

NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING NOTIFICATION AND AGENDA

- Meeting Date:** Friday, December 5, 2025 9:15 AM
- Meeting Title:** State Board of Education Meeting Notification and Agenda
- Location:** NDE Office Building
Board Room
500 South 84th Street
Lincoln, NE 68510
- Agenda:** Except for emergency items added at the time of the meeting, the agenda will not be changed less than 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting and any changes will be immediately posted on the website. The Board will attempt to adhere to the sequence of the published agenda, but reserves the right to adjust the order of items if necessary and may elect to take action on any of the items listed.
- Interpreter:** If you need interpreter services or other reasonable accommodations, please contact the Nebraska Department of Education at (402) 471-5059 five (5) days prior to the meeting to coordinate arrangements.
- Website:** An electronic version of the agenda and support materials are available on the State Board of Education's Agenda page: www.education.ne.gov/stateboard/state-board-agendas/
- Lunch:** On Friday, December 5, 2025, the State Board of Education may also take a recess for lunch. The Board may resume work on the agenda at approximately 1:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER (The Board may take a recess)
President Tegtmeier
 - 1.1. Roll Call
President Tegtmeier
 - 1.2. Pledge Of Allegiance
President Tegtmeier
 - 1.3. Announcement Of The Placement Of The Open Meetings Act Information
President Tegtmeier
2. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS
President Tegtmeier
3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT
Commissioner Maher

3.1. Agenda Overview And Consent Agenda Process
Commissioner Maher

3.1.A. Commissioner's Recommendations And Items To Be Removed From
Consent Agenda
Commissioner Maher

3.2. Nebraska Teacher Of The Year Final Report
Lindsey Wilson, 2025 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, Bennington Middle School,
Bennington

3.3. Nebraska Leads Literacy Initiative (PE.122025.001)
Deputy Commissioner Stavem

3.4. Tax Equity And Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) Information
(BF.122025.006)
Commissioner Maher

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
President Tegtmeier

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
President Tegtmeier

5.1. Public Comment

5.2. Written Public Comment (None Submitted)

6. CONSENT AGENDA
President Tegtmeier

6.1. Board Member Out-of-State Travel Approval

6.2. Committee Appointments

6.2.A. Appoint Recommended Individual To Fill A Vacancy On The Nebraska
Assistive Technology Partnership Advisory Council (EX.082025.002)
Tobias Orr and Lindy Foley

6.3. Contract Approvals

6.3.A. Contract To Complete Required Compliance Reviews (BF.122025.003)
Zainab Rida

6.3.B. Contract For ADVISER Support (BF.122025.004)
Jill Aurand

6.3.C. Contract For Statewide Assessment (BF.122025.005)
Trudy Clark and Cassie Seiboldt

6.4. Grant Approvals

6.5. Lease Approvals

6.6. Minutes Of The Previous State Board Of Education Meeting

6.7. Miscellaneous Approvals

6.7.A. Approve School Districts' Requests For Exclusions To The Budget
Limitation In Accordance With The Provisions Of The Tax Equity & Educational
Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) (BF.082025.005)
Bryce Wilson

6.7.B. Approve The Interagency Agreement With The Nebraska Department Of
Health And Human Services (DHHS), Division Of Developmental Disabilities
(BF.122025.007)
Tobias Orr and Lindy Foley

6.7.C. Adopt Mentor Teacher Program Guidelines (RR.032025.004)
Shirley Vargas

7. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

President Tegtmeier

7.1. Executive Committee

President Tegtmeier

7.1.A. Action Item: Strategic Plan (EX.022025.003)

7.1.B. Action Item: Adopt Board Bylaw And Policy Revisions (EX.062025.003)

7.1.C. Action Item: Improvement Grant (EX.122025.002)

7.2. Budget And Finance Committee

Kristin Christensen

7.2.A. Monthly Board Travel Expense Reports

7.2.B. Action Item: Contract For The High-Quality IEP Development And
Implementation Pilot Project (BF.082025.013)

7.2.C. Action Item: Contract For A Veterans Education Management System
Application And Database (BF.102025.001)

7.2.D. Action Item: Contract For 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Statewide Evaluation (BF.102025.003)

7.3. Planning And Evaluation Committee
Lisa Schonhoff

7.3.A. Action Item: Contract For 2026-2027 Standard College Admission Test (PE.062025.009)

7.3.B. Action Item: Adopt The Assessment And Reporting Plan And Assessment Technical Report For 2025-2026 (PE.092025.002)

7.3.C. Discussion Item: Community Achievement Plan (CAP) Of The Learning Community Of Douglas And Sarpy Counties (PE.082025.003)

7.4. Rules And Regulations Committee
Maggie Douglas

7.4.A. Report On Rules

7.4.B. Action Item: Proposed Revision Of Rule 11 (92 NAC 11) Regulations For The Approval Of Prekindergarten Programs Established By School Boards Or Educational Service Units And For Issuance Of Early Childhood Education Grants (RR.022025.002)

7.4.C. Action Item: Proposed Revision Of Rule 20 (92 NAC 20) Regulations For The Approval Of Educator Preparation Programs (RR.032025.005)

7.4.D. Action Item: Proposed Revision Of Rule 47 (92 NAC 47) Regulations For Career Academy Programs Established By School Districts (RR.082025.001)

7.4.E. Action Item: Proposed Revision Of Rule 89 (92 NAC 89) Regulations And Procedures To Incentivize Distance Education (RR.092025.001)

8. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS
President Tegtmeier

9. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORTS
President Tegtmeier

9.1. Contracts Approved By Commissioner

9.2. Grants Approved By Commissioner

10. GOOD OF THE ORDER

This section of the agenda is intended for Board members to offer informal observations of the work of the State Board. Board members may make brief announcements about attendance at future events for the purpose of informing other Board members. No

business or motions, or suggested actions of the Board may be offered at this point in the agenda; nor should Board members engage in substantive discussion about other agenda items or introduce new agenda items.

President Tegtmeier

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Tegtmeier

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Friday, January 9, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Lincoln, Nebraska. As needed, a work session will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026 in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The agenda contains a list of subjects known at the time of its distribution on November 26, 2025. A copy of the agenda reflecting any changes will be available for public inspection during the normal business hours in the Office of the Commissioner of Education and on the State Board of Education's Agenda page: www.education.ne.gov/stateboard/state-board-agendas/. *Except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda will not be changed later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting.*



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 20, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Dr. Jane Stavem
Deputy Commissioner

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Nebraska Leads Literacy Initiative

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Other

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Nebraska Leads Literacy Initiative is a comprehensive professional learning opportunity to strengthen literacy outcomes statewide. This initiative recognizes improvement in literacy is most powerful when it is intentionally led at every level—by superintendents who set direction and ensure coherence, district leaders who operationalize systems and supports, and school-based leaders who influence daily instructional practice.

In partnership with Bailey Education Group, leaders engaged in the initiative can expect learning which emphasizes:

- **Establishing and implementing a shared literacy vision**, grounded in evidence-based instructional practices.
- **Building and sustaining guiding coalitions** that support systemwide implementation.
- **Coordinating instructional coherence**, including aligning literacy plans, walkthrough expectations, and MTSS structures.
- **Strengthening leaders' instructional expertise**, particularly in the Science of Reading, literacy observation and coaching, systems design, resource alignment, and ongoing professional learning.

The initiative includes differentiated learning pathways for superintendents, district leaders, and school leaders, each following a sequenced progression of in-person sessions, virtual implementation meetings, and regional team collaboration, beginning in early spring with a cohort of superintendents. Subsequently, district staff and school leaders, each engage in a year-long cohort experience culminating in a *graduation* to celebrate and affirm their learning.

To extend this work beyond schools, the NDE will also engage in regional literacy forums across the state – a series of community-based engagements designed to bring families, local partners, and educators together around our shared goal of supporting reading success.

Collectively, this coordinated, multi-year effort aims to ensure that every Nebraska leader is equipped to champion literacy improvement, align systems across levels, and ultimately create stronger, more coherent literacy experiences for students statewide.

Nebraska Leads Literacy will also introduce **Nebraska Leads Literacy Districts of Distinction**, an opportunity to highlight districts demonstrating strong leadership and measurable commitment to literacy improvement. Districts earn this designation when:

- The superintendent, district leaders, and principals complete all components of the Nebraska Leads Literacy training, and
- At least one school in the district meets the criteria to become an NDE Literacy Spotlight School.

This recognition is designed to honor exemplary leadership coherence and to elevate models of effective literacy systems across the state.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST:

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: (*--e.g., Federal, State*)
- New or Renewal:
- If renewal, date of first approval:

(--Following the funding source, include a statement that indicates if/ how the activity is part of an annual budget or allocation, or, approved as an activity for a grant. For example, "The funds for this contract are budgeted in the Office's annual allocation of state funds." Another example, "The funds for this activity are included in the grant award for this program.")

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement:
- Rationale for method of procurement:
- Rationale for contractor selection:

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process:

**Updated 08.15.2023*

Out-State Travel Authorization Reports - December

<u>Name</u>	<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Trip Request (i.e. 1st, 2nd, Other)</u>
Kristin Christensen	(NONE)			
Lisa Schonhoff	(NONE)			
Sherry Jones	(NONE)			
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	(NONE)			

Out-State Travel Authorization Reports - December

<u>Name</u>	<u>Event Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Trip Request (i.e. 1st, 2nd, Other)</u>
Maggie Douglas	(NONE)			
Liz Renner	(NONE)			
Kirk Penner	(NONE)			
Deborah Neary	(NONE)			



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Tobias J. Orr, Director, Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)
Lindy Foley, Office Administrator, Nebraska VR

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to appoint the recommended individual to fill a vacancy on the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership Advisory Council

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Other

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The purpose of the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership Advisory Council is to provide guidance for the development and expansion of assistive technology devices and services, guidance to state agencies and local planning and administrative entities providing assistive technology devices and services. This Advisory Council was established pursuant to the terms of the federal grant provided under the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act and requires the Advisory Council to be made up of a majority (51%) of individuals with disabilities that use assistive technology or the family members or guardians of individuals that use assistive technology.

The Board of Education was notified at the August 2025 State Board meeting of the vacancies on the ATP Advisory Council and the consistent need for recruitment.

Below is the recommended new member:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representation</u>
Caroline Helget	Individual that uses, or is a family member or guardian of someone that uses assistive technology.

Caroline Helget has experience with assistive technology. She has 14 years of experience as a former ATP staff member. Her knowledge of ATP services will be an asset to the ATP Advisory Council. Caroline is a former Council member whose previous term ended in 2022.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: N/A

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS: N/A

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT: N/A

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS: N/A

**Updated 08.15.2023*



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 20, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Zainab Rida, Ph.D., R.D., Administrator, Office of Coordinated Student Support Services
Kayte Partch, M.S., R.D., Assistant Administrator, Office of Coordinated Student Support Services

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Grant the Commissioner the authority to amend the contract with Hayes & Associates for compliance reviews of the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Programs.

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Contract

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The USDA requires for-profit organizations receiving more than \$35,000 annually from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) receive regular oversight and monitoring through the compliance review/audit process. Full-time staffing limitations governed by the Legislature, along with other staff responsibilities, require the support of a contract company to ensure thorough oversight is completed within the required timelines governed by the USDA regulations. Therefore, the NDE Nutrition Services would like to continue its contractual agreement with Hayes and Associates to complete a portion of the Compliance Reviews in 2026.

Hayes and Associates was selected using formal procurement through a Request for Proposal process. The contract for SY2025-26 is the second of four possible renewals. Their work will begin in January 2026 and will conclude in September 2026.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$63,418

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Funding Source: Federal CACFP Audit Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal (second of up to four renewals)
- If renewal, date of first approval: December 2024

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Method of procurement: NA
- Rationale for method of procurement: NA
- Rationale for contractor selection: NA

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: NA



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 12, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Jill Aurand, Data Management & Application Development Administrator

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize Commissioner to renew a contract for ADVISER support

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Contract

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ADVISER is the data system utilized by NDE for the collection of student-level information from all public and state-operated districts in the state. The backbone of the system is based on the Ed-Fi Technologies, including the Operational Data Store (ODS) and Application Programming Interface (API). The Ed-Fi Alliance licenses these technologies to education entities nationwide at no cost and provides limited technical support for their implementation.

The purpose of this contract is to provide advanced technical assistance to NDE staff to ensure the continued operation of the ADVISER data system and other related systems or Nebraska schools. The qualified vendor will provide specialized support for issues and tasks that require additional expertise beyond normal operations. In addition to ongoing support, the contract also includes the ability to implement deliverable-based projects that facilitate improvement and implementation activities for ADVISER or related systems, which may be identified as criteria and requirements evolve.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$217,300

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: General Funds, SLDS Funds, Lottery Funds
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: December 1, 2023

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: Competitive Negotiation
- Rationale for method of procurement: This work was performed under a previous contract with a different vendor for the last 5 years. NDE Procurement procedures as well as changes to the ADVISER environment at NDE necessitated the issuance of a new Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP was publicly posted on the websites of the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services and the Nebraska Department of Education. The proposals were reviewed and scored by a team of 5. This contract does not create an employee/employer relationship.
- Rationale for contractor selection: The EdWise Group, LLC, proposal earned the highest overall score from the evaluation committee members. The EdWise Group proposal demonstrated experience in the work described within the RFP including providing technical support for the Ed-Fi suite of technologies currently implemented statewide. The expectations for this support level are to ensure continuity of systems operation and address high-level technical bugs, security evaluations, and other supports deemed necessary by the NDE. The contractor is familiar with the Ed-Fi implementation in Nebraska as well as in other states. Given EdWise Group received a high score and has demonstrated previous quality performance, they were selected for this contract.

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: N/A



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Dr. Trudy K Clark, Director of Statewide Assessment and Cassie Seiboldt, Assistant Director of Statewide Assessment

This item was originally approved in December, 2024 This is an amended request adding a vendor.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to enter into contracts using US Department of Education Competitive Grants for Statewide Assessment (CGSA) funds to carry out grant activities.

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Action

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

CGSA is a discretionary grant program of the US Department of Education whose purpose is to enhance the quality of assessment instruments and assessment systems used by States for measuring the academic achievement of elementary and secondary schools students. The program is authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Performance period: October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2028

- At the October 4, 2024 state board meeting, the board accepted the Competitive Grants for State Assessments award, Enhancing the Instructional Value of Statewide Assessments: Coherence and Alignment for Educators and Families (CAEF) Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- CAEF is designed to improve the instructional utility of Nebraska's statewide assessment system by enhancing the accessibility and usability of assessment data for educators and families. It includes developing user-friendly score reporting templates, refining assessment items, and building capacity through professional learning opportunities. The project will involve key stakeholders—such as educators, families, and students—in co-designing score reports and communication tools that facilitate actionable insights from assessment data. The project will also engage districts statewide in pilot activities, providing resources and training to ensure the assessment system supports improved teaching and learning.
- The CAEF project primarily serves educators, families, and students in Nebraska's K-12 public school system, particularly those in grades 3-8. It aims to provide teachers with enhanced tools to use assessment data effectively to inform instruction, while also empowering families to better

understand their children's assessment results and support learning at home. Additionally, the project supports school districts involved in the pilot phases, as well as the broader statewide education community, by improving the overall usability of the through-year assessment system.

- To complete the work of the grant the Nebraska Department of Education will contract with an organization that will engage with the stakeholders, and others, in an equitable design process. Education First, a national, mission-driven strategy and policy organization with expertise in education improvement, specifically in assessment design, was one of the first national organizations to research through-year assessment designs in the 13 states that launched this test design in response to the Every Student Succeeds Act's support for innovative statewide test design. When Nebraska decided to apply for a CGSA grant based on the feedback from the Request for Information regarding usability of score reports, Nebraska anticipated building the reports and items for a through-year design. Education First has specific expertise in this area, which is why Education First was written into the grant as the facilitator.
- To complete the work of the grant the Nebraska Department of Education will contract with an organization to evaluate the processes employed to implement the project strategies and activities, as well as the outcomes of this work to assess the progress toward the project's goals. Marzano Research is a national organization that supports educators and system leaders through education research and consulting with a collaborative, small-business approach. They conducted the evaluation of the feedback we collected during the Request for Information cycle, from which they wrote the Request for Proposal with input from the Technical Advisory Committee. Because of their expertise in evaluation of systems, Marzano Research was written into the grant as the grant evaluator.
- Members of the assessment team applied to the U.S. Department of Education's Competitive Grants for Statewide Assessment, Enhancing the Instructional Value of Statewide Assessments: Coherence and Alignment for Educators and Families (CAEF) Grant in collaboration with the vendors who will add capacity to the NDE to perform the work. The U.S. Department of Education reviewed the grant and selected it to be funded.
- To complete the work of the grant and fulfill the coordination requirements of the Coherence and Alignment for Educators and Families (CAEF) Grant, the Nebraska Department of Education sought to contract with an organization that could provide comprehensive project management services.
- These services include coordination across multiple partner organizations, development of project management materials, monitoring of timelines and deliverables, documentation of project processes, and support for federal reporting obligations. This coordination is essential to ensure that work conducted by NWEA, Education First, Marzano Research, and NDE progresses in a consistent, organized, and timely manner.
- To procure these services, the Nebraska Department of Education released a competitive Request for Proposal titled NDERFP250813 Comprehensive Project Coordination Services for the CAEF Initiative. Proposals were reviewed by an evaluation committee based on organizational qualifications, relevant experience, understanding of project requirements, proposed approach, personnel expertise, and cost.

- Following the evaluation of all proposals, the committee recommended edCount, LLC for selection. edCount's proposal aligned closely with the requirements of the solicitation and demonstrated the organizational capacity, relevant experience, and technical expertise needed to support the successful implementation of CAEF activities throughout the grant period. The proposal reflected substantial national experience with CGSA-funded work, strong familiarity with Nebraska's statewide assessment system, and a well-developed coordination plan. edCount has previously partnered with the Nebraska Department of Education on statewide assessment initiatives and has a demonstrated history of effectively supporting states in managing complex, multi-vendor projects.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: Education First - \$340,000
Marzano Research - \$400,000
edCount, LLC - \$324,458.95

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal CGSA Grant
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: Request for Proposal
- Rationale for method of procurement: Required due to the cost of services needed
- Rationale for contractor selection: edCount, LLC submitted the highest-scoring proposal, demonstrating the greatest capacity to meet the coordination needs of the CAEF initiative.

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: N/A
- New or Renewal: N/A
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

State Board of Education Work Session and Business Meeting.

Thursday-Friday October 2-3, 2025

Fremont Public Schools District Office, Board Room, 130 E 9th Street, Fremont, NE 68025

[Link to Agenda and Attachments](#)

[Link to Video of Meeting](#) October 3, 2025

Publicized notice of the business meeting was given by posting notice on the Department's website and emailed to news media requesting notification, which gave the date, time, and location of the meeting.

