 2019

Grade	*N**	Mean	*SD*
Preschool	366	97.75	9.61
Kindergarten	536	99.15	9.14
Grade 1	591	99.35	9.21
Grade 2	578	97.17	8.94
Grade 3	533	95.38	9.67

FIGURE 18. | MEAN ACHIEVEMENT STATUS SCORES BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHICS

Implementation Insights: Leadership in the School as Hub Approach

Qualitative studies provide an opportunity to examine the processes involved in implementing the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan School as Hub approach. By considering perspectives of people involved and examining how various systems—schools, families, and communities—are engaged in effecting change, we are learning more about how enhancements to quality, continuity, and equity are being supported. In the 2019-20 school year, Buffett Institute researchers engaged in two studies to investigate (1) leadership observations and historical perspectives on the Superintendents' Plan, and (2) systems change elements that occurred in the Superintendents' Plan full implementation schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research and evaluation staff interviewed 10 principals in School as Hub full implementation schools and 10 superintendents' workgroup members in May and June of 2020 to document leadership observations and historical perspectives on the Superintendents' Plan. In addition, a document review was conducted to explore the systems change elements that occurred in the Superintendents' Plan full implementation schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic from February through May 2020. A total of 17 documents were reviewed and included meeting minutes from superintendents' workgroup meetings, principal community of practice meetings, home visitor and family facilitator community of practice meetings, and community of practice survey results.

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

Principals took ownership and responsibility over School as Hub, describing that the work "has to start from me." One principal mentioned being part of School as Hub served as a "constant reminder of what's important." It was commonly expressed that being a School as Hub leader has shifted the principals to have a "much more intentional focus on early childhood." Principals also described how being a School as Hub principal changed how they relate to families. For instance, it was discussed that "schools should be designed to meet the needs of families and not the other way around" and that families "drive the planning" in the school. One principal described, "… we always wanted to include parents…now that's just the initial part of our planning…that'd be probably the major shift I've had…" Principals discussed how understanding each family and the challenges they experience helps schools best support families and their students.

"You know, I think the more we understand the family, and family dynamics, some of the challenges they're facing, it's just so much easier to understand what our students bring to school with them every day. You know, just always knowing that it is important to understand the family, but also, this just makes us realize that piece. Without that

piece, our partnership is just not, it just doesn't have the strength that we need in order to move our students forward."

Principals stated that school should be a place for families to come for resources, not just education.

"…One of our things is, a building is to serve…And so we're serving the community by providing a great education, a great learning environment for students to come into, but we're also serving them with any needs that they would need, whether it's our social worker getting involved, whether it's our counselor or school psychologist, myself, you know, driving supplies to a family's home, or setting up transportation for them to go to the doctor. I mean, those are different things that I think are more important for me and are definitely more visible to me now being in a building like [school name] and trying to embody that School as Hub philosophy."

Principals discussed how being a School as Hub principal shaped how they relate to community partners. Even though many principals mentioned the importance of community partnerships and viewed the school as being a connector to the community, principals discussed this as an area where they can improve. Only one principal mentioned child care centers or family child care homes specifically as community partners.

Supports

Although principals commonly mentioned that the commitment for School as Hub must start with the principal, they often described that it was a team effort within their school buildings. For instance, home visitors and family facilitators were crucial for representing parent voice. Furthermore, principals appreciated the support and connection offered by members of the principals' community of practice. The shared understandings and similar situations faced by these leaders created a safe foundation for cooperative thinking. Principals articulated the deep conversations and "bouncing ideas" around with their peers fostered connections that "helped us grow professionally a great deal." One principal expressed, "It's been great learning with other leaders and other districts. It's been nice to understand where they're coming from…understanding where we're coming from. All the things that we have in common and uncommon."

Lessons Learned

Principals discussed how they learned School as Hub is not a "one size fits all approach" and individualizing it to your school is essential.

"… At the beginning of the year I would kind of go to our School as Hub meeting, and I would listen to those things. And then I would hear something a little bit different from

our district meetings…And so, I think what I've kind of finally learned to balance is [to] be able to take both messages, and then bring that back to our School as Hub team here at the building. And then we get to be the deciders of how we make that look in our building…"

Principals described the importance of making sure the School as Hub team is fully integrated as part of the staff. School staff must appreciate the value of a School as Hub team. One principal encourages participation in the School as Hub team in the building, particularly so those working to advance School as Hub initiatives are not viewed as separate.

Next Steps

Principals most commonly mentioned increasing family engagement and recruiting more families into the program as next steps. Principals discussed their desire to connect and partner with families but struggled with how to implement family partnership strategies with the COVID-19 challenges. To increase family engagement, one principal mentioned that it will be necessary to better understand why families are not engaging with the school and to also better show families that the school values their participation.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

Workgroup members discussed the value in meeting regularly with other district leaders and how it offered important conversations and learning opportunities, including discussion on successes, challenges, and ways districts have overcome challenges. Many workgroup members felt honored to be part of this group.

"And I think that is one of the strongest aspects of this committee that I've seen is that their ability to share in hopes of helping one another…really good avenue for communication and working on issues together..."

Similar to principals, many workgroup members expressed the overarching goal of the Superintendents' Plan influenced them to "think of early childhood much more." Most workgroup members expressed that the prioritization of continuity has increased in their district. While the value of early education has increased across districts, competing priorities reduce the capacity for large, long-term investment to move the work past a formative stage.

Workgroup members discussed the goal of closing opportunity gaps across the Omaha metro area. These goals have long been district priorities. Increasing educational equity through the Superintendents' Plan has brought this into focus by elevating the issue with leadership across school districts.

Workgroup members discussed investments that were made to support the Superintendents' Plan and if resources had extended beyond the full implementation school sites. Time was the most common reported investment that was made to support the Superintendents' Plan, including administrative work (i.e., planning guidance oversight, meetings, responding to principal requests, meetings with principals, budget and human resource responsibilities) and time related to professional development and meetings for the teaching staff. Most workgroup members reported that School as Hub principals have not extended much beyond the full implementation schools. However, professional development was one investment that crossed all elementary schools. In addition, the values and ideals of School as Hub have extended through relationships with principals and staff from other district schools seeking to learn more.

"I think the work that they're doing, I think people are curious about it…so others have conversations with those principals trying to figure out how, how they build that idea of School as Hub…other principals ask them about what they're doing, they do want to learn more."

LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Family and Student Supports

As districts shifted to remote learning, schools focused on providing basic resources to meet the needs of students and families. Many schools became meal distribution sites through a drive-through or pickup process. Schools and school districts provided devices and technology resources to families, including iPads, chargers, internet service, and hot spots for students to successfully participate in online learning. In addition, schools printed packets, gathered classroom supplies, and distributed books for pickup or delivery.