STATE BOARD WORK SESSION, Thursday, October 2, 2025, 2:16 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Tegtmeier called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Deborah Neary

Elizabeth Tegtmeier

Kristin Christensen

Lisa Schonhoff

Liz Renner

Maggie Douglas

Sherry Jones

Commissioner Maher was also in attendance.

Absent: Kirk Penner

1.2. President Tegtmeier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Tegtmeier announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

2. BUSINESS

2.1. Information on Statewide Accountability System

NDE Representative, Derek Ippensen, provided information on the statewide Accountability System.

3. ADJOURNMENT

President Tegtmeier adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

The State Board of Education will reconvene Friday, October 3, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at Fremont Public Schools District Office, Board Room, 130 E 9th Street, Fremont, NE 68025.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING, Friday, October 3, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER – President Elizabeth Tegtmeier called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Deborah Neary (arrived at 9:04 a.m.)	Elizabeth Tegtmeier	Kristin Christensen
Lisa Schonhoff	Liz Renner	Maggie Douglas
Sherry Jones		

Commissioner Maher was also in attendance.

Absent: Kirk Penner

1.2. President Tegtmeier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Tegtmeier announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

2. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

2.1. Adopt the Resolution to Recognize October as Dyslexia Awareness Month

Motion by Kristin Christensen, second by Lisa Schonhoff to adopt the Resolution to recognize October as Dyslexia Awareness Month.

Deborah Neary	Yes
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	Yes
Kirk Penner	Absent
Kristin Christensen	Yes
Lisa Schonhoff	Yes
Liz Renner	Yes
Maggie Douglas	Yes
Sherry Jones	Yes

The motion passed.

3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

3.1. Agenda Overview and Consent Agenda Process

3.1.A. Commissioner Maher's recommendation and items to be removed from consent agenda

No items were requested to be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Maher delivered the Commissioner's report.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There was no President's Report.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

5.1. Public Comment

The following individuals spoke with regard to theater endorsement requirements: Dan Hays, Averi Hogue, Jenna Pool, Elliot Brummond, Alexxus Taavda, Rusty Ruth.

5.2. Written Public Comment

There were five Written Public Comments submitted.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Kristin Christensen, second by Lisa Schonhoff to approve the Consent Agenda.

Deborah Neary	Yes
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	Yes
Kirk Penner	Absent
Kristin Christensen	Yes
Lisa Schonhoff	Yes
Liz Renner	Yes
Maggie Douglas	Yes
Sherry Jones	Yes

The motion passed.

7. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1. **Executive Committee** – Elizabeth Tegtmeier, Chair, reported on the meeting of the Committee.

7.1.A. Discussion Item: Strategic Plan

There was discussion regarding the strategic plan draft and input offered by board members for consideration. The Executive Committee plans to meet before the December meeting to review feedback and propose a final draft to the Board for consideration.

7.1.B. Discussion Item: Board Bylaw and Policy Revisions

There was no further discussion.

7.2. **Budget and Finance Committee** – Kristin Christensen, Chair, reported on the meeting of the Committee.

7.2.A. Monthly Board Travel Expense Report

There was no further discussion on this item.

7.2.B. Action Item: Authorize the Commissioner to Submit the 2025-26 Deficit Budget Request

Motion by Kristin Christensen, second by Maggie Douglas to submit the 2025-26 Deficit Budget Request.

Deborah Neary	Yes
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	Yes
Kirk Penner	Absent
Kristin Christensen	Yes
Lisa Schonhoff	Yes
Liz Renner	Yes
Maggie Douglas	Yes
Sherry Jones	Yes

The motion passed.

7.2.C. Action Item: Contract for a Program Quality Anchor for Results Matter and Step Up to Quality

Motion by Kristin Christensen, second by Liz Renner to approve Program Quality Anchor for Results Matter and Step Up to Quality.

Deborah Neary	Yes
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	Yes
Kirk Penner	Absent
Kristin Christensen	Yes
Lisa Schonhoff	Yes
Liz Renner	Yes
Maggie Douglas	Yes
Sherry Jones	Yes

The motion passed.

7.2.D. Action Item: Contract for Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

Motion by Kristin Christensen, second by Liz Renner to authorize the Commissioner to contract for Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS).

Deborah Neary	Yes
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	Yes
Kirk Penner	Absent
Kristin Christensen	Yes
Lisa Schonhoff	No
Liz Renner	Yes
Maggie Douglas	Yes
Sherry Jones	Yes

The motion passed.

7.3. **Planning and Evaluation Committee Report** – Lisa Schonhoff, Chair, reported on the meeting of the Committee.

7.3.A. Action Item: Subject Area Examinations and Passing Scores for Temporary Certificates

Motion by Maggie Douglas, second by Kristin Christensen to approve Subject Area Examinations and Passing Scores for Temporary Certificates.

Deborah Neary	Yes
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	Yes
Kirk Penner	Absent
Kristin Christensen	Yes
Lisa Schonhoff	Yes
Liz Renner	Yes
Maggie Douglas	Yes
Sherry Jones	Yes

The motion passed.

7.4. **Rules and Regulations Committee** – Maggie Douglas, Chair reported on the meeting of the Committee.

7.4.A. Report on Rules

The report on rules is linked through Sparq in Board Agenda item 7.4.A.

8. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

(NONE)

9. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Information items and reports are linked through Sparq under Board Agenda item 9.

10. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Sherry Jones reported she is attending the ExcelinEd conference in New Orleans, LA, November 17-19, 2025 .

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Tegmeier adjourned the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

The next meetings of the State Board of Education are scheduled for December 4-5, 2025, in Lincoln, Nebraska.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 17, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Bryce Wilson, Administrator, Office of Financial & Administrative Services

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Approve school districts' requests for exclusions to the budget limitation in accordance with the provisions of the Tax Equity & Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) (BF.082025.005)

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Other

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Distance Education Courses

Proposed Board Action: Approve the exclusion amount for Distance Education Courses for the district shown on the attachment.

Rationale/Background information: Section 79-1028.01(1)(d) provides for the State Board to permit a district to exceed its budget authority for the general fund budget of expenditures for amounts received from educational entities for providing distance education courses through the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council to such educational entities. Department Staff have reviewed the request listed on the attachment and recommend approval. If approved, the school district may access additional budget authority. This request is applicable to the 2025/26 school district budget.

2. Reimbursement for Wards of the Court

Proposed Board Action: Approve the Reimbursement for Wards of the Court listed on the attachment as a Special Grant Fund.

Rationale/Background Information: Section 79-1028.01(1)(m) provides for the State Board to permit a district to exceed its budget authority for the general fund budget of expenditures for amounts received for Reimbursement for Wards of the Court as a special grant fund for budget limitation purposes. The Reimbursement for Wards of the Court listed on the attachments has been reviewed by Department Staff and appears to qualify as a special grant fund per State Statute Section 79-1003(38). If approved, the school district may access additional budget authority. This request is applicable to the 2025/26 school district budget

3. Retirement Contribution Increase

Proposed Board Action: Approve the exclusion amount for a Retirement Contribution Increase for the district shown on the attachment.

Rationale/Background information: Section 79-1028.01(1)(e)&(f) provides for the State Board to permit a district to exceed its budget authority for the general fund budget of expenditures for a retirement contribution increase. Department Staff have reviewed the request listed on the attachment and recommend approval. If approved, the school district may access additional budget authority. This request is applicable to the 2025/26 school district budget.

4. Special Supplementary Grant

Proposed Board Action: Approve the grant listed on the attachment as a Special Supplementary Grant.

Rationale/Background Information: Section 79-1028.01(1)(m) provides for the State Board to permit a district to exceed its budget authority for the general fund budget of expenditures for amounts received for Special Supplementary Grants from Corporations, Foundations, or Other Private Interests as special grant funds for budget limitations purposes. The individual grant listed on the attachment has been reviewed by Department Staff and appears to qualify as a special supplementary grant per State Statute Section 79-1003(38). If approved, the school district may access additional budget authority. This request is applicable to the 2025/26 school district budget.

5. Voluntary Termination Agreements

Proposed Board Action: Approve the exclusion amount for Voluntary Termination Agreements for the district shown on the attachment.

Rationale/Background information: Section 79-1028.01(1) (g), (i), (j), (k), provides for the State Board to permit a district to exceed its budget authority for the general fund budget of expenditures for expenditures for voluntary termination agreements. Department Staff have reviewed the request listed on the attachment and recommend approval. If approved, the school district may access additional budget authority. This request is applicable to the 2025/26 school district budget.

per State Statute Section 79-1003(38). If approved, the school district may access additional budget authority. This request is applicable to the 2025/26 school district budget.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: None

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS: N/A

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT: N/A

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS: N/A

**Updated 08.15.2023*

**Requests Relative to the Budgeting Provisions
of the Tax Equity & Educational Opportunities Support Act
For the 2025/26 School Year
December 5, 2025**

Recommendation 1

Distance Education Courses [Section 79-1028.01(1)(d)]

County-District Number	School District Name	Amount to be Approved
56-0007	Maxwell Public Schools	\$36,000

Recommendation 2

Reimbursement for Wards of the Court [Section 79-1003(38)]

County-District Number	School District Name	Amount to be Approved
72-0032	Shelby-Rising City Public Schools	\$100,000

Recommendation 3

Retirement Contribution Increase [Section 79-1028.01(1)(e)&(f)]

County-District Number	School District Name	Amount to be Approved
13-0022	Weeping Water Public Schools	\$110,715
27-0595	North Bend Public Schools	\$120,000
31-0506	Franklin Public Schools	\$89,140
52-0100	Keya Paha County Schools	\$34,812
69-0055	Loomis Public Schools	\$79,903
70-0542	Osmond Community Schools	\$84,545
78-0001	Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools	\$276,135

Recommendation 4

Special Supplementary Grant [Section 79-1003(38)]

County-District Number	School District Name	Amount to be Approved	Source
72-0032	Shelby-Rising City Public Schools	\$61,839	Title I
		\$42,750	Title II
		\$21,735	Title IV-A

Recommendation 5

Voluntary Termination Agreements [Section 79-1028.01(1)(g), (i), (j), (k)]

County-District Number	School District Name	Amount to be Approved
10-0123	Schuyler Community Schools	\$124,292
27-0595	North Bend Public Schools	\$37,500



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Tobias Orr, Director, Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)
Lindy Foley, Office Administrator, Nebraska VR

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to approve the interagency agreement with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Developmental Disabilities

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Interagency Agreement

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

For over 20 years the Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) has collaborated with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) through an interagency agreement to provide essential services for DHHS consumers on Medicaid Waivers. These services, which include assistive technology and home/vehicle modification assessments, recommendations, contractor procurement, and project oversight are vital in enabling individuals with disabilities to maintain independence and reside in their homes rather than a nursing facility. This partnership ensures a high standard of quality control and the provision of the most appropriate, cost-effective solutions.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): 12/2025

ESTIMATED COST: Up to \$1,521,310.43 to be received by NDE.

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal – Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services – Medicaid funds.
- New or Renewal: Renewal
- If renewal, date of first approval: 12/2024

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for contractor selection: N/A

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: N/A

**Updated 08.15.2023*



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 21, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Shirley Vargas, Ed.L.D.
School Transformation Officer

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Adopt the Mentor Teacher Program Guidelines (RR.032025.004)

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Guidelines

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In June 2025, the State Board of Education approved the repeal of Rule 26, *Regulations and Procedures for Mentor Teacher Programs*.

While the rule is repealed, Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-761 states, “The State Board of Education shall develop guidelines for mentor teacher programs in local systems in order to provide ongoing support for individuals entering the teaching profession. Mentor teachers shall not participate in the formal evaluation of beginning teachers which shall be the responsibility of school administrators. Local systems shall identify criteria for selecting excellent, experienced, and qualified teachers to be participants in the local system mentor teacher program which are consistent with the guidelines developed by the State Board of Education.”

The text in the attached draft guidelines are the same as those previously found in Rule 26. These guidelines ensure compliance with state statute.

Attachment: Mentor Teacher Program Guidelines

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: N/A

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source:

- New or Renewal:
- If renewal, date of first approval:

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement:
- Rationale for method of procurement:
- Rationale for contractor selection:

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: NA

**Updated 07.06.2023*



Mentor Teacher Program Promising Practice Guidelines Adapted from Rule 26

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-761 provides:

The State Board of Education shall develop guidelines for mentor teacher programs in local systems in order to provide ongoing support for individuals entering the teaching profession. Mentor teachers shall not participate in the formal evaluation of beginning teachers which shall be the responsibility of school administrators. Local systems shall identify criteria for selecting excellent, experienced, and qualified teachers to be participants in the local system mentor teacher program which are consistent with the guidelines developed by the State Board of Education.

01 Definitions:

- 01.01 Academic year means the school year which consists of two consecutive semesters that occur from fall through spring.
- 01.02 Endorsement means an area of specialization indicated on a certificate issued pursuant to 92 NAC 24 signifying that the individual has met specific requirements.
- 01.03 Field (used as a descriptor of an endorsement) means two or more subjects which, considered as a single area of study, represent a wider and broader scope than that of a subject.
- 01.04 First-year teacher means individuals entering the K-12 teaching profession in their first year of contracted service in any school, public or private, in this or any other state. Individuals who have only taught as substitute teachers are not considered to have had a previous year of contracted service. Individuals whose previous contracted teaching experience is less than one full academic year are not considered to have had a previous year of contracted service.
- 01.05 Grade level preparation means the grade levels an individual is prepared to teach as indicated on a teaching certificate.

- 01.06 Mentor means a permanent certificated teacher (i.e. "tenured"), as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-824, who has demonstrated the competencies necessary for successful teaching and who initially assists certified persons toward mastery of those competencies.
- 01.07 Supervisor means any individual who performs evaluations, and pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 48-801, means any employee having authority, in the interest of the employer, to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees, or responsibly to direct them or to adjust their grievances, or effectively to recommend such action, if in connection with the foregoing the exercise of such authority is not a merely routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment.
- 01.08 Teacher means any certified employee who is regularly employed for the instruction of pupils in the public schools pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-101.
- 02 Mentor Teacher Program Guidelines.
- The following guidelines constitute requirements that are necessary to offer a quality mentor teacher program, but do not place any legal obligation on schools or school districts.***
- 02.01 All first-year teachers must be provided a mentor and mentoring support from a permanent, certificated teacher. The first-year teacher must be matched with a mentor in compliance with at least one of the following (in order of most to least desirable):
- 02.01.01 Match both endorsement field (e.g. social science) and grade level preparation (e.g. 7-12 all schools) within the same school district or building;
 - 02.01.02 Match endorsement field only (e.g. social science) *or* grade level preparation only (e.g., 7-12 all schools) within the same school district or building;
 - 02.01.03 Match only school district (e.g. ABC Public Schools) *or* building (XYZ Elementary); *or*
 - 02.01.04 Match endorsement field or grade level preparation by using a mentor outside of the school building or district.
- 02.02 Participation must be voluntary for the mentor.
- 02.03 The program must include structured or planned contacts between the mentor and first-year teacher.

- 02.04 The program must include a written plan for mentoring developed by the mentor and first-year teacher including activities, a timeline, and provisions for mentor preparation and support.
 - 02.05 The program must provide time for the mentor and first-year teacher to meet, observe one another's classroom teaching as well as classroom teaching of other teachers, and to analyze and discuss the teaching of students.
 - 02.06 The program must have a needs assessment component for determining the needs of the first-year teacher.
 - 02.07 The program must have an evaluation component to measure the effectiveness of the mentoring program.
 - 02.08 Mentor teachers must meet the criteria for Mentor Teacher Qualifications.
- 03 Mentor Teacher Qualifications.
- 03.01 The following criteria must be used in selecting excellent, experienced, and qualified mentor teachers:
 - 03.01.01 Mentor teachers must hold a valid Nebraska teaching or administrative certificate; and
 - 03.01.02 Mentor teachers must not be the first-year teacher's supervisor or an administrator in the school or school district.
 - 03.01.03 Mentor teachers must be regularly employed for the instruction of pupils and be permanent, certificated employees (i.e. tenured) as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-824.
- 04 Additional Promising Practices.
- Mentor teacher programs may benefit from using any of the following promising practices:***
- 04.01 Use of a support team approach for the first-year teacher that could include administrators, mentor teacher program coordinators, district curriculum coordinators, and external consultants.
 - 04.02 Use of mentor teachers from within or outside of the school district (e.g. other school districts, educational service units, or professional organization pools).

- 04.03 Assign first-year teachers more than one mentor, depending upon mentor availability and first-year teacher needs. For example, if a mentor in the first-year teacher's field of endorsement is not available within the building, the first-year teacher may benefit from both a mentor within the building and a mentor outside of the building who is endorsed in the same field as the first-year teacher.
- 04.04 Inclusion of orientation and training for first-year teachers.
- 04.05 Inclusion of a coordinator of the mentor teacher program responsible for initial matches, periodic checks of the suitability of the matches as well as the progress/benefits of the mentoring relationship and activities.
- 04.06 Inclusion of benefits or incentives for mentors for their services to the mentor teacher program including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 04.06.01 Release time;
 - 04.06.02 Stipends for mentoring activities conducted outside of the normal contracted teaching day;
 - 04.06.03 College credit;
 - 04.06.04 Professional growth points; or
 - 04.06.05 Classroom materials.
- 04.07 Inclusion of benefits or incentives for first-year teachers for their participation in the mentor teacher program including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 04.07.01 Release time;
 - 04.07.02 Stipends for mentor teacher program training attended outside of the normal contracted teaching year; or
 - 04.07.03 Professional growth points.
- 04.08 Design of mentor teacher programs which:
 - 04.08.01 Are differentiated in design to accommodate a variety of learners;
 - 04.08.02 Are focused on improved student learning;

- 04.08.03 Address first-year teacher needs based on individual needs assessment. Examples of first-year teacher needs may include more information or guidance with the following: building/district policy and procedures orientation, assessment of student learning, evaluation of student work, classroom management, classroom discipline, instructional techniques, design of instruction appropriate to individual differences, student motivation, techniques for assisting students with personal problems, time management, classroom observation and the provision or reception of feedback regarding such observation, development or enhancement of curricular content expertise, course work planning, adaptation of plans to limited instructional resources, and methods to enhance positive relationships with parents of students; and
- 04.08.04 Address mentor needs based on a needs assessment.
- 04.09 Inclusion of the following mentoring activities:
 - 04.09.01 Meetings between mentors and first-year teachers;
 - 04.09.02 Classroom observations with accompanying feedback;
 - 04.09.03 Discussion groups related to first-year teaching experiences;
 - 04.09.04 On-site and off-site training for first-year teachers; or
 - 04.09.05 Provision of supplementary materials related to the mentoring needs of first-year teachers.
- 04.10 Documentation of services provided by the mentor teacher program including, but not limited to, the following: logs of mentor/first-year teacher contacts including such information as date, time, topics discussed, concerns of first-year teacher, concerns as a mentor, perception of the role of the mentor for that contact (e.g. responder, colleague, initiator).