As remote learning became routine, communication with students and families in various forms was essential: video lessons, texting, phone and video calls, and daily messages on social media. Various platforms and apps were used by staff and administration including Google Meet, Zoom, Seesaw, Dojo, Raz-Kids, and HeadSprout. Home visitors continued to connect with their families via text, phone, and/or video calls rather than in-person visits.

Instructional Supports

Leadership supported school staff so they could focus on the students' academic and social-emotional needs during this uncertain time. At several schools, district and principal leadership supported staff by providing self-care resources, calling staff members on a regular basis to check in, and holding weekly meetings with staff by grade level. During this time, schools also provided supports and strategies to help

staff communicate and support families: assigning an interpreter to every grade to help staff make regular calls to families, sharing community resources with the staff so they can better support the families, and making the process easier for home visitors to take books from the library to families.

Barriers

The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted and magnified equity issues already present. Often the families with the greatest needs were challenging to reach while other families did not fully express all their needs, making it difficult for staff to make connections to the necessary supports and resources. Meal distribution sites faced high demand; meals were limited to serving only children, not the family. Technology was a common barrier as many families did not have the necessary devices, internet service, or comfort with technology required for virtual learning. Over time, parent engagement declined. Parents expressed they were missing connection while feeling overwhelmed by the amount of information they were receiving.

Next Steps

Schools are preparing for all scenarios for the 2020-21 school year and making sure staff feel prepared in addition to equipping families with the necessary supports for no matter what the school year holds. Next steps for many schools include working with home visitors and family facilitators to increase engagement with families and determining how to best develop and support relationships virtually, especially as it may be more challenging connecting with newer families during this time.

Schools are preparing for students to have greater needs when they return in the fall than when they left in the spring, but they do not know how the children's needs will present themselves. Schools are aware of and concerned about the long-term impact on children's social-emotional development and mental health. For this reason, there will be an increased focus on how to meet social-emotional needs of the students. In addition, schools will focus on how to better support English Language Learners and special education students through remote learning. There will continue to be professional development for teachers on remote learning and determining the best platform for teachers to use to communicate with their students and families. As teachers are experiencing increased stress, determining how schools best support the teachers will be another focus for the coming year.

Implementation Insights: Early Education Transitions

An evaluation of transition practices, programs, and policies present in the 10 Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan full implementation schools was conducted to establish a reference point for future study and engagement. Forms of data collected included school social media posts, separate focus group interviews with school principals, home visitors, and family facilitators, informal interviews with these school staff, and open-ended survey data from school staff and Institute staff (educational facilitators). Transitions were conceptualized as changing educational environments (i.e., classroom, school) in which the child is an active participant. Children interact with others in these spaces and others bring their own understanding and experience with transitions to these interactions and to their site-specific work. Transition experiences across the birth through elementary years were explored.

HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING TRANSITION PRACTICES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Transition supports are most common as children move into Kindergarten and less common in the early elementary years. They are frequently framed as one-time events for children and families. Family members are invited to these special transition experiences, often hosted at schools. To inclusively serve families in their school community, certain transition efforts were prioritized at some schools. For example, materials were translated, and interpreters were present at events. Collaborative experiences among community- and school-based PreK and Kindergarten teachers were also used to support transitions and occur more frequently in the spring semester as the academic year comes to a close.

Birth to Age 3

Home visitation and discussion of pathways in early education are two transition practices in these youngest years. In Superintendents' Plan full implementation schools, home visitors and family facilitators developed warm relationships with families. This establishment of trust with school staff begins to create connections with the school and with other families within the community. By meeting families in their homes, at school, or virtually, home visitors and family facilitators work with families to set and achieve goals and engage in targeted discussions of education goals and pathways (school PreK, community child care options, or home-based education) as children reach 3 years.

Into Kindergarten

As children move from various settings into Kindergarten, they experience many types of transition: Kindergarten registration, orientation, open house, classroom visitation, and discussion of expectations. Enrolling students in Kindergarten through a registration event is a common school practice and is often paired with Kindergarten orientation

and open house events. Schools used these opportunities to welcome families and to convey messages about policies and procedures: health, curriculum, guidance/discipline, and family engagement. Along with conveying messages, school staff begin building relationships with children and their parents/caregivers through activities and individualized dialogue. Some parents and children may visit classroom areas and meet with a teacher as part of a tour while participating in orientation/open house or as a stand-alone activity. At these events, schools shared formally (via handouts) or informally (through conversations with teachers) ways in which parents could support their child's learning.

Teachers worked across settings to align educational experiences for children and families. PreK and Kindergarten teachers learned from one another through collaboration, understanding the children they educate by sharing child records, and hosting events to introduce children to each other across environments. Teachers also collaborated with other educators and administrators at leadership team meetings and in professional learning communities to make and enact plans. Teachers sometimes shared and reviewed various child records including portfolios, goals, and other documentation. On occasion, teachers planned and held combined events with students (and parents/caregivers) from across classroom and school environments.

Across Grades

Transition experiences across the elementary school building were less common and usually consisted of scheduling or communication from the school to families. Often, schools contacted families via technology (email, messaging apps like Dojo, e-newsletters) to inform and connect them to information and educational opportunities in the school or community. Drawing on personal relationships with families, teachers and school staff used informal communication techniques to convey transition information. Examples of these unique interpersonal communication contexts included phone calls, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, parent-teacher association meetings, family nights, socialization groups, drop-off/pickup time, and at other transition events. Adjusting the start schedule for portions of the school is another transition experience affecting the school system. Several schools had distinctive plans for the start of their school term. For instance, PreK students began a few days after elementary students started. Another school allowed Kindergarten students to come to school a full day before their elementary peers in the school.

LEADERSHIP IN TRANSITION IMPLEMENTATION

Planning and implementing transition experiences to support children and families is a sizable commitment. Many contribute to this effort, both in planning and execution. Transition experiences vary considerably across schools and are influenced by the school leadership and staff. As instructional leaders, principals shaped the direction

and resources for transition experiences. Principals interpreted district policies, narrowed and customized building-level priorities, and engaged in planning and hosting experiences for students and families.

School staff advanced most of the transition work. Home visitors and family facilitators developed and maintained close relationships with families and were expected to be responsible for most planning, coordination, and implementation of this work. They collaborated with many others: teachers (especially PreK/Kindergarten/dual language teachers), paraprofessionals, principals, assistant principals, custodial staff, nurses, counselors, administrative professionals, librarians, parents/caregivers, bilingual liaisons, social workers, and community partners.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Goals of transition experiences were varied and largely relationship-based. While many events had educational components, school staff prioritized interpersonal elements among staff and parents/caregivers. School staff wanted to develop connections with parents/caregivers to support views of school as a supportive, safe place. Stated goals for parents/caregivers included reducing anxiety with the school experience, understanding stressors for children, appreciating the importance of family morning and evening routines, recognizing the need for adequate sleep/nutrition for children, learning general academic skills that could be reinforced during the summer months, and participating in future school events. Goals for children involved taking the fear and mystery out of attending school, interacting with their peers and teachers, and navigating their school with comfort and confidence. Assessment of goals was not a formal process, and school staff followed up with participants informally. Information about the success of transition experiences included positive remarks, comfort in reaching out to school staff to ask questions, a reduction in confusion or a flurry of questions from parents, and increased attendance at future events. School staff sought recommendations and improvement advice from parents.