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: December 5, 2025

The Executive Committee reports on its December 4, 2025, meeting. Members present were chair Elizabeth Tegtmeier, vice chair Deb Neary, Sherry Jones, and Liz Renner.

The committee reviewed three action items. First, the committee reviewed the proposed strategic plan. NDE staff provided a review of the document. The committee recommends the Board approve the strategic plan. Next, the committee reviewed proposed Board bylaw and policy revisions as recommended by NDE staff. The committee recommends the Board approve the proposed Board bylaw and policy revisions. Finally, the committee reviewed the proposed awarding of the Improvement Grant. NDE staff provided information on this item. The committee recommends the Board approve the awarding of the Improvement Grant.

The committee also reviewed two information items. First, the committee received a report from the Commissioner on input regarding contract abrogation terms and whether any change is needed. Second, the committee reviewed the recommendation of an appointment to the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership Advisory Council. This item appeared on the consent agenda for approval.

This concludes the Executive Committee report.

Elizabeth Tegtmeier, Chair

*Submit a printed copy to the Committee Chair and email to the Recording Secretary.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 24, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Ryan M. Foor, Ph.D.; Assistant Commissioner and Chief of Staff

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Adopt the 2026 -2030 Nebraska Department of Education Strategic Plan

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Other

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The final draft of the Nebraska Department of Education strategic plan is presented for review by the State Board of Education and recommended for approval. This draft is informed by a process that began in January 2025, with key input from the board at its February 2025 meeting, followed by input from citizens, students, clients, school leaders, and other partners. Feedback was reviewed from the September 2025 board work session and October 2025 Executive Committee meeting.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$0

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: N/A
- New or Renewal: N/A
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

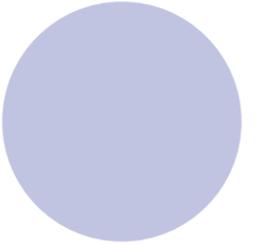
FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for contractor selection: N/A

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: N/A

**Updated 08.15.2023*



Good Life | Great Schools | Excellent Education

The Nebraska Department of Education Strategic Plan for 2026-2030





The Nebraska Department of Education engaged in a strategic planning process beginning in January 2025. After rigorous engagement with citizens, partners, clients, and staff, this document outlines our roadmap for the statewide education system in Nebraska. Through this process, members of the State Board of Education (State Board) and agency staff members received input and feedback from over 2,500 Nebraskans who represent students, families, and schools in our public, nonpublic, and exempt schools, as well as vocational rehabilitation clients. This roadmap, titled **Good Life | Great Schools | Excellent Education** embodies a vision to ensure all Nebraskans receive high-quality educational opportunities for success in learning and life.

Good Life is a nod to our state’s longtime state slogan, “The Good Life.” The slogan first appeared in the 1970s and has been widely used in marketing, on highway signs, and in tourism campaigns. Often when referring to “The Good Life,” Nebraskans are alluding to the quality of life in the state, deep connections to our communities, the natural environment, as well as agriculture, industry, and employment opportunities.

Great Schools highlights the importance we place on our local schools, public and nonpublic, as well as the educational opportunities afforded to students through exempt (home) school settings. Nebraskans are proud of their local schools and the learning that takes place in those spaces. Schools also provide learning opportunities outside the classroom through activities and athletics, and in many ways serve as a hub of community life.

Excellent Education promotes the desire for all Nebraskans to have access to high-quality educational opportunities and resources. Ultimately, the Nebraska Department of Education exists to serve students and our clients. While the NDE provides some direct services to students and clients, much of the work we do is dependent on our partners, such as teachers and school leaders. We aim to hold up the Nebraska education system as a beacon for educational excellence in our country and the world.

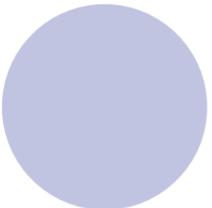
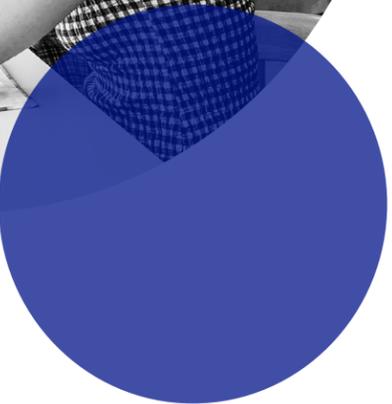
Good Life | Great Schools | Excellent Education is organized in four major areas:

- Who we are
- Who we serve
- What we do
- Where we are going

Key findings from the strategic planning process are embedded throughout this document, highlighting what we heard from people across the state. Additional information about the strategic planning process is found on page 15.

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Who We Are

The Nebraska Department of Education is a state constitutional agency operating under the authority of an elected, non-partisan board of education. The State Board appoints the Commissioner of Education (Commissioner), who oversees the administration of the state school system. The state constitution provides an overarching description of the authority of the NDE.

Article VII, Section 1

The Legislature shall provide for the free instruction in the common schools of this state of all persons between the ages of five and twenty-one years. The Legislature may provide for the education of other persons in educational institutions owned and controlled by the state or a political subdivision thereof.

Article VII, Section II

The State Department of Education shall be comprised of a State Board of Education and a Commissioner of Education. The State Department of Education shall have general supervision and administration of the school system of the state and of such other activities as the Legislature may direct.

Article VII, Section III

The State Board of Education shall be composed of eight members, who shall be elected from eight districts of substantially equal population as provided by the Legislature. Their term of office shall be for four years each. Their duties and powers shall be prescribed by the Legislature, and they shall receive no compensation, but shall be reimbursed their actual expense incurred in the performance of their duties. The members of the State Board of Education shall not be actively engaged in the educational profession and they shall be elected on a nonpartisan ballot.

Article VII, Section IV

The State Board of Education shall appoint and fix the compensation of the Commissioner of Education, who shall be the executive officer of the State Board of Education and the administrative head of the State Department of Education, and who shall have such powers and duties as the Legislature may direct. The board shall appoint all employees of the State Department of Education on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Education.

The NDE employees carry out the mission of the agency on behalf of Nebraska students and clients in public and nonpublic schools, as well as exempt school settings. The NDE staff interact with schools and institutions of higher education to develop, coordinate, and improve educational programs.

Over 500 employees carry out the myriad duties assigned by state and federal statutes and the policy direction of the State Board. In broad terms, the work of NDE may be categorized into four main areas:

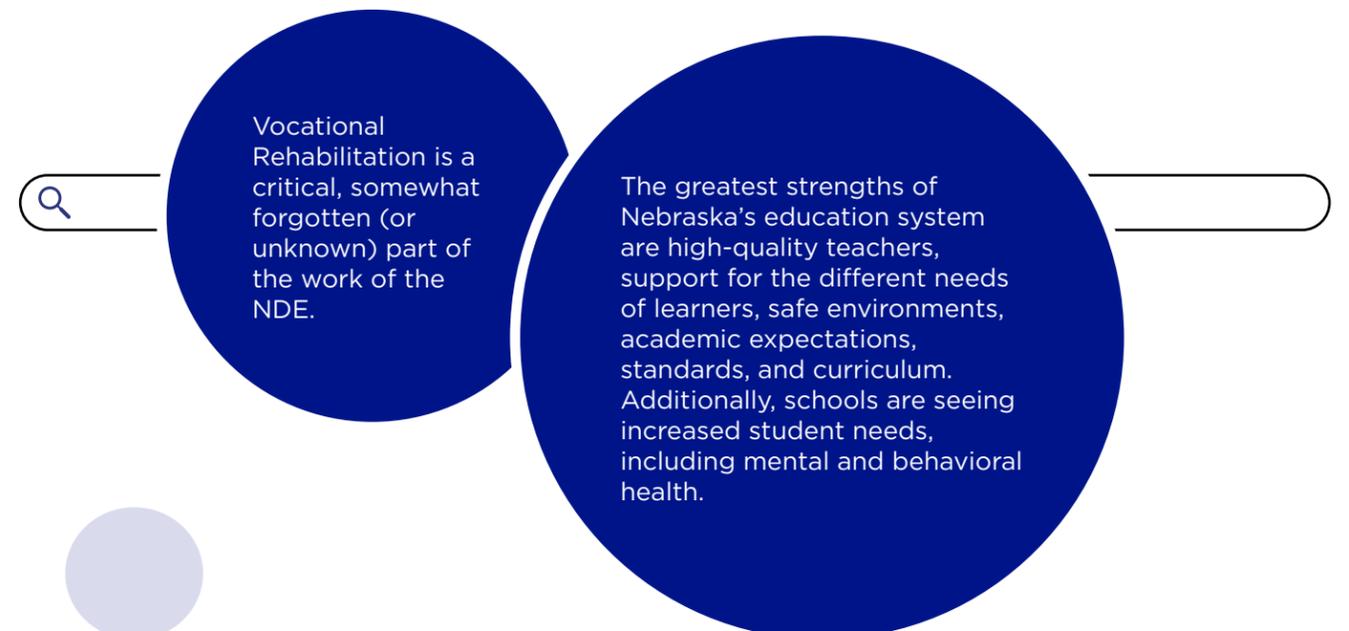
- 1) Education programs and services – serving public and nonpublic schools, educators, and students

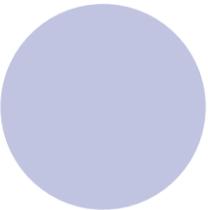
- 2) Vocational Rehabilitation (Nebraska VR) - assisting people with disabilities to join the workforce
- 3) Disability Determination Services (DDS) - adjudication of claims for disability benefits under Social Security or Supplemental Security Income
- 4) Agency operations – areas like human resources, accounting, legal services, and information technology

The NDE provides a broad range of consultative and support services for Nebraska public, nonpublic, and exempt schools. Services are provided in areas such as:

- Adult education and GED®
- After-school programs
- Career and technical education
- Data management
- Early childhood
- Family and community engagement
- Federal programs
- Student support services
- School accreditation
- School improvement
- Special education
- School finance
- Teaching, learning, and assessment

While the above list relates mostly to the statewide education system, most of the agency employees work in Nebraska VR and DDS. In many ways, the NDE ensures success for all learners from early-childhood to career.





Values

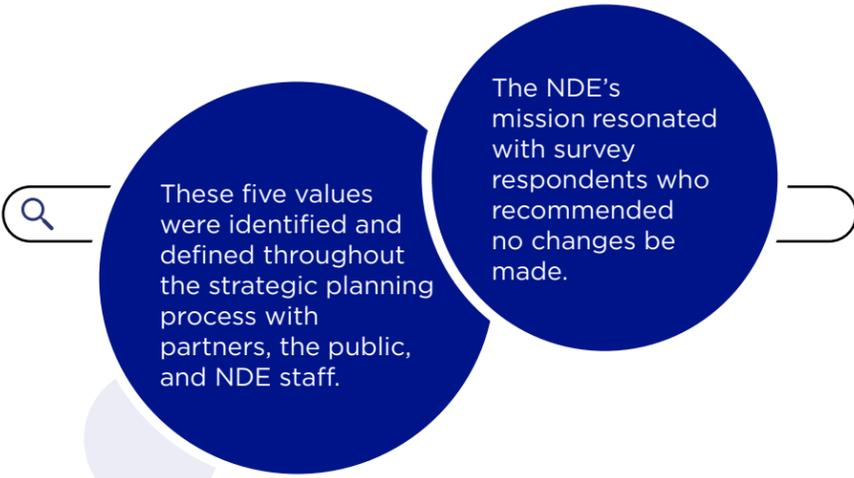
The NDE grounds its work on the following core values:

- » **Communication**
The NDE prioritizes accessible, consistent, transparent communication that informs the public and our partners of key priorities and activities and allows our partners to have a voice in the work of the state agency. Valuing communication enables the NDE and its partners to implement best practices at scale with efficiency, thereby accelerating learners’ achievement and outcomes.
- » **Accountability**
The NDE is accountable to our partners when we use resources wisely, follow through and show integrity, take responsibility for our actions and outcomes, and uphold high standards. Valuing accountability will lead the NDE to support our partners, thereby improving outcomes and opportunities for all learners.
- » **Respect**
Nebraska is a state with diverse geographies, demographics, languages, backgrounds, cultures, and needs, and the NDE will engage in open-minded, intentional, and consistent listening and decision-making processes. Valuing respect, the NDE will operate similarly to Nebraska’s classrooms where respect builds a positive learning environment; the NDE will model respect in all processes, allowing partners to contribute to the statewide education system.
- » **Excellence**
The NDE will be a model for educational and workplace excellence in Nebraska, guided by evidence-based, data-informed research. The NDE will strive for operational excellence in our services, serving as a model for actively identifying problems, implementing solutions, and evaluating impact. Similarly, the NDE will expect excellence of external partners serving learners throughout Nebraska. Valuing excellence will elevate the level of performance across the education system.
- » **Service**
The work of the NDE depends upon the service we provide to students, educators, families, communities, and external partners. A service mindset recognizes that we, as an entity of state government, serve the citizens of Nebraska. Valuing service will allow the NDE to strengthen partnerships and achieve greater results.

These five values form an acronym, CARES. This acronym serves as an easy-to-remember structure for communicating about our core values, implementing the values in decision-making processes, and providing a common set of expectations for employees.

Mission Statement

The **mission** of the Nebraska Department of Education is ***to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living.***



These five values were identified and defined throughout the strategic planning process with partners, the public, and NDE staff.

The NDE’s mission resonated with survey respondents who recommended no changes be made.

Who We Serve

Nebraska schools educate over 365,000 students in public and nonpublic school districts and systems. There are nearly 330,000 students who attend public schools in the state. School districts range in size from serving 50 to 60 students to the largest district serving over 51,000 students. Nonpublic schools serve over 36,000 students in schools that range with student counts from three to over 1,000. Additionally, there are nearly 14,000 students educated through exempt (home) schools. Our schools are served by over 41,000 certificated staff, of which, 26,000 are teachers. In terms of Nebraska VR, nearly 3,000 individuals are served each year.

The state laws of Nebraska further detail the responsibilities of the Nebraska Department of Education. Nebraska Revised Statute § 79-301 provides a general, overall view of the statutory duties of the NDE:

- (1) The State Department of Education provided for in Article VII, section 2, of the Constitution of Nebraska shall consist of a State Board of Education and a Commissioner of Education. The State Department of Education shall have general supervision and administration of the school system of the state and of such other activities as the Legislature may direct.
- (2) The State Board of Education, acting as a unit, shall be the policy-forming, planning, and evaluative body for the state school program. Except in the appointment of a Commissioner of Education, the board shall deliberate and take action with the professional advice and counsel of the Commissioner of Education.
- (3) The Commissioner of Education shall be the executive officer of the State Board of Education and the administrative head of the professional, technical, and clerical staff of the State Department of Education. The commissioner shall act under the authority of the State Board of Education. The commissioner shall have the responsibility for carrying out the requirements of law and of board policies, standards, rules, and regulations and for providing the educational leadership and services deemed necessary by the board for the proper conduct of the state school program. In the event of vacancy in office or the absence or incapacity of the Commissioner of Education, a deputy commissioner shall carry out any duties imposed by law upon the commissioner.

Partners

To meet these responsibilities, the NDE serves our partners differently in both direct and indirect ways. The individuals and entities in the direct service list represent those partners with whom the NDE has direct and regular interactions. The individuals and entities in the indirect service list represent those partners with whom the NDE serves by working with the partners in the direct service list. Note that the NDE staff are not teaching in the classrooms; rather, they are supporting the teachers, school leaders, and schools who have direct interactions with students every day in classrooms. This distinction is important, as it highlights the scope and reach of the work of the NDE, and it serves as a reminder that the NDE exists to serve students through partnership with our schools. In another example, Nebraska VR staff are, in many cases, working directly with students in schools.

Direct Service Partners

- PK-12 schools
- Early childhood education programs
- Nebraska VR clients
- Business partners
- Educators (e.g., school leaders, teachers)
- Applicants for certifications
- Postsecondary educational institutions
- Educational Service Units
- Students (e.g. students participating in career and technical student organization)
- Families and citizens (e.g., families seeking exempt school opportunities)
- Nonprofit organizations serving the education system

Indirect Service Partners

- Students
- Families
- Businesses - the current and future workforce



What We Do

Services

The services describe the work of the NDE and are derived from state and federal statutory authority, as well as initiatives and priorities set by the State Board. In order to set a strategic roadmap, the “work” of the NDE must be clear. This list of 10 services provides a relatively comprehensive description of the work of the Nebraska Department of Education, cutting across all of its component offices. These services are rooted in quality assurance.

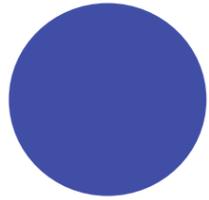
- **Certification:** The NDE is tasked, by statute, to set the rules and regulations that dictate requirements for educator certification.
- **Coordination with other government/non-governmental agencies:** The NDE is the state education agency and, as such, represents the educational system in cross-agency collaborations such as the Governor’s efforts to decrease the teacher shortage with other state agencies. Additionally, the NDE is responsible for administrative management of several statewide commissions and councils.
- **Direct services to students/learners/clients:** Nebraska VR provides direct services to clients and the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education provides learning opportunities for students in career and technical student organizations.
- **Grant funding opportunities to education entities and third parties:** The NDE plays a role in pass-through funding made available from the United States federal government. Additionally, the NDE stewards state and non-governmental funds, when available, to advance the priorities of the State Board.
- **Program and fiscal compliance and monitoring:** The NDE is statutorily required to regulate schools and school districts and direct compliance activities.
- **Program accreditation and approval:** The NDE is required, by statute, to serve as the accreditation and approval authority for public and nonpublic schools, educational service units, and educator preparation programs.
- **Professional development:** The NDE provides high-quality professional development activities for educators that align with the content area standards of the state, and other programmatic activities.
- **School and continuous improvement:** Through a required evaluation process, Nebraska’s schools and districts report leading and lagging indicators of success. The NDE responds to these evaluations with hands-on support to ensure that each student is afforded the opportunities and support necessary to achieve success.
- **School accountability:** The NDE is statutorily required to lead the state school accountability system, including setting statewide content standards for and administering statewide proficiency assessments. The agency is also responsible for determining state classifications and federal designations of public schools and districts.
- **Technical assistance:** The NDE provides resources for all schools, public and nonpublic, as well as parents, families, and citizens in support of the education system.

Strategic Levers

The Nebraska Department of Education, as the state education agency, has the opportunity to create change, drive improvement, and cultivate innovation through several strategic levers. Strategic levers are tools and frameworks used to drive transformation and improve learning outcomes. These seven strategic levers are designed to address specific challenges and goals within the education system. The purpose of these strategic levers is to create a more effective and efficient educational system that meets the needs of all students and contributes to the overall development of society.



Political change and uncertainty at the federal level specifically seem to be on the minds of partners. NDE could be an important “leveler” to help manage and stabilize the disruption.