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan School as Hub Full Implementation Evaluation: Summary and Recommendations

This year's evaluation reflects a year of early success, disrupted by a pandemic that forced shifts in the entire education system. However, staff working to support School as Hub in full implementation continued to partner with school building leadership and family engagement (home visiting and family facilitation) staff to provide families and staff with needed supports. Program quality was assessed when possible, as were child development and learning, and system shifts related to School as Hub principles of quality, continuity, and equity.

PROGRAM QUALITY

Home visiting was an area of intensive effort. However, it remains a challenging program for schools to deliver in terms of recruiting families for program and evaluation participation and engaging in quality program delivery. Enrollment in home visiting, and in the evaluation, remain low. Only four schools met the targeted goal to serve 15 children, and four schools served fewer than 10 children. The home visitation program for birth to 3 years is designed to serve 150 children and their families, across the 10 full implementation schools. At 15 children and families per school, the reach of the program as designed is already limited to a few families per school, and as such, school leadership may not be fully engaged as a program investment.

Delivering high-quality programs for home visiting has also been a challenge, with program quality hovering in the "acceptable" range across the program years. An exception to this program rating is the degree to which home visitors supported quality parent-child relationships, for which their efforts were evaluated as "good." Clearly, the interruption of home visiting in the context of the pandemic interfered with targeted efforts on the part of schools to integrate assessment into ongoing program improvement. All have worked hard to provide what families need in this stressful context, with most home visitors meeting with families virtually through the spring and summer months.

In the coming year, Buffett Institute program staff will provide additional supports to increase district and school staff recruitment of families with children birth to age 3 into home visitation and evaluation participation. Program staff will continue to use observational assessments with home visitors and family facilitators as tools for continuous improvement.

The opportunity remains to learn how schools can continue to engage with families and learn how to create meaningful learning experiences in the years before school entry. Schools can support staff and families to acknowledge the value of parent engagement rooted in reciprocal partnerships. Going forward, efforts to enroll families will include partnering with community organizations to engage families that reflect school demographics.

Classroom practices related to instructional, organizational, and emotional supports in the classroom climate have improved over the years of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. Ongoing instructional coaching related to emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support practices is an important focus in the full implementation schools. Though individualized by school needs, coaching delivery varies across classrooms and schools. 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), schools can continue to leverage instructional strengths (e.g., emotional support and classroom organization), and ensure that all children equitably access instructional quality. Educational facilitators can continue to provide evidence-based coaching and professional development to support teacher practices related to instruction and child engagement in learning. Principals and district instructional staff can prioritize classroom quality and support teachers' efforts informed by the CLASS assessment tool; however, the CLASS tool is designed for in-person instruction. As forms of instruction may vary dramatically in the coming year, from in person to fully remote, use of technology for teaching and learning will be elevated. Coaches and teachers will need skills and tools to engage with children and families, while ensuring equitable access to learning experiences.

FAMILY PROCESSES

Family engagement, as connected to interaction with the home visitor and measured via the HOVRS, was evaluated as a program strength, consistent with findings from the 2018-19 school 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.

Suspension of home visiting data collection in spring 2020, due to the pandemic, prevented observation of change over time. Efforts are planned for the 2020-21 school year to evaluate family engagement and parent-child interactions using virtual technology to support continuous learning and documenting programmatic quality in schools' work with families.

Family perceptions of school engagement, as assessed using the Family Engagement Survey (FES) reflected very high family perceptions of engagement with schools, with the response rate slightly higher than in the 2018-19 school year. Response rates varied dramatically across schools; it will be helpful to learn how schools that had higher rates of return secured families' survey participation. Understanding family beliefs and values regarding education is an ongoing commitment for schools and using data to inform school decisions for family engagement 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 was assessed for only a few children transitioning out of home visiting due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Results were not reported for these few children, as their number was low (*n*=7). Program efforts, home visiting in particular, 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. In the next year of School as Hub, efforts will continue to support families as they provide learning supports for their young children.

Academic achievement in Kindergarten through Grade 3 was assessed in fall and winter time points, using the school-based MAP assessments, but spring achievement was not assessed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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. While schools and districts have begun to shift their attention to quality, continuous, equitable learning opportunities for families and young children, opportunity gaps based on racial and ethnic disparities continue to be reflected in academic achievement scores. Children's academic achievement will continue to be observed using MAP assessments in future evaluation years to examine how system-level changes may be associated with child outcomes. Efforts will continue to work more closely with school districts to obtain

School as Hub Full Implementation Evaluation: Summary and Recommendations

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 function was largely in the average range and improved across the last two school years. Executive function 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 function were supported through Professional Development for All activities this year. Ongoing efforts will focus on supporting executive function development for 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 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 leadership perspectives are shifting with engagement in School as Hub and how they perceive school systems shifting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While acknowledging that School as Hub cannot work as a "one size fits all" approach, principals reported having developed a "more intentional focus on early childhood" and pivoting in their prioritization of families' needs and engagement in the school community, starting from when children are born. It is possible that elevated awareness and understanding of families' lives contributed to the rapid responses schools demonstrated in response to the onset of the pandemic. However, principals noted that the work of family engagement remains difficult and that more learning about engaging families is needed.

District leaders also acknowledged an increased focus on and understanding of early childhood as a priority for schools' attention, and the role of birth – 8 learning and development in closing opportunity gaps across the metropolitan area.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools shifted efforts to providing basic resources for families and building capacity to communicate with families. Principals and district leaders quickly identified gaps in families' opportunities to access these resources and communication. In terms of instruction, leaders were identifying how to reach students and how to support teachers in their efforts to implement virtual learning and engagement technologies.

The Early Education Transitions study was concluded in this academic year. A key

engagement in School as Hub is supporting school staff in their efforts to identify and prioritize quality transitions to ensure that families and children experience continuity in their engagement with schools. While all data were collected before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the study revealed that transition practices in schools focused primarily on entering Kindergarten, and less formally addressed years before PreK and first through third grade. Goals for transition experiences also varied across schools and districts. Ongoing efforts will identify goals and strategies to support schools' efforts at engaging families in seamless transitions, across the continuum from birth to Grade 3.

The evaluation will continue to examine the processes associated with enacting systems change using the School as Hub Birth – 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 2020-21 program and evaluation year, with the understanding that efforts may need to shift in response to schools' responses to the pandemic. Due to the pandemic, schools shifted their focus and intensity of their work with families, putting efforts into addressing food insecurity, technology for learning, and family stress. Plans are in place to continue engaging in and evaluating home visiting virtually, acknowledging that our curriculum and evaluation tools are not designed for virtual implementation.

By continuing to engage in home visiting and personal visits, using observational data, home visiting and family facilitation school staff, and building school leadership support for family engagement, schools can enhance their connections with children from birth and with 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. Buffett Institute staff will support schools' efforts to build capacity for use of technological-mediated learning in response to the pandemic and beyond. Using multi-pronged approaches including technological tools for virtual family engagement (e.g., home visiting, personal visits, family group activities), schools will continue to experience enhanced relationships with all families.

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 plan of the Ralston Public Schools is highlighted below.

Supporting Language Development and Instructional Practices: Ralston Public Schools

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.

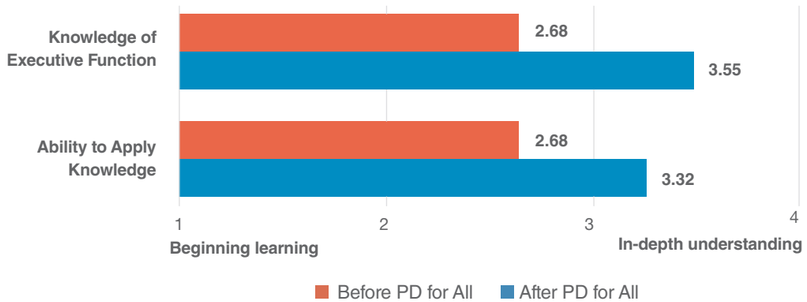
FINDINGS FOR TEACHERS

Ralston's goals for educators focused on supporting children's transitions through the school day, promotion of social and emotional development through relationships, and awareness of how language influences children's learning. Evaluation efforts focused on how professional development is impacting instructional practices and children's 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. Establishing consistent transitions for children was a primary goal of the project. Teachers reviewed classroom expectations with children and by the end of the year, all teachers used visual cues to further support children's understanding of these classroom expectations and routines. By the end of the school year, students responded to classroom transitions positively with little teacher guidance. Promoting positive relationships was a goal of all teachers. Teachers were frequently observed talking with children on their level, speaking calmly to students, and demonstrating positive non-verbal behaviors to facilitate relationships with children. Teachers identified supporting language development as key to their students' academic success. Adults in the classroom were frequently observed introducing vocabulary words and referring to vocabulary they had previously introduced. Seasoned teachers were observed to use these strategies more often than novice teachers. Teachers indicated they worked to use language to support all academic areas: "I have worked to make sure I use plenty of math-talk. This is a place I have grown."

A total of 26 Ralston staff attended one of the two PD for All institutes and completed the pre/post survey. The majority (62%) of those attending were PreK teachers. The remaining teachers worked with either infants and toddlers (26%) or K – 3 students (12%). Respondents rated their knowledge of teaching skills and practices, related to the institute topics on a pre/post survey utilizing a scale from 1 (starting learning) to 4 (in-depth knowledge). Survey items were customized to the specific key learnings for each institute, but both surveys included a self-assessment of general knowledge related to executive function strength and a measure of the participant's ability to apply that information to their work with children. A statistical analysis was conducted to determine if changes in participant understanding of executive function and their ability to apply the concepts to their work were significant. Results indicate that the increases were significant:

- Knowledge of executive function: pre (*M*=2.68, *SD*=.894) to post (*M*=3.55, *SD*=.510); t(21)=-4.557, p<.001, d=0.972, two-tailed test.
- Ability to apply knowledge: pre (*M*=2.68, *SD*=1.041) to post (*M*=3.32 *SD*=.716); t(21)=-3.309, p=.003, d=0.705, two-tailed test. The effect size was large, indicating meaningful change.

FIGURE 19. | RALSTON PARTICIPANT KNOWLEDGE AND APPLICATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

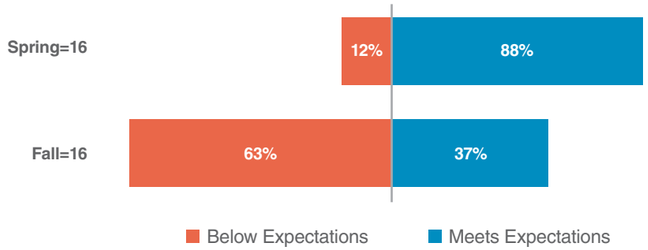


FINDINGS FOR STUDENTS

Students' learning outcomes were assessed using Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD (Burts et al., 2016). TS 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. The Nebraska Department of Education requires that this assessment be completed each fall and spring. Data from the TS Strategies GOLD language domain was used to evaluate the children outcomes as part of this project. These outcomes were judged by the leadership team to be aligned with the targeted areas

for professional development and were selected as the child outcomes that would be measured in the assessment and evaluation plan. Due to COVID-19, the assessments for children, except those on an IFSP or IEP, were not required to be completed in the spring. Fall and spring comparisons were only available for children with an IEP. Child outcomes for this assessment are reported based on three categories, "below expectations," "meets expectations," and "exceeds expectations." A total of 16 children who were on an IEP had fall and spring data. Due to COVID-19, no spring data was collected on the other children, as this requirement was waived by NDE. As a result, the following descriptive data needs to be interpreted in light of this specialized population of children. These results suggest that by the spring checkpoint, the majority of the children on an IEP were "meeting expectations" in the area of language development. Over half of the children moved from the category of "not meeting expectations" to "meeting expectations."

FIGURE 20. | PREK — GRADE 3 MINNESOTA EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SCALE RESULTS: FALL 2019



NEXT STEPS

During 2020-21, the external coach will consult with the Ralston lead teacher to build her coaching and technical assistance capacity with the plan for her to assume this coaching role in the following school year. 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.

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 2019-20 theme, Executive Function and Self-Regulation, focused on research-based approaches to build and enhance children's executive functioning. The series was planned to include three full-day institutes in English and two Spanish-language institutes. The content of the sessions offered in Spanish aligned with the content presented in the previous sessions in English. After the introductory institute in November, the remaining institutes included additional focus areas: "Fostering Positive Relationships" and "Equity and Racial and Cultural Awareness." The January institute was offered twice, once during the week and then the following Saturday to accommodate educators and other professionals who could not attend during a work day.

The institute format included six hours of learning, starting with an hour-long keynote address, followed by a choice of three to four 1.5-hour breakout sessions, which were offered in the morning and repeated in the afternoon. A working lunch created time for participants to engage with one another, reflect on targeted questions, and share learnings from the day. The institute concluded with closing remarks from the keynote speaker.

This year, the PD for All schedule was disrupted. Inclement weather in January resulted in the cancellation of the Saturday institute. The remaining three institutes planned for March, April, and June were canceled due to the arrival of COVID-19 in mid-March. With school closings and statewide directives to limit gatherings, the organizers pivoted to offer a virtual model for PD for All. Over the summer, they presented three live webinars of an hour to 1.5 hours in length. In each webinar, a panel of early childhood experts focused on how to support children's social-emotional development during challenging times. Additional topics of discussion included connecting with families, supporting peer-to-peer relationships, and promoting equity and anti-racism in early childhood work.