Where We Are Going

In response to what we heard from citizens, educators, school leaders, clients, students, parents, and others, as well as examining statewide data, the Nebraska Department of Education is committed to four strategic priorities. **Strategic priorities** are the clearly defined areas of focus for the NDE essential to achieving our long-term mission; they act as guiding principles for decision-making, resource allocation, and daily actions. These are the top-level goals of the strategic plan; in other words, what we focus on.

Strategic priorities are further defined by strategic outcomes. **Strategic outcomes** are the specific results or impacts the NDE aims to achieve by pursuing our strategic priorities. Strategic outcomes are the measurable results or changes that demonstrate progress toward our long-term mission. Strategic outcomes tell us what success looks like; they are our desired results.

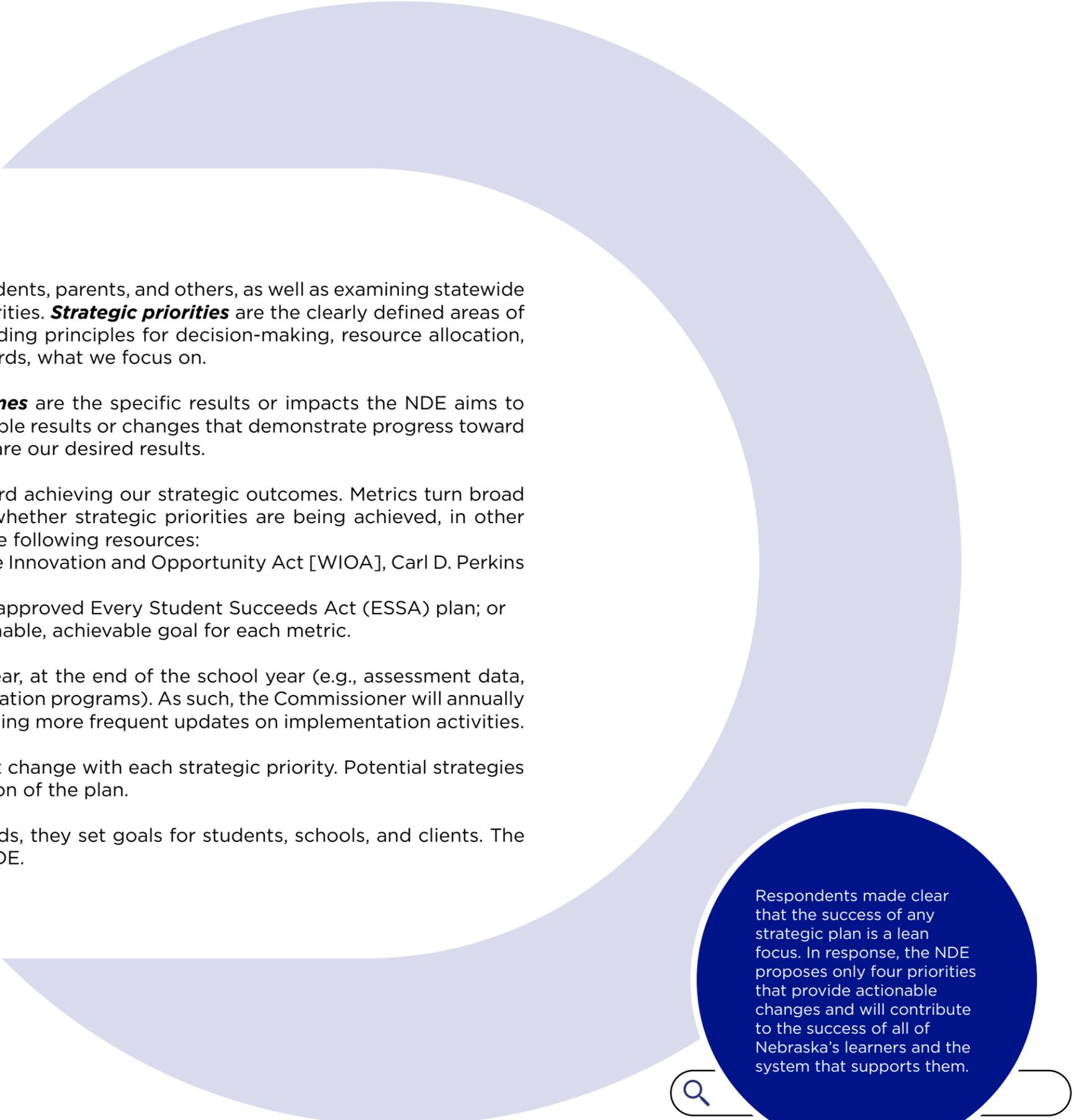
Metrics are the specific measures or indicators used to track our progress toward achieving our strategic outcomes. Metrics turn broad goals into observable, quantifiable evidence of success. Metrics demonstrate whether strategic priorities are being achieved, in other words, the evidence. The metrics below were calculated using one or more of the following resources:

- leveraging pre-existing metrics in other approved state plans (e.g., Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA], Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act [Perkins]);
- adapting the 50% reduction in non-proficiency goals outlined in the state's approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan; or
- consulting with relevant internal and external partners to determine a reasonable, achievable goal for each metric.

Many metrics are “lagging indicators,” meaning the data are available once a year, at the end of the school year (e.g., assessment data, graduation rates, teacher vacancy data, participation in career and technical education programs). As such, the Commissioner will annually report metrics to the State Board through the Executive Committee, while providing more frequent updates on implementation activities.

All of the strategic levers identified above may be used to some degree to effect change with each strategic priority. Potential strategies are identified as suggested actions with each strategic priority for implementation of the plan.

Three of the strategic priorities are outward facing in their impact. In other words, they set goals for students, schools, and clients. The fourth strategic priority is inward facing and focused on the operations of the NDE.



Respondents made clear that the success of any strategic plan is a lean focus. In response, the NDE proposes only four priorities that provide actionable changes and will contribute to the success of all of Nebraska's learners and the system that supports them.

Strategic Priority 1: Accelerate Student Achievement

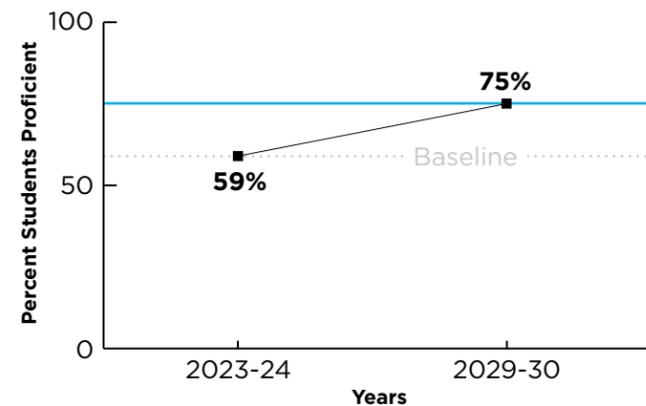
Students and clients thrive when they are met with high expectations and gain the knowledge, skills, and mindsets to engage and contribute to their communities. While all content areas are important to prepare students, the NDE will focus this plan on English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, recognizing the immediate achievement needs of students in these two areas.

Achieving this priority and outcomes will only be possible when the NDE focuses specific attention on improvement within student groups. The identified student groups are those reported in the ESSA plan. More information on performance of student groups across metrics is found on pages 13 through 14.

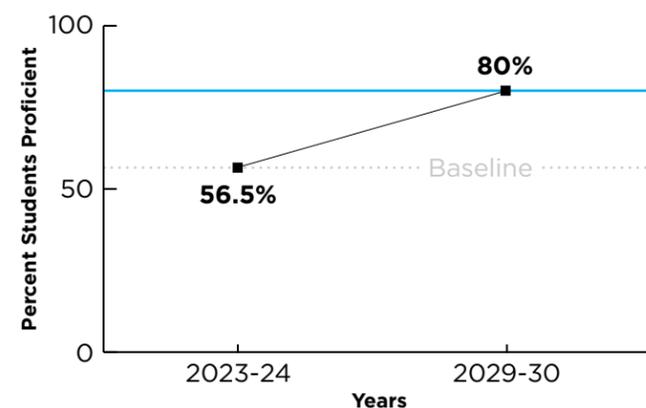
» Strategic Outcome 1.1: Improved Student Achievement

Metrics:

- ◇ **1.1.1.** 75% of 3rd grade students will score proficient in English language arts as measured by the NSCAS statewide assessment by 2030.



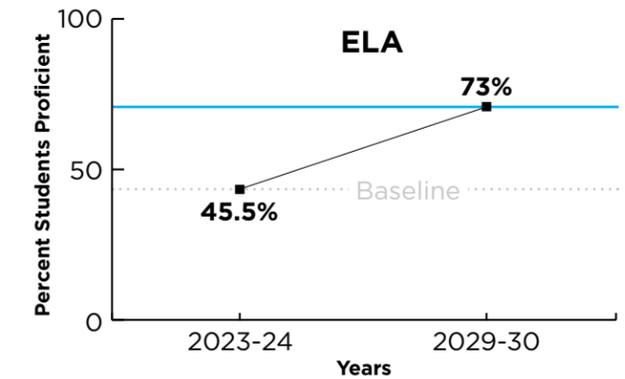
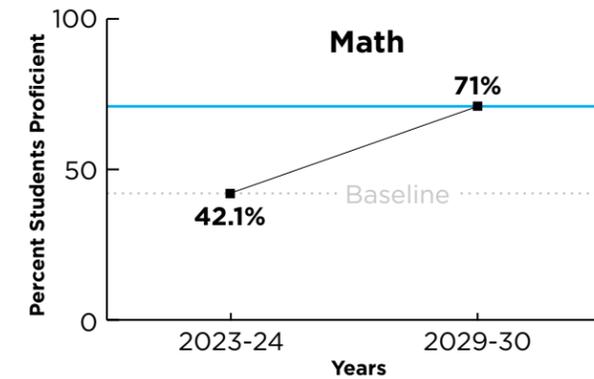
- ◇ **1.1.2.** 80% of 8th grade students will score proficient in mathematics as measured by the NSCAS statewide assessment by 2030.



There is a strong call for better support for students with disabilities, English learners, and those in poverty. Respondents of the survey emphasized the importance of early intervention and access to resources.

Students noted concerns with a focus on college entrance exams, and called for deeper engagement with course content "rather than test prep."

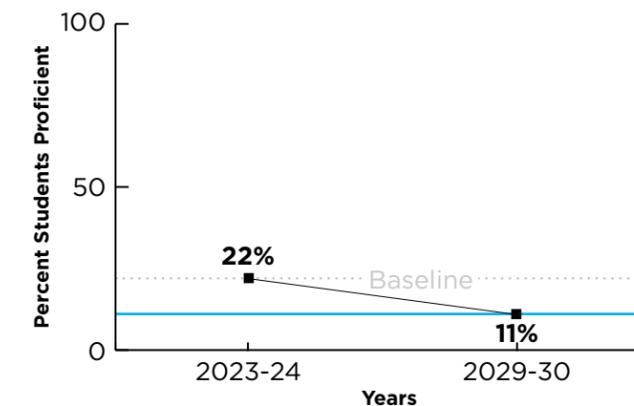
- ◇ **1.1.3.** 71% of 11th grade students will score proficient in math and 73% will score proficient in ELA as measured by the ACT assessment by 2030.



» Strategic Outcome 1.2: Reduced Chronic Absenteeism

Metric:

- ◇ **1.2.1.** Reduce chronic absenteeism by 50% by 2030.



Chronic absenteeism is seen as a growing issue, especially post-COVID. Survey respondents and public focus groups linked attendance to broader social issues like poverty, mental health, and family engagement.

Potential Strategies:

- » Focus discretionary or unrestricted funds to ELA and mathematics achievement, and chronic absenteeism efforts.
- » Support schools through targeted school improvement and continuous improvement activities leading to increased student achievement.
- » Provide statewide resources supporting ELA and mathematics achievement, and student engagement strategies.
- » Partner with community organizations, healthcare providers, families, and students to identify and address non-academic barriers to attendance.
- » Deepen and expand summer and afterschool programming.
- » Promote safe and welcoming school environments.

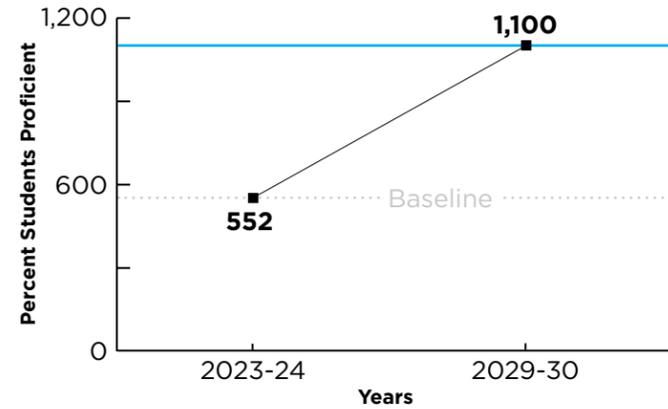
Strategic Priority 2: Grow the Educator Pipeline

The single most important in-school factor associated with student achievement is the quality of the educator a student engages with daily. Every child deserves access to high-quality educators, supported by high-quality leaders and support staff. (Note: The NDE recognizes the importance of all educators and school personnel; this plan focuses squarely on teachers, recognizing the current classroom teacher needs in the state.)

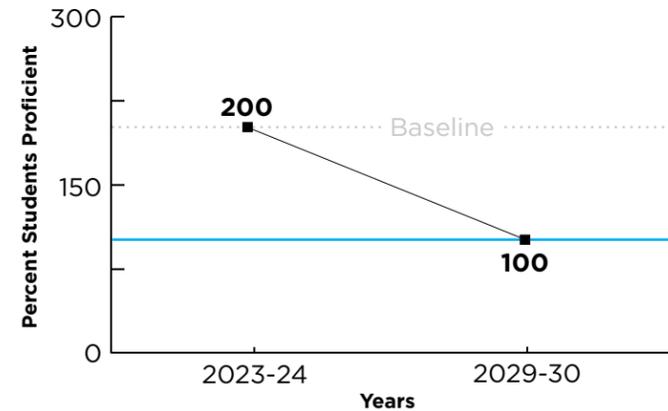
» Strategic Outcome 2.1: Increased Supply of Teachers

Metrics:

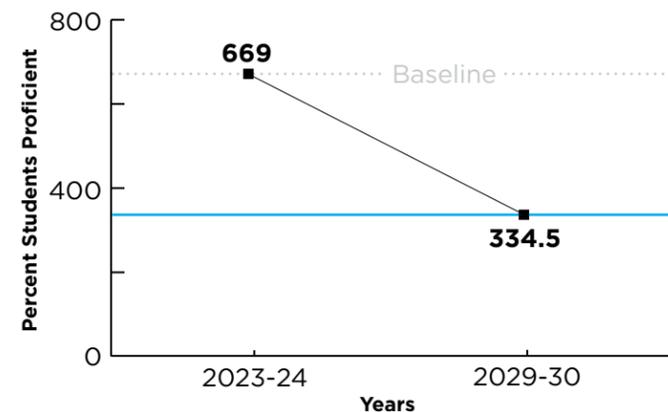
- ◇ **2.1.1.** 1,100 students per year will concentrate in the education and training program of study by 2030.



- ◇ **2.1.2.** Decrease by half the number of vacant teacher positions by 2030.



- ◇ **2.1.3.** Decrease by half the number of unfilled teacher positions by 2030.



Potential Strategies:

- » Support schools in the implementation of education and training programs of study.
- » Direct resources to incentivize teaching as a career.
- » Explore rules and regulations revisions related to teacher certification.



Throughout the NDE's strategic planning process, partners escalated teacher shortages and retention as one of the state's most significant challenges in education. Survey respondents and focus group participants cited low pay, lack of respect, and burnout as major factors.

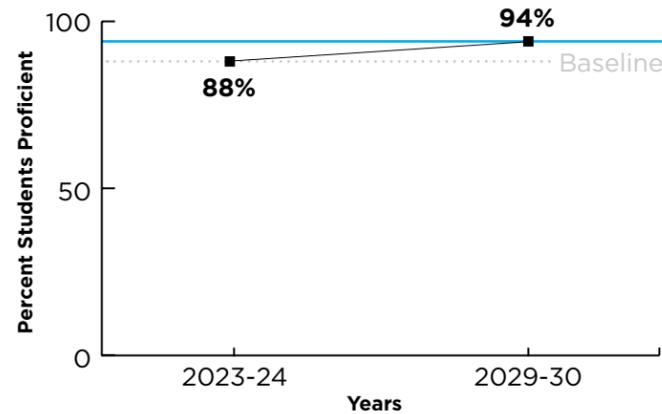
Strategic Priority 3: Equip Learners for the Workforce

Nebraskans are best prepared to participate in the workforce when they are ready for what is next after high school, whether a career or postsecondary training or education. In 2022, the Nebraska Legislature, by way of LR 335, adopted a goal for 70% of Nebraskans aged 25 to 34 to have a degree, certificate, diploma, or other postsecondary or industry-recognized credential of economic value by 2030. This is often referred to as an “attainment goal.” The State Board adopted the same goal, affirming this effort in 2022. To achieve this strategic priority, learners must have transferable career-readiness skills like critical thinking, communication, and empathy, and the foundational knowledge to become economically, self-sufficient. The NDE will support the preparation of life-long learners who are engaged, productive members of their communities, state, and nation.

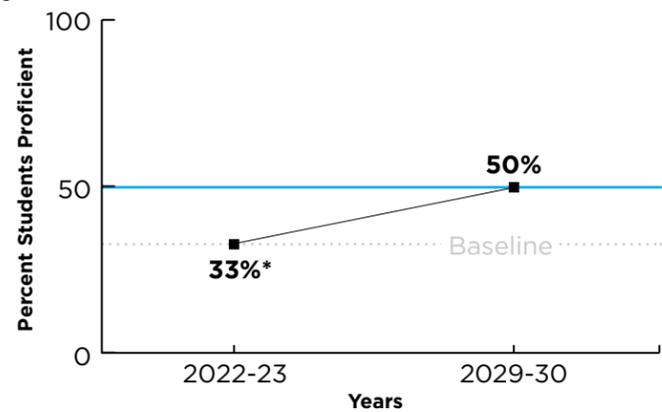
» **Strategic Outcome 3.1: Increased Postsecondary Access and Attainment**

Metrics:

◇ **3.1.1.** 94% of students will graduate by 2030.