More than 395 professionals registered for the two in-person PD for All institutes; attendance data was not available. However, 297 professionals attended the three summer webinars. Participant survey results are analyzed in the following sections for in-person and virtual PD for All offerings. Different survey instruments were used across the sessions, so results are reported separately.

PD FOR ALL IN-PERSON INSTITUTES

Methods

Following the concluding remarks, participants received a link via email to an online pre/post evaluation survey. Most (88.5%) respondents completed the survey while still at the PD for All event. The survey included ratings for the keynote address and the breakout sessions. Participants rated their pre/post understanding of key learnings, their ability to apply the key learnings to their work with students, and their satisfaction with the presentations. Across the two institutes, 225 participants responded to the survey. Survey participation rates were not calculated because exact attendance numbers were not available.

Findings

Work Setting

Most survey respondents worked in school-based programs (*n*=154, 67.5%), including elementary schools, PreK within elementary schools, after school programs and Head Start or Educare within elementary schools. A subset of respondents (*n*=38, 16.7%) were from community-based programs, including child care centers and preschools (not in elementary schools), and the Omaha Learning Community Centers. Participants from four different Nebraska universities (*n*=20, 8.8%) also responded.

Age Group Served

Survey respondents most commonly worked with multiple age groups (*n*=89, 39%). About a third (*n*=74, 31.6%) worked primarily with preschool-age children, 14.5% worked with infants and toddlers (*n*=33), 9.2% worked with children in Kindergarten through Grade 3 (*n*=21), and a few worked directly with families (*n*=11, 4.8%).

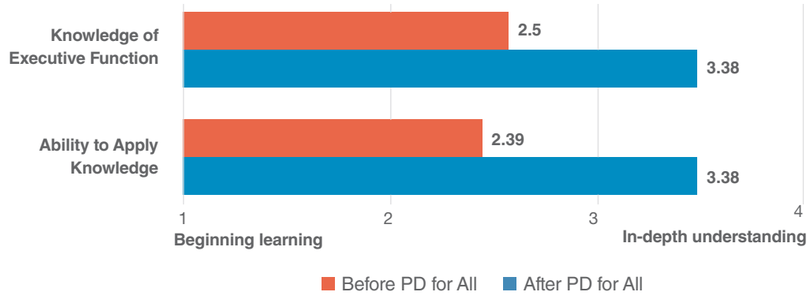
Job Title

The majority of respondents identified themselves as teachers (*n*=75, 32.9%). Other roles included home visitor or family facilitator (*n*=44, 19.2%), director (*n*=14, 6.1%), assistant teacher/paraeducator (*n*=7, 3.1%), and principal/assistant principal (*n*=2, .96%). Many respondents identified as "other" (*n*=86, 37.7%), and included speech language pathologists, educational coaches and consultants, early childhood coordinators and developers, individuals working with special education populations, and higher education professionals.

Do attendees report increased knowledge of executive function and how to support children in developing executive function skills?

Respondents rated their knowledge of teaching skills and practices, related to the institute topics on a pre/post survey utilizing a scale from 1 (starting learning) to 4 (in-depth knowledge). Survey items were customized to the specific key learnings for each institute, but both surveys included a self-assessment of general knowledge related to executive function and a measure of the participant's ability to apply that information to their work with children. The following graph shows the average ratings before attending the institute and after for these two areas.

FIGURE 21. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL: RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTION, *N*=221



Survey results show that 14% of respondents (*n*=32) indicated they had "in-depth" knowledge about executive function prior to attending the PD for All sessions. At post, 50% (*n*=110) of participants rated their understanding at that level. In the area of applying their understanding of executive function to their work with children and families, only 11% (*n*=25) of respondents indicated in-depth knowledge at pre. After attending the institute, 47% (*n*=103) selected this response. A statistical analysis was conducted to determine if changes in participant understanding of executive function and their ability to apply the concepts to their work were significant. Respondents reported large and significant increases for:

- Knowledge of executive function: pre (*M*=2.50, *SD*=.840) to post (*M*=3.38 *SD*=.689); t(220)=-19.36, p<.001, d=1.29, two-tailed test.
- Ability to apply knowledge: pre (*M*=2.39, *SD*=.839) to post (*M*=3.38 *SD*=.647); t(220)=-19.46, p<.001, d=1.31, two-tailed test.

Did the attendees find the breakout sessions useful?

Respondents rated the effectiveness of the breakout sessions. Sample topics included the connection between executive function and challenging behaviors in preschool-age children, children's executive functioning in natural outdoor settings vs. indoors, and engaging students and parents in executive function activities.

- 85% of respondents thought the sessions had a good balance between theory and practical information they can use.
- 87% thought the sessions helped them understand new information and ideas.
- 88% plan to use what they learned in the sessions.

PD FOR ALL WEBINARS

Methods

After each webinar, participants received a link via email to an online evaluation survey.

Across the three webinars, 143 participants responded to the survey, which is a completion rate of 48%.

Findings

Where Participants Work

The webinar format allows for much broader geographic participation compared to the in-person institute. The majority of webinar attendees (*n*=110, 76.9%) work in Douglas or Sarpy County. The remaining participants come from many counties across Nebraska and as far away as Washington state.

Work Setting

About a third of the survey respondents worked in school-based programs (*n*=51, 35.7%), including elementary schools, PreK within elementary schools, Head Start, Educare, and after school programs. A third worked in community-based programs (*n*=51, 35.7%). The rest (*n*=41, 28.8%) were from a variety of work settings including higher education, home visiting programs, and state agencies.

Age Group Served

Survey respondents most commonly worked with multiple age groups (*n*=60, 41.8%). About a fifth (*n*=32, 22.2%) worked primarily with infants and toddlers, 16.1% worked with PreK (*n*=23), 12.4% worked directly with families (*n*=18), and a few worked with school-age children in Kindergarten through third grade (*n*=11, 7.5%).

Job Title

Some respondents identified themselves as teachers (*n*=19, 13.3%). Other roles included home visitor or family facilitator (*n*=22, 15.4%), director/administrator (*n*=24, 16.8%), assistant teacher/paraeducator (*n*=3, 2.1%), instructional/early childhood coach (*n*=8, 5.6%) and special education/early intervention teacher (*n*=4, 2.5%). Many respondents identified as "other" (*n*=63, 44.1%), and included curriculum coordinators, program evaluators, speech language pathologists, early childhood coordinators, and higher education professionals.

Did participants find the webinars informative and useful to their work?

The participant feedback surveys included three common questions about learning new ways to support children's social-emotional development and if they found the information to be useful. Results across 143 participants indicate high levels of satisfaction with what they learned from the webinars and the relevance of the learning to their work.

- 92% of respondents reported that they learned new ways to support children's social-emotional learning.