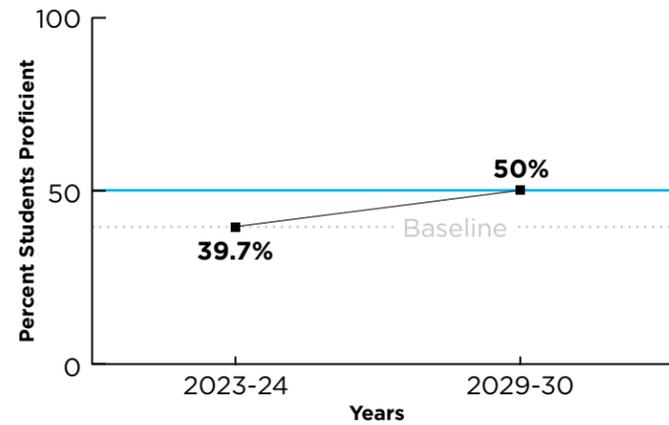


◇ **3.1.2.** 50% of students will engage in dual enrollment by 2030.



*Note: The baseline data year is from the 2022-23 year as these are the most recent statewide data for this metric.

◇ **3.1.3.** 50% of students will concentrate in a CTE career cluster by 2030.

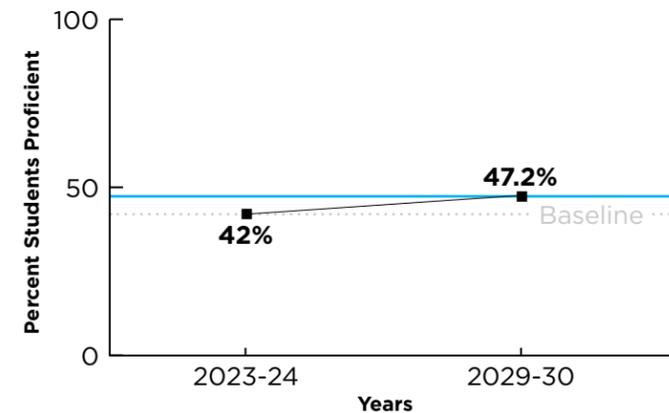


◇ **3.1.4.** Partner in the creation of a system to capture the number of industry recognized credentials obtained by Nebraska graduates.

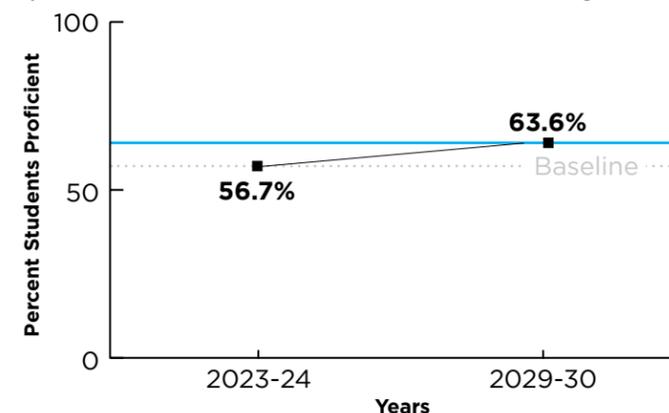
» **Strategic Outcome 3.2: Improved Skill Attainment for Clients and Learners**

Metrics:

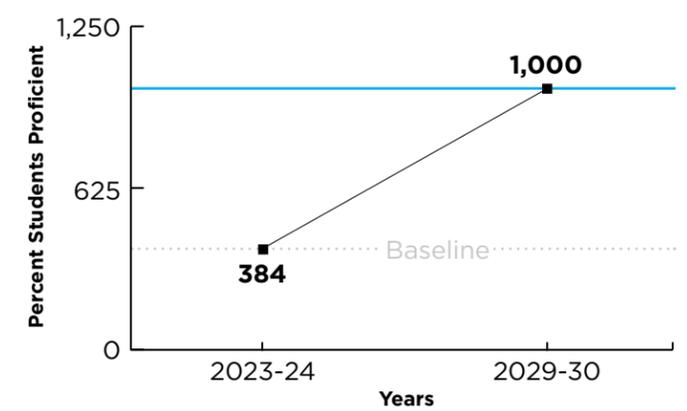
◇ **3.2.1.** 47.2% of Nebraska VR clients will receive a credential of value by 2030.



◇ **3.2.2.** 63.6% of Nebraska VR clients will be employed in quarter four after exit from services by 2030.



◇ **3.2.3.** 1,000 students per year will achieve the Seal of Biliteracy by 2030.



Potential Strategies:

- » Coordinate with schools and other education partners to provide resources and support to attain each metric.
- » Partner with institutions of higher education and other organizations to increase access to dual enrollment and other early postsecondary opportunities.
- » Coordinate with partner state agencies and the business community to ensure workforce needs are addressed.
- » Direct financial and human resources to support the strategic outcomes.



Workforce shortages across the state are especially evident in education, and even more acute in specific areas.

Students expressed a desire to learn and experience greater opportunities to problem-solve and develop a sense of lifelong learning.

Strategic Priority 4: Provide Exceptional Service

The NDE will improve efficiencies and systems to serve our agency and the state with a high-quality, exceptional service mindset, while upholding our constitutional and statutory duties. (Note: For this strategic priority, example metrics are offered for illustration, as each office within the NDE will be responsible for operationalizing how the respective office reports on each strategic outcome.)

» **Strategic Outcome 4.1: Improved Agency-Wide Efficiency**

◇ *Example metrics: average number of days for invoice processing; average number of days to complete the contract routing process; average number of days for educator certification approvals.*

» **Strategic Outcome 4.2: Increased Responsiveness and Communication**

◇ *Example metrics: average number of hours/days to respond to emails and calls; average number of days to respond to help desk tickets.*

» **Strategic Outcome 4.3: Improved Capacity Building**

◇ *Example metrics: number of cross-training opportunities; number of identified succession planning opportunities.*

Potential Strategies:

- » Implement a customer service model based on the organizational values.
- » Implement an employee goal model based on the organizational values.
- » Provide training and support for employees based on the organizational values.

Implementing the Plan

The Commissioner is responsible for implementing the vision set by this plan. Upon approval of the plan by the State Board, the Commissioner is charged with implementation and reporting on achievement, leading to measurable success.

The first three Strategic Priorities will be implemented through **Action Teams** appointed by the Commissioner. Each action team will have a designated leader and will consist of cross-agency representatives, given the task of addressing one of the identified strategic priorities. Each action team will inherit the metrics identified in the strategic plan and will set strategies and timelines necessary to accomplish the outcomes by way of a Commissioner-approved **Action Plan**. Action teams will ensure alignment of agency resources and engage with external partners. Additional responsibilities will include data management, reporting, and regular updates to the Commissioner, who will, in turn, report to the State Board through the Executive Committee. The Commissioner's Office and Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives will provide administrative support and coordination to the action teams.

The fourth Strategic Priority will be implemented through **Operational Plans** with assigned responsibility to each office administrator within the agency. Each office administrator in the agency will be tasked to lead their respective staff teams in identifying relevant metrics and strategies in support of the strategic outcomes. The Commissioner's Office and Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives will provide administrative support and coordination to office administrators in the development of their respective operational plans. Office administrators will report on key metrics to the Commissioner, who in turn will report summary highlights to the State Board. The State Board will regularly receive updates on agency operations and efficiencies that reflect the strategic outcomes outline in the fourth strategic priority.



Metric Benchmarks by Student Group

Metric 1.1.1. 75% of 3rd grade students will score proficient in English language arts as measured by the NSCAS statewide assessment by 2030. (2023-24 baseline: 59% of 3rd grade students are proficient.)

Student Group	2023-24 Baseline (Percent Proficient)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient)
American Indian / Alaska Native	35.0	67.5
Asian	61.0	80.5
Black or African American	36.0	68.0
Hispanic or Latino	41.0	70.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	48.0	74.0
Two or More Races	56.0	78.0
White	69.0	84.5
Students with Disabilities	33.0	66.5
Economically Disadvantaged	45.0	72.5
English Learners	24.0	62.0

Metric 1.1.2. 80% of 8th grade students will score proficient in mathematics as measured by the NSCAS statewide assessment by 2030. (2023-24 baseline: 56.5% of 8th grade students are proficient.)

Student Group	2023-24 Baseline (Percent Proficient)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient)
American Indian / Alaska Native	29.0	64.5
Asian	60.0	80.0
Black or African American	24.0	62.0
Hispanic or Latino	37.0	68.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	49.0	74.5
Two or More Races	48.0	74.0
White	68.0	84.0
Students with Disabilities	23.0	61.5
Economically Disadvantaged	40.0	70.0
English Learners	20.0	60.0

Metric 1.1.3. 71% of 11th grade students will score proficient in math and 73% will score proficient in ELA as measured by the ACT assessment by 2030. (2023-24 baseline: ACT scores for Math and ELA are 42.1% and 45.5% proficient respectively.)

Student Group	2023-24 Baseline (Percent Proficient - ELA)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient - ELA)	2023-24 Baseline (Percent Proficient - Math)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient - Math)
American Indian / Alaska Native	24.0	62.0	**	**
Asian	52.0	76.0	51.0	75.5
Black or African American	18.0	59.0	13.0	56.5
Hispanic or Latino	25.0	62.5	22.0	61.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35.0	67.5	**	**
Two or More Races	44.0	72.0	38.0	69.0
White	56.0	78.0	53.0	76.5
Students with Disabilities	10.0	55.0	8.0	54.0
Economically Disadvantaged	27.0	63.5	23.0	61.5
English Learners	4.0	52.0	4.0	52.0

**NDE masks or hides some student data to protect confidential information about students as required by federal law.

Metric 1.2.1. Reduce chronic absenteeism by 50% by 2030. (2023-24 baseline: Current rate of chronic absenteeism is 22% of students)

Student Group	2023-24 Baseline (Percent Proficient)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient)
American Indian / Alaska Native	50.0	25.0
Asian	16.0	8.0
Black or African American	46.0	23.0
Hispanic or Latino	31.0	15.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	32.0	16.0
Two or More Races	30.0	15.0
White	15.0	7.5
Students with Disabilities	31.0	15.5
Economically Disadvantaged	31.0	15.5
English Learners	31.0	15.5

Metric 3.1.2. 50% of students will engage in dual enrollment by 2030. (2022-23 baseline: 33% of students are engaged in dual enrollment)

Student Group	2022-23 Baseline (Percent Proficient)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient)
American Indian / Alaska Native	5.5	9.1
Asian	28.2	46.8
Black or African American	11.3	18.8
Hispanic or Latino	19.3	32.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8.7	14.4
Two or More Races	34.0	56.4
White	35.6	59.1
Students with Disabilities	*	*
Economically Disadvantaged	*	*
English Learners	*	*

*Data are currently unavailable for this student group

Metric 3.1.1. 94% of students will graduate by 2030. (2023-24 baseline: 88% graduation rate)

Student Group	2023-24 Baseline (Percent Proficient)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient)
American Indian / Alaska Native	74.0	87.0
Asian	90.0	95.0
Black or African American	76.0	88.0
Hispanic or Latino	80.0	90.0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	73.0	86.5
Two or More Races	84.0	92.0
White	93.0	96.5
Students with Disabilities	69.0	84.5
Economically Disadvantaged	82.0	91.0
English Learners	61.0	80.5

Metric 3.1.3. 50% of students will concentrate in a CTE career cluster by 2030. (2023-24 baseline: 39.7% of students are CTE concentrators)

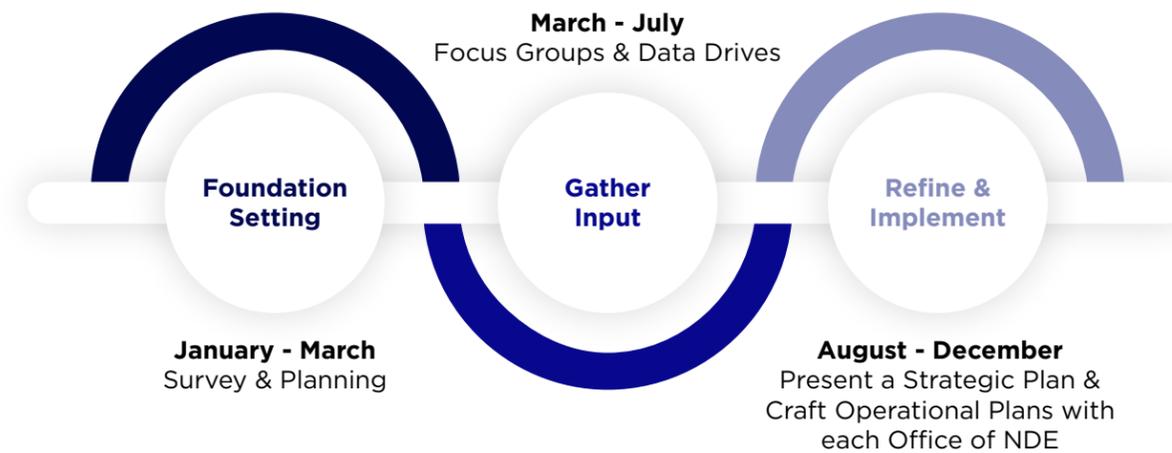
Student Group	2023-24 Baseline (Percent Proficient)	2029-30 Goal (Percent Proficient)
American Indian / Alaska Native	37.9	43.9
Asian	33.3	41.7
Black or African American	36.6	43.3
Hispanic or Latino	34.8	42.4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	30.3	40.2
Two or More Races	35.0	42.5
White	42.3	46.1
Students with Disabilities	32.1	41.1
Economically Disadvantaged	39.3	44.6
English Learners	21.1	35.6



Summary of the Strategic Planning Process

The Nebraska Department of Education followed a three-phase approach to strategic planning: Phase I Foundation Setting, Phase II Gather Input, and Phase III Refine and Implement. Among these three phases, the staff of the NDE gathered data from five sources to inform the future strategic plan. These three phases and five data sources are summarized below, with additional information available at education.ne.gov/commissioner/2026-strategic-plan.

3 Phase Approach



Phase I

Foundation Setting occurred between January and March 2025. During this time, NDE staff created and distributed surveys. While open to the public, the NDE coordinated the logistics needed to meet citizens and partners in a regional approach. Phase I ended with the closing of the public survey and nearly 2,000 responses from staff, teachers, administrators, community partners, and citizens of Nebraska. This survey is the first of five data sources that guide the work of the strategic plan, and is summarized at this link: education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Strat-Plan-Survey-Summary_4.14.25.pdf.

Phase II

Gather Input through regional and public focus groups, and analyze the data collected during Phase I. Between March and July 2025, the NDE staff studied the data collected from the public survey and used the gaps to solicit future feedback opportunities. For example, the public reached near consensus that the education system should have these three values: communication, respect, and accountability. With additional time and modes of communication, the NDE was able to ask for standard definitions of those values as they relate to our state, our students, and our work.

Phase II also allowed the NDE staff to meet with more than 200 partners in 10 communities. These **community focus groups**, the second of five data sources, allowed public input on the NDE's strategic planning process. Additionally, the NDE staff and Commissioner were able to secure valuable time with and feedback from students in four communities during **student focus groups**, the third of five data sources. The NDE staff then met with partners of the education system to discuss the work currently underway at the NDE through SWOT analyses. SWOT analysis includes examining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the work of the NDE and our partners. First, the NDE staff leading these efforts met with each of the 16 offices of the NDE. These **Internal SWOT Analyses** were the fourth of five data sources. Next, NDE staff asked for feedback from partners. These **External SWOT Analyses** were the final of five data sources.

Phase III

Refine and Implement is the final phase of work, executed from August to December 2025. The NDE's staff drafted the outline of the strategic plan under the guidance of Commissioner Maher. This framework was taken to the State Board at an August work session. Feedback was collected from board members with additional insight from employers, philanthropic partners, and school leaders. With additional context from these partners and the feedback collected in Phases I and II, the NDE staff drafted a strategic plan.

Final approval is expected from the State Board prior to implementation. In preparation for implementation, staff began creating operational plan templates that will be utilized by each office of the NDE and cross-agency teams. These templates are being developed to address each strategic priority and are intended to aid each NDE employee to see their work tied to the mission of the organization and the strategic priorities of Nebraska's education system. The public can expect to see the results of this work online at education.ne.gov/commissioner/2026-strategic-plan and during State Board meetings.



Nebraska Department of Education

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education.ne.gov



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 18, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Ami Huff
General Counsel

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM:

- Adopt revisions to the Board Operating Policies
- Adopt revisions to the Agency Management Policies

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Board policies.

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

As a result of discussion in the Executive Committee on August 7, 2025, in Lincoln; and on October 2, 2025 in Fremont; reviewing the current Board Operating Policies, NDE staff proposes the attached revisions as follows:

1. BOP 1.06: Language related to Public Participation to clarify the topic matter to be addressed in public comment.
2. AMP 2.01: Use of the term “Internal Operating Procedure” instead of “Administrative Memoranda” to reflect NDE current practice.

All proposed revisions are in legislative format.

Revisions to the BOP and AMP require a majority vote (BOP 1.15).

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December, 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$0.00

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS: Not applicable.

- Indicate the Funding Source:
- New or Renewal:
- If renewal, date of first approval:

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT: Not applicable.

- Indicate the method of procurement:
- Rationale for method of procurement:
- Rationale for contractor selection:

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS: Not applicable.

- Describe the grantee selection process:

BOP 1.06

Public Participation at Board Meetings

The Board establishes the following procedures with regard to public participation in the meetings of the Board.

The published agenda of meetings of the Board shall contain an item identified as public comment period. This period may be available to any person who wishes to address the Board on any matter **that is on the agenda or within the Board's authority to act**. Up to ninety minutes will be allowed for public comment period. A majority of members present and voting may take action to extend the total amount of time allowed for the public comment period. A majority of members present and voting may also take action to allow or terminate public comment at any time during a meeting. Each person may address the Board for up to five minutes. A majority of members present and voting may take action to reduce or extend the amount of individual time allotted to all speakers. If at any time persons appearing before the Board exceed the time limitations set forth in this policy or on the agenda, or become abusive or threatening in language or behavior, it shall be the responsibility of the President to refuse permission to continue to address the Board.

Each individual speaking to the Board will be required to complete a "Sign-in" card for identification of oneself. Individuals are required to include on the Sign-In card their name, address, ~~and~~ name of any organization represented, **and agenda item or topic that is within the Board's authority to act**. Individuals may be prohibited to speak in public comment if the Sign-In card does not include the required information. Persons speaking to the Board during public comment should state their name, city, and state at the beginning of their allotted time and may submit printed materials for the Board but may not use any other form of media. Anyone refusing to be identified will be prohibited from speaking.

Generally, Board members will not engage in dialogue during the public comment period. A Board member may request from the President to ask a clarifying question of a public comment speaker for

the purpose of understanding a point or statement made by the speaker. Asking a clarifying question should not result in extended dialogue.

Persons may address the Board for public comment purposes by written submission in lieu of live testimony. Such written submissions must be provided 24 hours prior to the start of the public meeting where public comment is scheduled, or by close of business of the Thursday prior to any meeting scheduled for a Monday and is limited to 750 words. Written public comments submitted in accordance with these requirements will be provided to the Board members and become part of the record of the meeting, but will not be read aloud during the meeting.