- 94% reported that the webinars helped them understand new information and ideas.
- 94% plan to use what they learned in the webinars.

Two of the webinar surveys included two additional common questions. Results are reported below.

- 95% of respondents (*n*=94) reported that the webinars gave them new ways to foster connections and relationships with families.
- 93% of respondents (*n*=77) indicated that they learned new ways to promote equity and anti-racism in their work.

CONCLUSIONS

Survey responses for in-person learning and online webinars indicate high levels of satisfaction, with 88% to 94% of respondents reporting that they plan to use what they learned at PD for All. Participants at the in-person institutes indicated their knowledge and understanding of executive function increased significantly. Webinar participants had high levels of satisfaction with the offerings. Strong majorities found the information useful and learned new ways to support children's social-emotional development.

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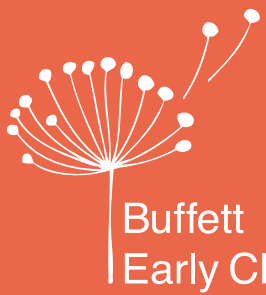

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STUDENT DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Demographics

This section of the report provides general enrollment information, as well as data associated with student eligibility for free or reduced lunch (FRL) and ELL (English Language Learner) services for the 2019-2020 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

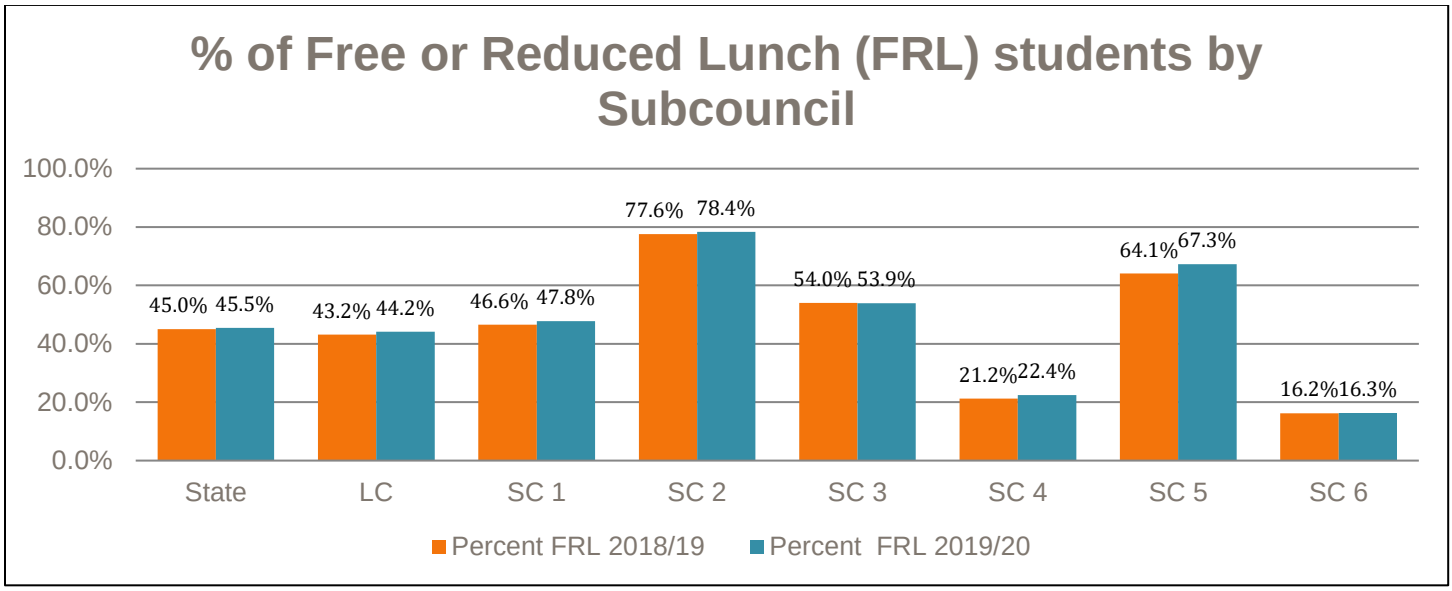
Nebraska Statute establishes six Achievement Subcouncils within the two-county area of the Learning Community. The population is divided among the Subcouncils as equally as feasible.

Table III.1: 2019-2020 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

2019/20	SC	ENROLLMENT	NUMBER FRL	PERCENT FRL	NUMBER ELL	PERCENT ELL
K-6	1	9,051	3,982	44.0%	714	7.9%
7-12	1	7,741	4,045	52.3%	434	5.6%
Subcouncil Total	**1**	**16,792**	**8,027**	**47.8%**	**1,148**	**6.8%**
K-6	2	8,884	7,719	86.9%	2,124	23.9%
7-12	2	7,951	5,478	68.9%	742	9.3%
Subcouncil Total	**2**	**16,835**	**13,197**	**78.4%**	**2,866**	**17.0%**
K-6	3	9,203	5,040	54.8%	1,410	15.3%
7-12	3	6,223	3,279	52.7%	424	6.8%
Subcouncil Total	**3**	**15,426**	**8,319**	**53.9%**	**1,834**	**11.9%**
K-6	4	12,213	2,814	23.0%	485	4.0%
7-12	4	11,028	2,391	21.7%	111	1.0%
Subcouncil Total	**4**	**23,241**	**5,205**	**22.4%**	**596**	**2.6%**
K-6	5	12,245	8,551	69.8%	3,567	29.1%
7-12	5	10,935	7,040	64.4%	1,099	10.1%
Subcouncil Total	**5**	**23,180**	**15,591**	**67.3%**	**4,666**	**20.1%**
K-6	6	16,065	2,647	16.5%	275	1.7%
7-12	6	13,265	2,134	16.1%	68	0.5%
Subcouncil Total	**6**	**29,330**	**4,781**	**16.3%**	**343**	**1.2%**
K-6	All LC	67,661	30,753	45.5%	8,575	12.7%
7-12	All LC	57,143	24,367	42.6%	2,878	5.0%
Learning Comm. Total	**All LC**	**124,804**	**55,120**	**44.2%**	**11,453**	**9.2%**