Revision History

- Created: 1981
- Last Revised: 2024
- Reviewed: 1984, 1995, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024
- Approved: 08/02/2024

Board Action History

- 11/15/1981 – Prior BCBI
(No copies of prior version.)
- 12/07/1984 – Prior 9322 BOP
(Same text as BCBI, except for deletion of statute references.)
- 12/08/1995 – Prior B12
(Similar text in first 3 paragraphs, but appearance extensions may also be granted by majority, public comment period reduced from 30 to 15 minutes for items not on agenda [and from 6 to 3 persons], added agenda item public comment designations, and option for allowing additional public comment during meetings.)
- 09/07/2006 – B12
(Added majority vote option for extending public comment period.)
- 03/05/2013 – B12
(Changed wording regarding the Public Comment Period.)

Nebraska State Board of Education
Board Operating Policies

- 01/07/2014 – B12

(Changed wording regarding the Public Comment Period.)

Board Action History (cont'd)

- 05/06/2016 – B12

(Added language for special appearances.)

- 03/03/2017 – B12

(Align language with B5 (formerly B11) regarding dates of Board Meetings.)

- 03/03/2017 – B12(B9)

(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. B12 is now B9)

- 12/11/2020 – B9

(Four-year review. Added language to reflect current approaches providing public participation in remote audio video/audio technologies at Board meetings.)

- 01/07/2022 - B9

(Changed wording regarding the Public Comment Period.)

- 12/02/2022 – B9(BOP 1.06)

(Reorganized Board bylaws and policies with new designated letters for categories of bylaws [BLW], board operating policies [BOP] and agency management policies [AMP]. B9 is now BOP 1.06.)

- 01/05/2024 – BOP 1.06

(Reordered information to organize like information together; deleted pandemic-specific paragraph; deleted opening paragraph and paragraph on contested cases; revised to include consistent language throughout the document.)

- 08/02/2024 – BOP 1.06

(Revised wording regarding the Public Comment Period required for all meetings per statutory revision; speakers shall state name, city, and state at beginning of public comment; reduced Public Comment Period from two hours to ninety minutes.)

Cross-References

- 84-1412 R.R.S.– Public participation.
- 79-317(2) R.R.S. – Public participation.
- State Board Policy B5, “Board Meeting Notification for Regular Meetings”

AMP 2.01

Human Resources Policies

Personnel Policies and Internal Operating Policies ~~Administrative Memoranda~~

The Commissioner is the administrative head of the Department and has the authority to establish and maintain an appropriate system of personnel administration and such administrative rules and regulations as are necessary for the proper execution of duties and responsibilities placed upon him or her. The Department Personnel Rules for employees exempt from the Bargaining Agreement shall be approved by the Board as these are subject to the Nebraska Administrative Procedures Act.

The Board also authorizes the Commissioner to promulgate a series of internal operating procedures for the Department at his or her discretion and to issue, revise, and update such internal operating procedures without subsequent approval by this Board.

Professional Personnel Hiring

The Board shall, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of Education, appoint and fix the compensation of all new professional positions in the Department, including any Deputy Commissioner. A new professional position is defined as one that requires specialized knowledge and intensive academic preparation and was not previously part of the organization of the agency.

The Commissioner may approve employment of any persons hired as a replacement Deputy Commissioner or a new professional position in the interim between Board meetings; however, such appointments are still subject to Board approval at the subsequent Board meeting.

Labor Negotiations

The Commissioner shall act as representative of the Board in all labor negotiations and shall appoint the bargaining team and chief negotiator. The Commissioner shall advise the Board prior to, and on a regular basis, during negotiations. Bargaining Agreements shall be approved by the Board.

Nebraska State Board of Education
Agency Management Policies

Equal Opportunity Employment and Nondiscrimination

The Board prohibits employment practices by the Department that are a violation of state and federal law.

Revision History

- Created: 1977
- Reviewed: 1978, 1979, 1984, 1995, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2016, 2020, 2022, 2023
- Approved: 01/05/2024

Board Action History

- 03/11/1977 – Prior BIB
(Mentioned statute authorizing system of personnel administration in list of Commissioner’s duties.)
- 07/07/1978 – Prior HAE
(Board appoints negotiating team and chief spokesman)
- 07/02/1979 – Prior GAAA
(Equal Opportunity Employment)
- 12/07/1984 – Prior 2231 DO
(Referenced personnel statute as in former BIB, and covered personnel policies, administrative memorandums, and State school policy manual)
- 12/07/1984 – Prior 4135.3 DO
(Same as former HAE)
- 12/07/1984 – 4118.11 DO
(Same as GAAA, without statute references)
- 12/08/1995 – Prior D4
(Combined 3 prior policies, but designated Commissioner to act as labor representative and to appoint bargaining team. Revised non-discrimination statement to cite statute.)
- 11/03/2006 – D4
(Deleted reference to State school policy manual and Personnel manual and added 48-004 R.R.S. reference.)
- 10/08/2009 – D4
(Amended to include Subsection (4) of 48-1004 R.R.S., which prohibits retaliation.)

Board Action History (cont'd)

- 03/03/2017 – D4(P4)
(Reorganized Board Policy Reference Manual with new designated letters for categories of policy [P], bylaws [B] and position statements [S]. D4 is now P4.)
- 09/04/2020 – P4
(Revisions providing further clarification to existing language that aligns with the Board's approval of the NDE Personnel Rules and also an addition that makes reference to the Department following not only state law concerning employment discrimination, but also Federal Law.)
- 12/02/2022 – P4
(Combined prior P6 with P4.)
- 12/02/2022 – P4(AMP 2.01)
(Reorganized Board bylaws and policies with new designated letters for categories of bylaws [BLW], board operating policies [BOP] and agency management policies [AMP]. P4 is now AMP 2.01.)
- 01/05/2024 – AMP 2.01
(Removed language deemed unnecessary; clarified definition of new professional position; clarified replacement Deputy Commissioner or new professional position hires are subject to approval at subsequent Board meetings; removed language referencing state statutes verbatim related to employment practices; revised to include consistent language throughout the document.)

Cross-References

- 79-306 R.R.S.
- 48-1004 R.R.S.
- 49-1104 R.R.S.
- 93 NAC 1-16

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 18, 2025

TO: Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Lane Carr
Administrator, Office of Policy and Strategic Initiatives

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS: Improvement Grant (BF.032025.003)

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Action

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Nebraska Revised Statute Sec. 79-1054 requires the use of improvement grant funds in the following areas:

- i) Teacher recruitment and retention, improvement for schools and school districts, improvement in student performance in the subject areas of reading and mathematics, and other improvement areas identified by the state board,
- ii) Learning platform,
- iii) Centralized education records system for students under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court and the employment of registrars.

See below for relevant excerpts of statutory language for the learning platform:

(b) For purposes of this subsection, learning platform means a three-dimensional, game-based learning platform for use by middle school and high school students.

(c)(i) The State Board of Education shall establish a grant program to procure or purchase an annual license for learning platforms for use in schools to engage students in coursework and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Such grants shall be funded using lottery funds pursuant to section 79-3501.

(ii) The State Board of Education shall establish standards that a learning platform shall meet in the subject areas of chemistry, physical science, and mathematics. The state board shall develop the criteria to prioritize the grant applications.

(iii) A developer may apply to the Commissioner of Education in a manner prescribed by the state board for a grant under this subsection for a learning platform that:

- (A) Is designed to teach information related to chemistry, physical science, or mathematics;
- (B) Aligns with the standards established by the state board relating to chemistry, physical science, or mathematics;
- (C) Connects such standards with real-world technologies and applications;
- (D) Highlights science, technology, engineering, and mathematics career pathways in Nebraska; and
- (E) Meets any additional requirements set out by the State Board of Education.

(iv) Any developer that receives a grant under this subsection shall provide access to and use of its learning platform to all Nebraska school districts.

(v) Any grant awarded pursuant to this subsection shall be awarded by July 1 of each year.

(d) On or before December 1 of each calendar year, the state board shall electronically submit a report to the Clerk of the Legislature on the grant program, including, but not limited to, the recipients of the program and evaluations of the effectiveness of the grant program. The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out this subsection.

Previous Action:

State Board approved criteria and priority areas at the August 2024 meeting.

First Application Process:

Two proposals were submitted and reviewed by the NDE staff. The NDE staff recommended neither application for the grant. The State Board has taken no action as of December 6, 2024

Second Application Process

Statutory changes took effect September 1, 2025 prompting the NDE to revisit the improvement grant program. A revised Request for Application was distributed and closed on November 3. Two proposals were submitted and reviewed by the NDE staff. The recommendation from that process is to award a grant to Plasma Games.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: Up to \$1 million

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Improvement Grant Funds (Lottery)
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for contractor selection: N/A

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: Competitive Grant - A request for application solicits multiple vendors, partners, and entities to bid on the scope of work necessary to implement the Innovative Learning Platform.
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: December 4, 2025

The Budget and Finance Committee reports that at its Thursday, December 4th meeting, members present were Kristin Christensen, Maggie Douglas, Kirk Penner and Lisa Schonhoff. The Committee reviewed four action items. The first item reviewed was for a potential contract related to a high-quality IEP Development and Implementation Pilot Project. The Committee recommends approval of this item. The second action item reviewed was a potential contract with the OCIO's office for Federally required IDEA and Early Childhood data reporting systems. The Committee recommends approval of this item. Next, the committee reviewed a potential contract for a veteran's education management system application and database. The Committee recommends approval of this item. The last action item reviewed was for a possible contract to evaluate the 21st Century Learning Centers. The Committee recommends approval of this item.

The Committee then reviewed one discussion item for board member travel expenses noting no concerns.

Last, the Committee reviewed four information items including an update on the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant expenditures, the Trust Fund Budget for the Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who are Blind or Visually Impaired, a potential contract for the Nebraska Inclusive Systems Capacity Project and a TEEOSA information update.

This concludes the Budget and Finance Committee report.

Kristin Christensen, Chair

*Submit a printed copy to the Committee Chair and email to the Recording Secretary.
Updated 02.02.2023



2025-2026 Board Travel

At-A-Glance

Budgeted

\$20,141

Monthly Spending

\$3,000
Average

Annual Spending

\$36,000
Projected

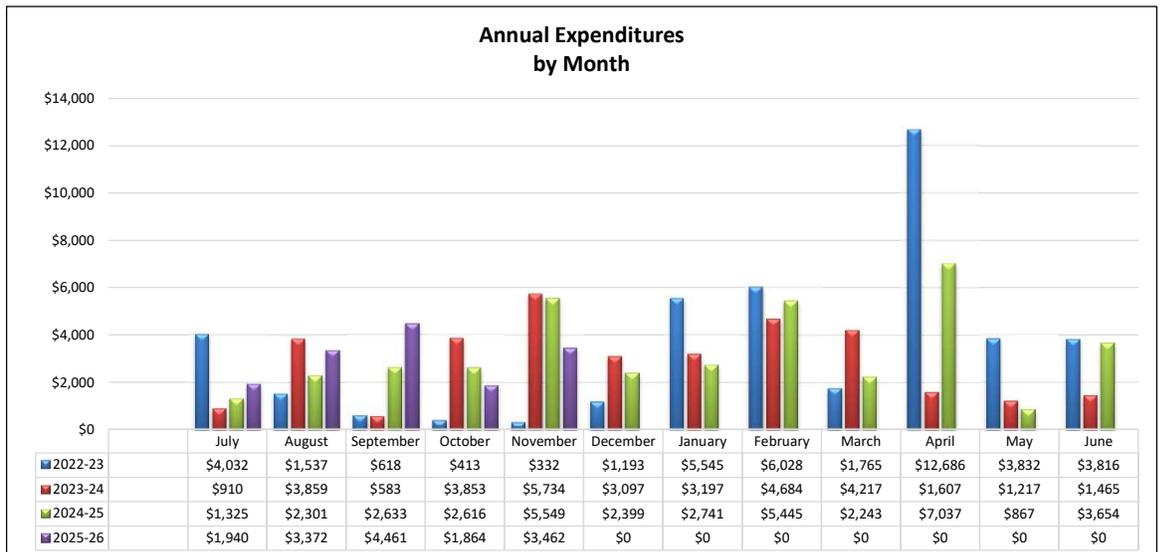
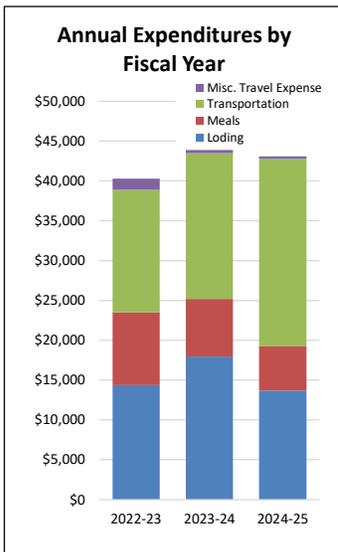
Expenditures

Lodging
Meals
Mileage



Board Member Activity

District	Board Member	Current Year July 2025-June 2026		Prior Year July 2024-June 2025		Variance	
		November	Year-To-Date	November	Year-To-Date	November	Year-To-Date
1	Patsy Koch Johns <i>Incumbent</i>	\$0	\$0	\$92	\$376	-\$92	-\$376
1	Kristin Christensen <i>Appointed Dec. 2024</i>	\$183	\$1,058	\$0	\$0	\$183	\$1,058
2	Lisa Fricke <i>Incumbent</i>	\$0	\$0	\$1,012	\$2,483	-\$1,012	-\$2,483
2	Maggie Douglas <i>Appointed Dec. 2024</i>	\$0	\$1,133	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,133
3	Patti Gubbels <i>Incumbent</i>	\$0	\$0	\$1,034	\$2,335	-\$1,034	-\$2,335
3	Lisa Schonohoff <i>Appointed Dec. 2024</i>	\$632	\$3,301	\$0	\$0	\$632	\$3,301
4	Jacquelyn Morrison <i>Incumbent</i>	\$0	\$0	\$274	\$956	-\$274	-\$956
4	Liz Renner <i>Appointed Dec. 2024</i>	\$0	\$932	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$932
5	Kirk Penner	\$0	\$44	\$509	\$548	-\$509	-\$504
6	Sherry Jones	\$835	\$2,390	\$833	\$2,456	\$2	-\$66
7	Elizabeth Tegtmeier - President	\$1,812	\$6,031	\$1,710	\$4,463	\$102	\$1,568
8	Deborah Neary - Vice President	\$0	\$210	\$86	\$455	-\$86	-\$245
		\$3,462	\$15,099	\$5,549	\$14,072	-\$2,088	\$1,027
Annual Budget			\$20,141		\$19,754		
Under or -Over Budget			\$5,042		\$5,682		



In-State Travel Authorization Reports - December

Name	Event Name	Date	Location	Board Bylaw B16 Code A-F
Kristin Christensen	(NONE)			
Lisa Schonhoff	(NONE)			
Sherry Jones	2025 NASB State Education Conference	November 21, 2025	Omaha, NE	E
Elizabeth Tegtmeier	ESU 13 Superintendent meeting	December 17, 2025	Scottsbluff, NE	E

In-State Travel Authorization Reports - December

Name	Event Name	Date	Location	Board Bylaw B16 Code A-F
Maggie Douglas	(NONE)			
Liz Renner	(NONE)			
Kirk Penner	(NONE)			
Deborah Neary	(NONE)			



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 24, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Amy Rhone, Administrator – The Office of Special Education

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to contract with Goalbook for the High-Quality IEP Development and Implementation Pilot Project.

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Grant

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Pursuant to federal and state regulations—specifically, 34 C.F.R. § 300.600 and 92 Neb. Admin. Code § 51-004.14—the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), through its Office of Special Education (OSE), is charged with monitoring the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and ensuring compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations. These regulations require that Nebraska provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with exceptionalities in the least restrictive environment (LRE), while also ensuring that parents and stakeholders are afforded the procedural safeguards set forth under IDEA and Nebraska Rule 51.

In alignment with these responsibilities, the NDE, Office of Special Education, issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a qualified contractor to implement a multi-year, High-Quality IEP Development and Implementation Pilot Project. This initiative is designed to assist a selected Nebraska school districts in building a holistic, scalable system that enhances the development and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through improved instructional practices and more effective delivery of specially designed instruction (SDI).

The overarching purpose of this pilot program is to:

- Strengthen the quality and instructional relevance of IEPs;
- Improve the effectiveness of special education teachers through coaching, professional learning, and the use of evidence-based practices; and
- Boost academic and functional outcomes for students with disabilities by ensuring clear alignment between student needs, IEP goals, instructional strategies, and progress monitoring systems.

Through the formal Request for Proposals (RFP) procurement process, Goalbook has been identified as the qualified vendor to support this work. In accordance with BOP 1.14, the Office of Special Education is submitting this rationale to authorize activities associated with the selection of this vendor for a four-year approval period. Beginning with the initiation of the contract in 2025, this approval would allow the contract to be executed and subsequently renewed annually through 2029, contingent upon the continued availability of federal funds. The Contract will specify the work to be completed as detailed below.

Goalbook will work collaboratively with participating district(s) to develop and implement an integrated framework that includes:

- Professional learning tailored to the needs of special educators and support staff;
- Instructional coaching and support for IEP development and delivery;
- Tools and resources that are data-informed, sustainable, and responsive to district diversity.

Goalbook's proposal included a detailed implementation plan, methods for measuring impact, and a clear vision for how successful strategies can be scaled statewide over time.

Goalbook demonstrated expertise in special education systems design, instructional leadership, and educator capacity building and demonstrated a proven track record of improving outcomes for students with disabilities through systemic support for IEP implementation.

This pilot project directly supports the state's commitment to continuous improvement in special education and its obligation under federal and state law to ensure that children with exceptionalities receive high-quality, individualized educational services.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST:

Year 1 (2025-26)	\$300,000
Year 2 (2026-27)	\$250,000
Year 3 (2027-28)	\$250,000
Year 4 (2028-29)	\$250,000

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal IDEA – Part B, 611 and 619 Funding
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval:

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: Competitive Negotiation
- Rationale for method of procurement: NDE reviewed proposals from multiple potential vendors via a publicly posted RFP. Vendor responses were evaluated by the evaluation committee members & the committee chose a qualified vendor for awarding the contract. A Request for Proposals was publicly

posted on the websites of the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services, Nebraska Department of Education, and The Office of Special Education. The RFP was also shared on The Office of Special Education's Social Media Platforms. The proposals were reviewed and scored by a team of 3. This contract does not create an employee/employer relationship.

- Rationale for contractor selection: Goalbook's proposal earned the highest overall score from the evaluation committee members. Goalbook's proposal included a detailed implementation plan, methods for measuring impact, and a clear vision for how successful strategies can be scaled statewide over time. Goalbook demonstrated expertise in special education systems design, instructional leadership, and educator capacity building and demonstrated a proven track record of improving outcomes for students with disabilities through systemic support for IEP implementation.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Brad Dirksen, Administrator, Accreditation, Certification, & Approval
Dr. Marisol Birth, Director, Private Postsecondary Career School Approval and Veterans Education

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Contract for a Veterans Education Management System Application and Database

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): contract

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Veterans Education section of the Department approves and monitors education programs which involve the utilization of G.I. Bill funds. The Department currently uses a database to manage the work of this section; however, the database is currently not able to be supported. There have also been significant changes to the veterans education work at the federal level that mandated changing state processes and created uniform forms across all states. It is essential that the Department replace this system to avoid a potential disruption of service to veterans and eligible participants in their utilization of education programs and benefits.

The Department has explored options to replace the current system and has decided to pursue a non-competitive negotiation through a sole source. A formal competitive solicitation is not feasible due to the highly specialized nature of the system required and the limited demand for such a system. The system must align with federal VA compliance standards, support multi-program management across a diverse range of educational and training formats, and integrate with existing federal systems, such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) uniform application forms. Upon extensive research, a sole source was identified, the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Development. The system has been implemented in Michigan, a state with similar oversight responsibilities as Nebraska, and was specifically designed to support the State Approving Agency (SAA) functions.

The contract with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Development will establish non-transferable ownership of the application system to the Nebraska Department of Education for internal business purposes.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$65,000.00

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: Federal, Veterans Benefit Administration, Administrative Funds. The funds for this contract have been budgeted in the Office's annual allocation.
- New or Renewal: New
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: Non-competitive Negotiation – Sole Source
- Rationale for method of procurement: A formal competitive solicitation is not feasible due to the highly specialized nature of the system required. The system must align with federal VA compliance standards, support multi-program management across a diverse range of educational and training formats, and integrate with existing federal systems, such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) uniform application forms: VA Form 22-10288 (Application for Approval of an Educational Program) and VA Form 22-10287 (Application for Approval of a Licensing or Certification Test). Only one known system, the Michigan-developed Veterans Education Database Management System, meets all these criteria. It has been implemented in Michigan, a state with comparable oversight responsibilities, and was specifically designed to support State Approving Agency (SAA) functions, including program approval, modification tracking, compliance monitoring, and reporting for GI Bill®-eligible programs.
- Rationale for contractor selection: State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Development was identified as the sole source available.

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process:

**Updated 08.15.2023*



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 26, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Zainab Rida, Ph.D. and Erika Wibbels, Office of Coordinated Student Support Services

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Action Item: 21st Century Community Learning Centers statewide evaluation contract (BF.102025.003)

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Contract

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The 21st CCLC is a competitive grant program to support the establishment of community learning centers offering expanded learning opportunities afterschool and in the summer. This federally funded program is authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended. The priority for 21st CCLC is to provide hands-on learning and positive youth development experiences for students who may have an opportunity gap, such as living in poverty, are highly mobile, are limited English proficient, or those who may start the school year learning below their grade level.

Nebraska's 21st CCLCs create an afterschool environment focused on three overarching goals: 1) improving overall student academic success, 2) increasing positive behavior and social interactions, and 3) increasing active and meaningful family and community engagement. These programs serve 11,000+ students across 120 sites statewide.

- Evaluation is a federal statutory requirement for the program and ensures accountability, continuous improvement, and alignment with evidence-based practices. NDE does not have the capacity to collect the necessary data and report on the federal GPRA (Government Performance & Results Act). Beyond the federal requirements, contracting with an evaluator supports 21st CCLC programs to hold up the quality framework established through the state board position statement.
- NDE published an RFP in order to find the best evaluation contractor through our NDE procurement process. NDE answered 87 vendor questions before the procurement closed at 2:00 pm on November 4, 2025. Four proposals were submitted. A team was formed to review and score the proposals using a rubric

designed for evaluating the applications. Evaluators worked independently to complete the evaluation form which consisted of corporate overview, technical proposal, & cost proposal. Partners for Insightful Evaluation was selected based on achieving the highest score while providing the needed components.

- The contract is coming to the Board for a multi-year project as an action item. Contract will start 1/2/26.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST:

- Year 1: \$314,000.00
- Year 2: \$275,000.00
- Year 3: \$275,000.00
- Year 4: \$275,000.00
- Year 5: \$275,000.00

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: (*--e.g., Federal, State*) Federal

The funds for this activity are included in the grant award for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

- New or Renewal: New

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: **Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP)**
- Rationale for method of procurement: A competitive RFP ensures transparency and allows the State to select the evaluator that best meets Nebraska's 21st CCLC statewide evaluation needs. This method supports compliance with federal and state procurement requirements and encourages multiple bids from qualified organizations.
- Rationale for contractor selection: The selected contractor demonstrated the strongest capacity to meet Nebraska's 21st CCLC statewide evaluation requirements, including:
 - Proven experience conducting large-scale or statewide program evaluations
 - Expertise with federal reporting expectations
 - Ability to manage statewide data collection, analysis, and reporting systems
 - A comprehensive approach to supporting local subgrantees with technical assistance
 - Competitive cost structure aligned with state funding guidelines
 - Strong references and evidence of prior successful statewide education evaluation work

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process:

**Updated 08.15.2023*



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: December 4, 2025

The Planning and Evaluation Committee reports on their committee meeting on December 4, 2025. The members present were Lisa Schonhoff, Sherry Jones, Deborah Neary, and Kristin Christensen.

The committee reviewed two action items related to the contract for the 2026-27 standard college admission test and the Assessment and Reporting Plan and Assessment Technical Report for 2025-2026. The committee recommends board approval of these items.

The committee reviewed a discussion item with NDE staff providing a summary and answering questions related to the Community Achievement Plan of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

The committee reviewed informational items related to Social Studies Standards Review update and the Priority School Designation Process update. NDE staff will bring these items to a future meeting for discussion and subsequent approval, where appropriate.

This concludes the Planning and Evaluation report.

Lisa Schonhoff, Chair

*Submit a printed copy to the Committee Chair and email to the Recording Secretary.
Updated 02.02.2023



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Dr. Trudy K Clark, Director of Statewide Assessment

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Action Item: Approve the Intent to Award to ACT Education, Corp as the contractor for the 2026-2027 standard college admission test.

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Contract

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 2007, the Nebraska Legislature passed 79-760.03 establishing a statewide system for the assessment of student learning and for reporting the performance of school districts. Specifically, this law required the state board to a) prescribe a statewide assessment of reading, mathematics, and science; and b) recommend national assessment instruments for the purpose of national comparison.

In 2016, the Nebraska Legislature amended it to state “Beginning with school year 2017-18, the state board shall select a national assessment instrument that is also used as a standard college admission test which shall be administered to students in the eleventh grade in every public high school in each school district. Each school district shall report individual student data for scores and sub-scores according to procedures established by the state board and the department pursuant to section [79-760.05](#).”.

In response to 79-760.03, the Department of Education released its first Request for Proposal to identify a contractor to provide a statewide assessment system and reporting of student performance in 2008. The Department released the initial Request for Proposal in 2016 for a standard, off-the-shelf, college admission test.

- Procurement guidelines indicated a new Request for Proposal was generally released every five (5) years. In December 2020, the Department of Education released a new Request for Proposal to identify a contractor for the college test in 2021-2022. There was only one submission.
- Per the procurement guidelines, a new Request for Proposal was required to identify a contractor for 2026-2027.
- The Request for Proposal process included the following:
 - A Request for Proposal released on September 26, 2025 by the Department of Administrative Services and concluded on October 31, 2025

- State responded to vendor questions by October 17, 2025
 - Proposal opening occurred on October 31, 2025
 - The evaluation committee members included:
 - Director of Statewide Assessment
 - Assistant Director of Statewide Assessment
 - Director of Accountability
 - The evaluation committee reviewed and evaluated the proposals submitted by two (2) vendors: College Board (SAT) and ACT Education, Corp (ACT)
 - Based on these evaluations, the evaluation committee selected a contractor for the 2026-2027 standard college admission test.
 - The Department of Administrative Services plans to announce a Notification of Intent to Award on December 8, 2025
- The standard college admission test contract would cover July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027, with the option to renew for four (4) additional years.
 - ACT Education, Corp is responsible for providing a nationally normed and widely accepted standardized off-the-shelf College Entrance Exam, or College Admission Test, for eligible Third-year Cohort students as part of a balanced assessment system of English Language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science assessments at a competitive and reasonable cost. This exam is a state-required accountability assessment (See Neb. Rev Stat. §79-760.03). This exam will provide students with college reportable scores that can be used, at college or university discretion, to inform application and admission decisions. The proposed cost for the standard college admission assessment system is \$1,100,000.00.
 - Specifically, the contractor will provide a standard college admission test to meet the requirement of the state (e.g., Nebraska statute 79-760.03) and the high school assessment to meet the federal government requirement (e.g., Every Student Succeeds Act). The contractor will provide the assessment of learning for students in the third-year cohort (generally 11th grade) in English Language Arts, mathematics, and science and report the performance of school districts.
 - ACT Education, Corp is offering optional services including the PreACT and ACT Online Prep, Powered by MasteryPrep. These options cost \$323,500.
 - The contractor will also serve Nebraska public school educators who make educational decisions based on ACT test results. The contractor will provide professional learning opportunities as part of the base contract.
 - The Request for Proposal process and notice of the “Intent to Award” were discussed during the May and October 2025 state board meetings.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$1,423,500.00

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: State and Federal
 - The funds for this contract are budgeted in the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment’s annual allocation of state funds.
- New or Renewal: New

- If renewal, date of first approval: NA

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: Request for Proposal/Competitive Bid
- Rationale for method of procurement: The necessity for a statewide assessment system to meet state and federal statutes required a process to seek bids from assessment vendors conducted by the Department of Administrative Services.
- Rationale for contractor selection: The evaluation team selected this contractor based on the written proposal.

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process:

**Updated 08.15.2023*



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 14, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Dr. Trudy K Clark, Director of Statewide Assessment

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Action Item: Adopt the Assessment and Reporting Plan and Assessment Technical Report for 2025-2026 (E.092025.002)

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Other

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The Assessment and Reporting Plan and Assessment Technical Report for 2025-2026 provides information on: the categories of achievement, nationally normed referenced test, confidentiality of student information, technical reports, and national performance data.
- Section 79-760.03(2) requires the State Board to adopt a plan for an assessment and reporting system annually, and submit that plan to the Governor, Clerk of the Legislature, and Chair of the Education Committee.
- This work serves a statutory requirement to inform the legislature and the Governor regarding the assessment plan for the state of Nebraska.
- The assessment plan must be approved and submitted annually. Since the last assessment plan was submitted in 2024, the assessment plan must be submitted in 2025. Data shared in this report was under embargo until November 2025.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: NA

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: NA
- New or Renewal: NA
- If renewal, date of first approval: NA

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT: NA

- Indicate the method of procurement

- Rationale for method of procurement:
- Rationale for contractor selection:

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS: NA

- Describe the grantee selection process:

**Updated 08.15.2023*

Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan

The Nebraska Department of Education Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan includes information for the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) for the 2025-2026 school year.

- The State Board of Education has adopted Nebraska College and Career Ready (CCR) standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The assessment plan reflects the transition of the statewide summative assessments to measure Nebraska’s College and Career Ready Standards.
- Per ESSA and 79-760.03, the statewide summative assessment must measure the students’ knowledge and skills according to the standards adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education.
 - English Language Arts assessments transitioned to measure CCR in spring 2017. The State Board of Education approved the updated standards in 2021 and they were first assessed in Spring 2023.
 - Mathematics assessments transitioned to measure CCR in spring 2018. The State Board of Education approved the updated standards in 2022 and they were first assessed in Spring 2024.
 - Science assessments transitioned to measure CCR in spring 2022. Implementation was delayed due to the cancellation of assessments in the spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Board of Education approved the updated standards in 2024 and they will be first assessed in Spring 2026.
- Student results from all statewide assessments in Nebraska are reported using three categories of achievement.
 - Assessments that evaluate Nebraska’s College and Career Ready Standards—both general assessments (grades 3–8) and alternate assessments (grades 3–8 and high school)—report results using three performance levels.
 - Developing: Developing learners **do not yet demonstrate proficiency** in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level, as specified in the assessed Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards. These results provide evidence that the student may need additional support for academic success at the next grade level.
 - On Track: On track learners **demonstrate proficiency** in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level, as specified in the assessed Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards. These results provide evidence that the student will likely be ready for academic success at the next grade level.
 - Advanced: Advanced learners **demonstrate high levels of proficiency** in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level, as specified in the Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards. These results provide evidence that the student will likely be ready for academic success at the next grade level.
 - Content area assessments that are measured with the ACT report three performance levels:
 - Developing
 - On Track
 - ACT Benchmark

Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan

Note: Students who score in the On Track and ACT Benchmark levels are identified as meeting expectations.

- Districts are required to test students on a nationally normed referenced test for the purpose of comparing Nebraska student achievement to other states.
 - MAP Growth data has been the nationally normed reference test data districts have used to meet the Rule 10 requirement. While items may be aligned to Nebraska state standards, they are not written to specific Nebraska content standards.
 - NSCAS Growth provided national normed percentile information for this purpose for the first time in spring 2022 for districts not using MAP Growth.
 - With the end of the through-year assessment program, NDE has returned to MAP Growth as the data source for the assessment plan report on student performance on a national normed reference test.
 - The percentage of students at the 50th percentile or higher are included in this report on pages 6 and 7.
 - Students that perform at the 50th percentile perform the same or better than 50% of students that take the test nationally.
- Pages 3 and 4 cover two items:
 - NDE protects the confidentiality of student information.
 - NDE assures inclusion of all students in statewide summative assessments, including students with disabilities and English learners. Nebraska schools have high participation rates, easily meeting the 95% federal requirement with many schools at 100%.
- At the top of page 6 is a link to the Statewide Summative Assessment Technical Reports—including those for General assessments, Alternate assessments, and standard college admission tests (such as the ACT)—containing extensive documentation. These reports span hundreds of pages and cover topics such as item validity, scoring reliability, universal design principles, test administration procedures, test security measures, and numerous other technical aspects essential to large-scale assessment systems.
- Pages six and seven include tables showing how Nebraska students perform on norm-referenced assessments compared to national norms.

Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan

Nebraska Department of Education				
Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Schedule 2025-2026				
Name of Summative Assessment	Grades Tested	Administration Dates	Performance Levels Reported	Released on Nebraska Education Profile
English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21 st Century (ELPA21)	Kindergarten-12	January 26 - March 13, 2026	Proficient Progressing Emerging	Fall 2026
NSCAS General English Language Arts and Mathematics	3-8	March 23 - May 1, 2026	Advanced On Track Developing	Fall 2026
NSCAS General Science	5 and 8	March 23 - May 1, 2026	Advanced On Track Developing	Fall 2026
NSCAS Alternate English Language Arts and Mathematics	3-8 and 11 (third-year cohort)	March 23 - May 1, 2026	Advanced OnTrack Developing	Fall 2026
NSCAS Alternate Science	5, 8, and 11 (third-year cohort)	March 23- May 1, 2026	Advanced On Track Developing	Fall 2026
ACT English Language Arts Mathematics Science	11 (third-year cohort)	March 24 - May 1, 2026 Dependent on mode	ACT Benchmark On Track Developing	Fall 2026
Nationally Norm-Referenced Assessment	At least one grade in each of the following two levels: grades 2-5, grades 6-8	August 15, 2025 - May 22, 2026	Percent of Students at or above the 50 th Percentile	Fall 2026

Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan

- **Nebraska Department of Education provides measures to protect confidentiality of student information.**

NDE shall utilize various procedures and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of student records collected and maintained by the agency. These procedures shall include assignment of a unique identifier to each student, a system of restricted access to data, and statistical cutoff procedures.

 - A unique student identification number (State Student ID) is assigned to each Nebraska student. The State Student ID is computer-generated and contains no embedded meaning. After being checked for duplicates, it becomes permanently assigned.
 - Security protocols shall be designed and implemented by NDE. They shall limit who may have access to the data and for what purposes.
 - NDE has adopted masking rules to ensure that confidentiality is maintained in all public reporting of personally identifiable student information from educational records.
 - All NDE personnel collecting or using personally-identifiable student information shall be provided instruction regarding procedures adopted in accordance with this policy.
 - NDE shall maintain a current listing of agency personnel who have access to personally-identifiable student information through authentication and internal links.

- **Nebraska Department of Education provides measures to assure inclusion of students with disabilities, students who are English Learners, and students entering school for the first time.**
 - Students with Disabilities
 - All students with disabilities are expected to participate in the statewide summative assessments. No student, including students with disabilities, may be excluded from the state assessment and accountability system. All students are required to have access to grade-level content, instruction, and assessment.
 - Students with disabilities may be included in state assessment and accountability in the following ways:
 - Students may be tested on the statewide tests without accommodations.
 - Students may be tested on the statewide tests with accommodations specified in the student’s IEP. Accommodations appropriate for the statewide tests are found in the [Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual](#)
 - Students may be tested on alternate statewide summative assessment measures.
 - Students Learning the English Language
 - Both state and federal laws require the inclusion of all students in the statewide summative assessments; therefore, English Learner students must be tested on statewide summative assessments.
 - ESEA requirements allow appropriate testing accommodations for all EL students.
 - In determining appropriate accommodations for students, districts should use the [Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System Accessibility Manual](#)

Summative Assessment Administration and Reporting Plan

- Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Students
 - A Recently Arrived Limited English Proficient Student is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as a student with limited English proficiency who has attended schools in the United States for less than twelve months.
 - Under NCLB, students who had a U.S. school for less than 12 months could be granted a waiver from the NSCAS-ELA assessment. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), all ELs in Nebraska must participate in all statewide summative assessments.
 - For the purpose of state accountability:
 - In Year 1: For the first year of enrollment, exclude the results on the English language arts, mathematics, and science assessments in the state accountability system.
 - In Year 2: Assess the student but include only a growth measure in the state accountability system.
 - In Year 3: Assess the student and include proficiency (achievement scores) in the state accountability system.
- §1111(b)(3)(A)(ii)

Technical Reports for Administration of Statewide Summative Assessment

- The department shall conduct studies to verify the technical quality of assessment instruments.

All Technical Reports of summative statewide assessment are available on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/assessment/technical-reports/>

- The department shall conduct studies to demonstrate the comparability of assessment instrument results.
 - NSCAS General English Language Arts and Mathematics (Combined test model) provide a RIT score for each student. The RIT is reflective of the score a student would have likely received if they had taken NWEA’s MAP Growth Reading or Mathematics assessments. RIT scores will also be generated when students take a MAP Growth assessment in reading, mathematics, and general science. For 2026, the RIT score may come from either the NSCAS Combined test model or MAP Growth.

**Comparison of National Assessment Instruments (NAI) and
Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)
MAP Growth – ELA 2025**

Percentile is a comparison score between a particular score and the scores of the rest of the group. It shows the percentage of scores that a particular score surpassed. For example, a score at the 50th percentile means that the score is above 50% of the scores. The table below indicates the percentage of Nebraska students that scored at or above the 50th percentile when compared to national norms for the same time period.