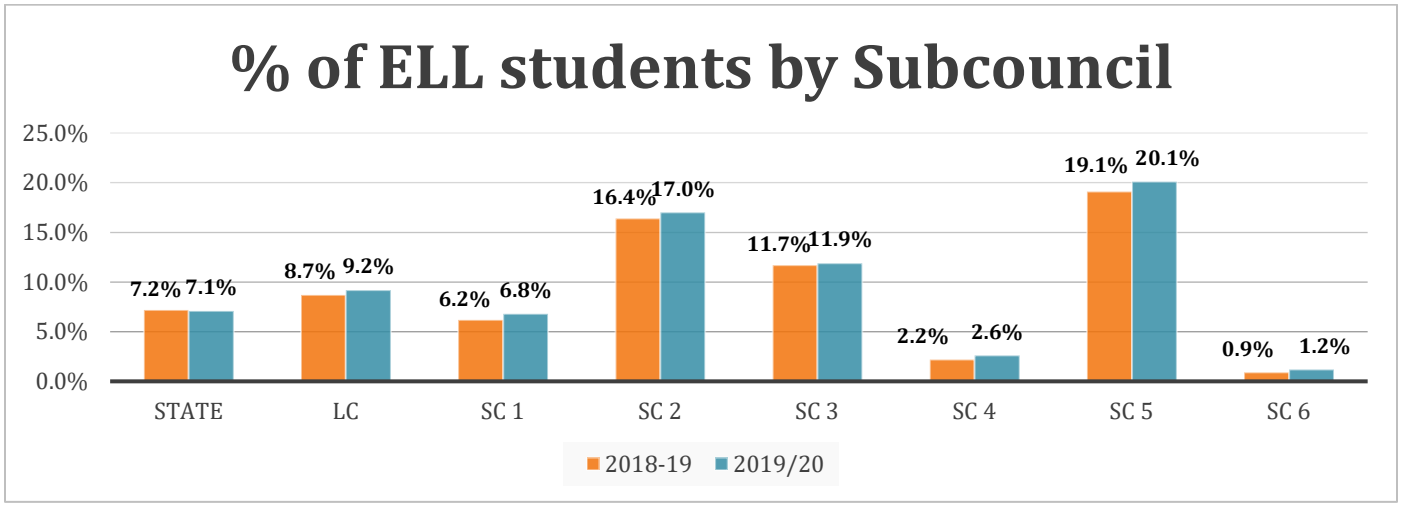
The growth within the Learning Community has been consistent over the last several years, with 1.07% growth year on year and 2.24% over 2 years. In fact, total enrollment has increased 6.77% over the past five years.

Figure III.1: 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 Percentage of FRL Students by Subcouncil



- The percentage of FRL students increased slightly in all Subcouncils except Subcouncil 3 which saw a slight decrease.

Figure III.2: 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 ELL by Subcouncil

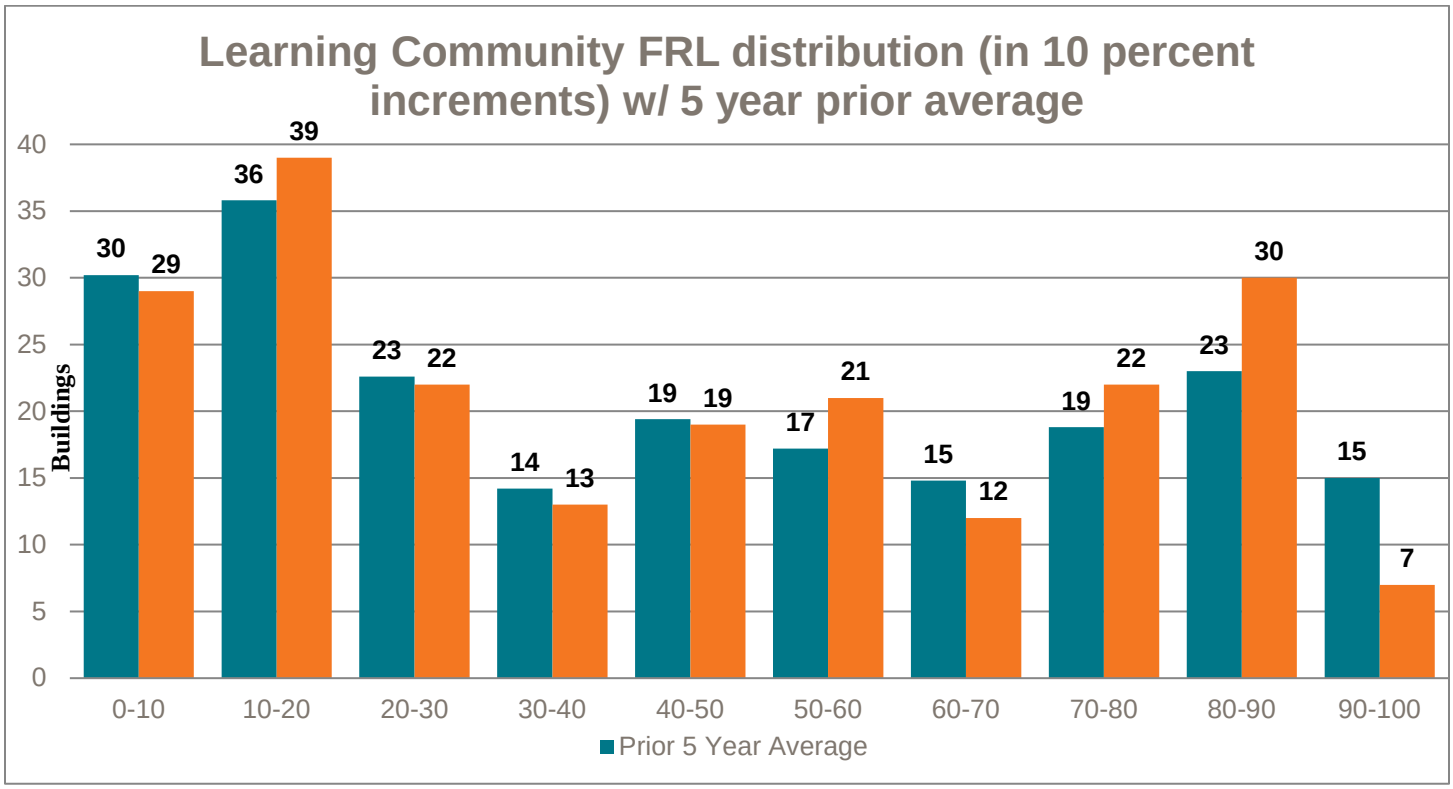


- The percentage of ELL students to total student continues to increase.

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 orange bar shows the number in the 2019-2020 school year.

Figure III.3: Number of Learning Community Schools in FRL Intervals of 10% Comparing 2019-2020 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: 2019-2020 Percentage of Nebraska Schools in FRL Intervals of 10% (excluding Learning Community)

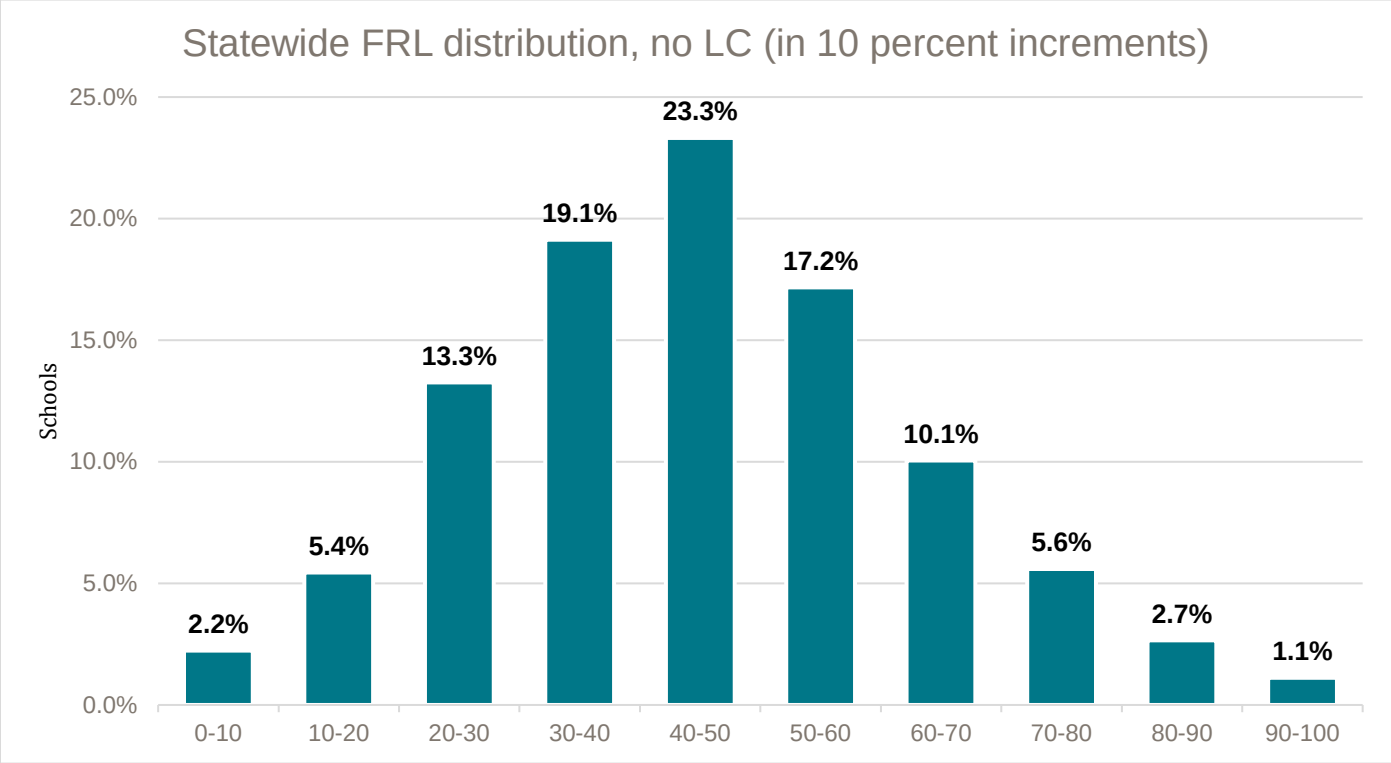
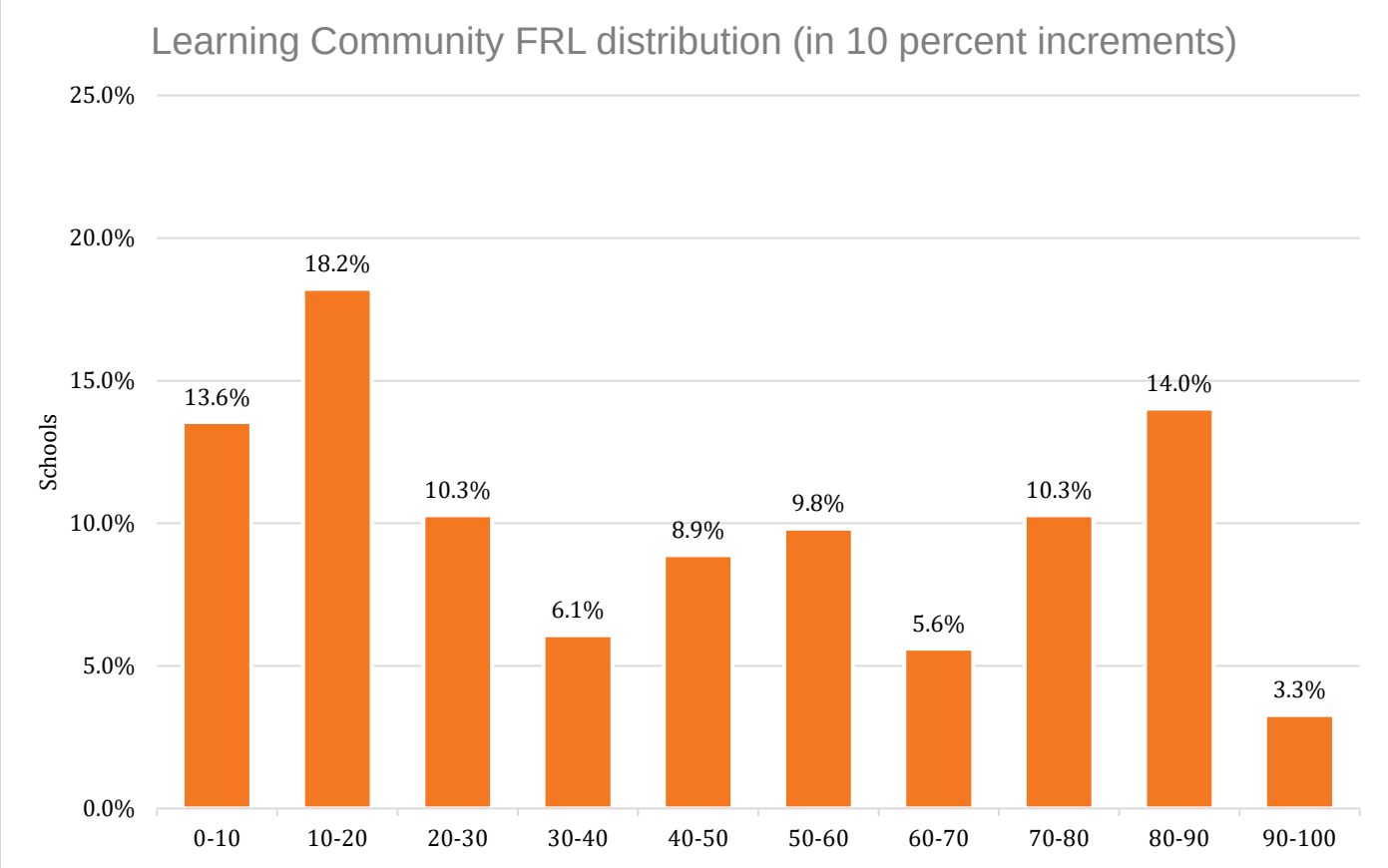


Figure III.4 illustrates that most Nebraska schools fall in the middle ranges of free and reduced lunch concentrations, and few schools fall in the very low and very high ranges when comparing FRL population to all students.

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: 2019-2020 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. Many 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 2019-2020 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%
2019-2020	1,327	37.37%	39.01%

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
2019-2020	124,804	1,327