Nebraska Student Achievement as Determined by National Norms on MAP Growth Reading		
MAP Growth English Language Arts- RIT		
GRADE	Percentage of Students at or above the 50 th Percentile	Number of Tests
3	62	23,803
4	58	23,555
5	53	23,928
6	48	23,665
7	44	23,655
8	44	23,577

Comparison of National Assessment Instruments (NAI) and
Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS)
MAP Growth – Mathematics 2025

Percentile is a comparison score between a particular score and the scores of the rest of the group. It shows the percentage of scores that a particular score surpassed. For example, a score at the 50th percentile means that the score is above 50% of the scores. The table below indicates the percentage of Nebraska students that scored at or above the 50th percentile when compared to national norms for the same time period.

Nebraska Student Achievement as Determined by National Norms on MAP Growth Mathematics		
MAP Growth Mathematics- RIT		
GRADE	Percentage of Students at or above the 50 th Percentile	Number of Tests
3	58	23,785
4	56	23,533
5	55	23,880
6	54	23,582
7	49	23,602
8	53	23,495



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Shirley Vargas, Ed.L.D.
School Transformation Officer

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Community Achievement Plan of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Plan

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In accordance with Nebraska Revised Statute § 79-2122, which took effect on July 21, 2016, the districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties collaboratively developed a Community Achievement Plan (CAP). The CAP serves as the plan that brings multiple stakeholders, initiatives, and plans together to collectively improve the outcomes of the students served in Douglas and Sarpy counties.

The CAP is comprised of four major strands of work that are in various stages of development, implementation, and data gathering and reporting. The four areas are the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, North and South Omaha Learning Centers, the MOEC Collective Impact Plan, and the Superintendents' Attendance Plan.

N.R.S. §79-2122 requires "an approved plan (that) shall remain in effect for three years except as revised with the approval of the state board. The learning community shall submit a report on the success of the plan, evaluation results, and proposed revisions by December 1 immediately following the completion of the first two years of implementation and every three years thereafter." The CAP was last approved by the State Board on April 7, 2023.

Attachments: CAP Progress Update 2025, CAP Evaluations (2023-2026), CAP 2026-2029

Draft Timeline:

- December 2025: Discussion Item on CAP
- January 2026: Action Item on CAP

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: N/A

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source:
- New or Renewal:
- If renewal, date of first approval:

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement:
- Rationale for method of procurement:
- Rationale for contractor selection:

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: NA

**Updated 07.06.2023*

Community Achievement Plan (CAP) of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (2026-2029)



Approved by the
Superintendents of the
Learning Community
on: 11/13/25

Approved by the
Learning Community
Coordinating Council
on: 11/19/25

Approved by the
Nebraska State Board
of Education on:

Vision

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

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.

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Community Achievement Plan (CAP) of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (2026-2029)
Approved by the Nebraska State Board of Education, April 14, 2023
Revisions and Progress Reports Submitted, October 3, 2025

CAP Background

Required by Nebraska Revised Statute §79-2122, the Community Achievement Plan (CAP), was originally approved by the State Board of Education on April 7, 2017, and revised and approved on April 14, 2023. The CAP impacts the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy counties, the 11 school districts contained therein, and Educational Service Unit’s 3 and 19. Over 125,000 PreK-12 students attend the schools of the Learning Community and are impacted by the Community Achievement Plan.

The Community Achievement Plan was developed to provide synergy and collaboration between already existing programs and newly conceived initiatives. These included:

- the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan—a partnership between the 11 school districts, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska, and the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan was specifically developed in response to legislation (LB 585) passed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2013 that directed the Learning Community Coordinating Council to establish an early childhood program designed by the metro Omaha superintendents for young children living in high concentrations of poverty. The plan is financed by a half-cent levy on property values, the funds shared roughly equally between the Institute and the participating school districts;
- the Superintendents’ Attendance Plan – a partnership between the 11 school districts, Douglas and Sarpy County law enforcement agencies, county juvenile court systems, county attorneys’ offices, and Nebraska state offices to focus on increasing student attendance;
- the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties’ North and South Omaha Learning Centers; and
- a Collective Impact Initiative developed by the Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC).

CAP General Operating Principles

The completion of the Community Achievement Plan necessitated that those responsible for its completion do so based upon a set of shared operating principles. The principles included a focus on

- students of poverty and limited English proficiency, within the framework of all students,
- student achievement and access to programs and services, and

- common goals for student achievement (academic readiness, proficiency in reading and math, graduation, successful transition to the next level, attendance, and completion of grade and program, participation in work experiences, etc.) across the continuum of their PK- 16 experiences.

To actualize these principles, the Learning Community will:

- continue to foster collaboration between and among the 11 school districts, Educational Service Units 3 and 19 and the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy counties, and community partners
- continue to address achievement barriers,
- be research and/or evidence-based,
- utilize best practices in addressing achievement issues,
- acknowledge the diversity of the member districts and their communities,
- provide customized plans matched to the schools/districts and community needs,
- capitalize on recently developed collaborative action while developing new initiatives to address critical needs, and
- promote continuous improvement while recognizing that changing conditions will necessitate changes in strategies over time.

Community Achievement Plan

These sections are intended to enhance and expand upon current initiatives as the plan evolves and additional community partners become involved. The CAP consists of four sections containing goals, strategies, and actions associated with each:

I. Section 1: Increased Access to Early Childhood Programming

1.1 Customized Assistance for Districts

All districts in the Learning Community will have access to customized assistance to support their early childhood goals. The Institute will partner with district leaders to co-create and monitor action plans, provide consultation and technical assistance, and build district capacity to design, implement, and sustain high-quality early childhood systems and programs.

1.2 School as Hub Programming for Schools

Districts will deepen implementation of the School as Hub model in selected schools with high concentrations of poverty. This approach integrates leadership effectiveness, instructional excellence, and family–community partnership engagement to ensure children and families from birth through Grade 3 experience continuity of high-quality learning opportunities and supports.

1.3 Specialized Professional Learning for Educators

Districts will collaborate with the Institute to provide specialized professional learning for early childhood educators, leaders, and family-facing staff across settings. Professional learning will be aligned to district action plans and the School as Hub

framework, with a focus on research-based practices that improve instructional quality, leadership capacity, and family engagement.

II. Section 2. Increased Parent Engagement and System Capacity Building Through the North and South Omaha Learning Centers

2.1 Family Learning at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha

The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify effective strategies for strengthening the capacity of parents and family members who have limited English proficiency and who are living in poverty to support their children’s learning.

2.2 Parent University at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha

The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify effective strategies for strengthening the capacity of parents of high-poverty backgrounds to support their children’s learning.

2.3 Intensive Early Childhood Classrooms at the Learning Center of North Omaha

The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify effective strategies for intensive, high-quality preschool experiences that measurably improve the educational outcomes for children from high-poverty backgrounds.

2.4 Partnership with IEC and Child Care Centers at the Learning Community Centers of North and South Omaha

The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate with Omaha Public Schools’ Intensive Early Childhood Partnership (IEC) to strengthen partnerships with childcare centers located in proximity to the North and South Learning Community Centers. The focus is to extend high-quality early learning practices and coaching supports into community childcare centers serving children from high-poverty backgrounds.

2.5 Workforce Development Initiative at the Learning Community Centers of North and South Omaha

The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify and expand workforce development strategies that support parents and family members, increasing family stability and economic opportunity to improve children’s learning outcomes.

III. Section 3: Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC) Collective Impact Achievement Plan

3.1 Students and families are engaged in high-quality early childhood experiences, so they are successful in the primary grades.

3.2 Students complete P-12 education and are prepared to successfully engage in a career pathway.

- 3.3 Students complete postsecondary experiences prepared for career success.
- 3.4 Business and community partners are engaged in collaborations with educators to create career and employment opportunities.

IV. Section 4: Superintendents' Attendance Plan

- 4.1 To improve student attendance and learning by offering assistance to youth and families, accomplished by early assessment and prompt delivery of coordinated interventions that promote school attendance and decrease at-risk behaviors.

Changes to the Community Achievement Plan

- 1. In Section 1, updates include revisions to Goal 1: Customized Assistance, highlighting action planning and capacity building for all 11 districts, Goal 2: School as Hub Programming, emphasizing birth through grade 3 in schools serving high concentrations of poverty, and Goal 3: Specialized Professional Learning, expanding tailored learning, coaching, and communities of practices for educators, leaders, and family-facing staff.
- 2. In Section 2, updates include expanding satellite locations to strengthen partnership with schools and offer Parent University in North Omaha, increase the Workforce Development Pathway to serve more families, and deepen partnerships with childcare centers in North and South Omaha.
- 3. In Section 3, updates include continued focus areas on math and literacy across participating districts, along with postsecondary partners, outline current metrics measured, and focus on student postsecondary and career success.
- 4. In Section 4, the Superintendents' Attendance Plan includes a goal and action plan, aligned to statutory requirements, highlighting best practices, for each participating district to address student attendance.

Section 1: Increased Access to Early Childhood Programming

<p>CAP Goal Goals of the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan focus on reducing or eliminating opportunity gaps for every child by helping Learning Community school districts create and sustain high-quality early childhood practices and policies. This includes:</p> <p>1.1 GOAL 1: <u>Customized Assistance for Districts</u>: Support all 11 districts in developing and implementing comprehensive early childhood action plans that build district capacity, strengthen leadership, align policies and practices, and reduce opportunity gaps for children from birth through Grade 3.</p> <p>1.2 GOAL 2: <u>School as Hub Programming for Schools</u>: Strengthen the “School as Hub” approach in selected elementary schools with high concentrations of poverty, ensuring children and families benefit from high-quality instruction, strong family-school partnerships, and seamless access to supports from birth through Grade 3.</p> <p>1.3 GOAL 3: <u>Specialized Professional Learning for Educators</u>: Advance the expertise of early childhood educators, leaders, and family-facing professionals through tailored professional learning, coaching, and communities of practice that strengthen instructional excellence, leadership effectiveness, and family and community partnership engagement across the Learning Community.</p>	
<p>Strategies/Activities GOAL 1: <u>Customized Assistance for Districts</u> strengthens district systems for children from birth through Grade 3 by focusing on leadership effectiveness, instructional excellence, and family and community partnership engagement. Districts develop action plans in collaboration with the Buffett Institute that guide implementation of early childhood priorities.</p> <p>Institute staff collaborate with district leaders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-develop and monitor action plans. • Provide consultation and technical assistance aligned to district needs. • Design and facilitate professional learning connected to action plan goals. • Support collaboration and problem-solving to address barriers and sustain implementation. 	<p>Evaluation Plan Evaluation activities for the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan are designed to assess outcomes for children, families, and systems, while also informing continuous improvement. Both qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) and quantitative (e.g., surveys, assessments, administrative data) methods are used. Data use agreements are developed with districts, as needed, to support evaluation activities.</p> <p>Child-Level Outcomes The evaluation examines how participation in School as Hub programming influences children’s experiences and growth. Key questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does engagement in the Superintendents’ Plan influence students’ academic growth within School as Hub sites? <p><i>Measure: Academic Achievement Reflections and district</i></p>

District leaders collaborate with Institute staff by:

- Establishing and following action plans.
- Maintaining regular communication.
- Engaging in planning and implementation.
- Taking steps to achieve identified goals.

GOAL 2: School as Hub Programming for Schools provides comprehensive birth through Grade 3 supports in selected elementary schools serving high concentrations of poverty. The approach integrates home visiting for children birth to age 3, high-quality preschool, and aligned PreK–3 curriculum, instruction, and assessment, along with strong family–school partnerships.

Institute staff collaborate with district and school leaders to:

- Provide consultation and coaching to principals, teachers, family facilitators, and home visitors.
- Plan and co-facilitate monthly School as Hub team meetings.
- Facilitate professional learning at school sites to strengthen instructional and family engagement practices.
- Support implementation of aligned instruction, leadership, and family engagement strategies.

School and district leaders, staff, and facilitators engage by:

- Leading and sustaining birth through Grade 3 programming.
- Promoting family and community engagement as a central part of the school’s work.
- Facilitating home visits and socialization events for families with infants and toddlers.
- Creating and supporting family engagement opportunities for all families in the school community.
- Participating in consultation, coaching, professional learning, and team-based planning.

GOAL 3: Specialized Professional Learning for Educators builds the knowledge and skills of educators, leaders, and family-facing staff

assessments

- How does engagement in the Superintendents’ Plan influence children’s development and social-emotional skills?
Measure: ASQ and ASQ-SE

Family-Level Outcomes

The evaluation assesses how families engage with and benefit from School as Hub supports. Key questions include:

- What is the influence of family engagement programming on perceptions of support?
Measures: Family Interviews and Family Engagement Staff Focus Groups
- What is the level of collaboration among families, schools within School as Hub sites, and communities?
Measures: Family Engagement Survey

Systems-Level Outcomes

Evaluation activities track how the plan strengthens leadership, instructional excellence, and family–community engagement across districts. Key questions include:

- What are the barriers and facilitators to collaboration between district stakeholders and Institute staff members?
Measure: Collaboration Survey
- How much progress was made toward district-level action plan goals?
Measures: Action Plan Focus Groups
- What was the depth of learning from participants engaged in professional learning opportunities?
Measures: Professional Learning Survey
- How did engagement in the Lens series influence early childhood educators' learnings and perceptions of the six essential child experiences?
Measures: Lens Series Program Surveys
- How did engagement in the Superintendents’ Plan

across the Learning Community. Professional learning opportunities strengthen instructional excellence, leadership effectiveness, and family and community partnership engagement from birth through Grade 3.

Institute staff collaborate with district and school leaders to:

- Provide access to a catalog of professional learning offerings for schools, districts, and community childcare programs to select programming aligned with their needs and priorities.
- Design and deliver professional learning aligned to district action plans and School as Hub priorities.
- Facilitate workshops, communities of practice, and coaching to support implementation of best practices.
- Provide tailored supports that connect research and innovative strategies to classroom, leadership, and family engagement practices.

District, school leaders, and staff engage by:

- Participating in professional learning sessions, coaching, and communities of practice.
- Applying new knowledge and strategies to strengthen instructional practice, leadership, and family engagement.
- Sharing insights and lessons learned to inform continuous improvement across schools and districts.

consultation, coaching, and communities of practice influence teacher and principal perceptions of self-efficacy for teaching and leadership?

Measures: Self-Efficacy Surveys

Summary

Together, these measures provide a comprehensive picture of how the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan improves child learning and well-being, strengthens family engagement, and builds district and school capacity to sustain high-quality early childhood systems.

Partnerships

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is built on strong partnerships across the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. Representatives from all 11 districts are engaged as advisors and collaborators on a regular basis. Every district has access to **Customized Assistance** and **Specialized Professional Learning** through the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, while six districts implement **School as Hub programming** in designated elementary schools serving high concentrations of poverty.

Representative partnerships include:

Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties: The Learning Community partners with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute and school districts to provide governance, oversight, and fiscal responsibility for the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. As the primary funder, the Learning Community ensures alignment with statutory requirements and community priorities, while supporting accountability and sustainability of the plan.

Buffett Early Childhood Institute: The Buffett Early Childhood Institute serves as the lead implementation partner for the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. The Institute collaborates with districts, schools, and community partners to design and implement programming, provide customized assistance, and facilitate professional learning. In partnership with the Learning Community, the Institute ensures that the plan is research-based, responsive to district needs, and continuously improved through evaluation.

Superintendents' Plan Workgroup: Each superintendent appoints an administrator to serve as a workgroup member. Members collaborate with one another and Institute staff to advise on the direction of the Superintendents' Plan. The workgroup meets quarterly.

District Leaders: Select school district leaders, including (but not limited to) early childhood coordinators, special education directors, curriculum directors, and student services administrators, partner with Institute staff to strengthen district systems through customized assistance and support implementation of School as Hub programming at school sites.

School Principals: Principals from the 10 School as Hub sites works regularly with Institute staff to implement School as Hub programming aligned with district priorities and action plans.

School Staff: Home visitors, family facilitators, community facilitators, teachers, and other school staff collaborate with Institute staff to provide children and families access to high-quality learning through classroom instruction, home visitation, family learning events, family engagement, connections to community supports, and engagement with community child care programs.

Evaluation Partner: To ensure accountability, effectiveness, and continuous program improvement, the Munroe-Meyer Institute at the University of Nebraska Medical Center serves as the independent third-party evaluator.

This partnership structure ensures shared governance, aligns district and community goals, and sustains collective responsibility for advancing high-quality early childhood education across the Learning Community.

Section 2: Increased Parent Engagement and System Capacity Building Through the North and South Omaha Learning Centers

2.1 Family Learning at The Learning Community Center of South Omaha	
<p>CAP Goal</p> <p>2.1 Family Learning at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha – The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify effective strategies for strengthening the capacity of parents and family members who have limited English proficiency and who are living in poverty to support their children’s learning.</p> <p>2.1.1 By 2029, parents will demonstrate individualized gains in English language acquisition as measured by CASAS assessments, with at least 70% advancing one or more proficiency levels after 40+ instructional hours.</p> <p>2.1.2 By 2029, at least 65% of parental interactions will be of medium to high quality (building relationships, promoting learning, and supporting confidence) as measured by the KIPS assessment.</p> <p>2.1.3 By 2029, families receiving navigation services will demonstrate measurable increases in self-sufficiency and reduced stress as evidenced through social assistance navigator data.</p> <p>2.1.4 By 2029, students of parents engaged for two years or more will demonstrate stronger educational outcomes than district peers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher attendance rates (with 70% or more missing fewer than 10 days). • Academic performance in the average or above average range on NWEA MAP in reading and math. • Gains in executive functioning and social-emotional skills, with at least 90% scoring in the average range by spring. <p>For more information about the program, please see the annual report: www.learningcommunityds.org.</p>	
<p>Strategies/Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand programming to two satellite locations in partnership with Omaha Public Schools to increase access for families in school communities. • Diversify course offerings to reach a wider range of participants, including expanded workforce development pathways, digital literacy, and financial literacy. • Provide ESL and GED instruction supported by bilingual facilitators, with progress monitored through CASAS assessment and GED enrollment/completion data. • Deliver parenting classes and workshops (Circle of Security, Love and Logic, financial literacy, nutritious cooking) to 	<p>Evaluation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CASAS Assessment to track English language proficiency gains. • KIPS assessment to measure parent-child interaction quality. • Navigator data (referrals, closures, and family outcomes) to measure family resiliency and self-sufficiency. • Attendance tracking for students to monitor progress toward 70%+ meeting the 10-day absenteeism threshold. • NWEA MAP results for students to monitor reading and math achievement compared to district averages. • Executive functioning and social-emotional measures (teacher-reported and observational) to assess student growth from fall to spring.

<p>strengthen parenting skills and protective factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Educational and Social Assistance Navigators to provide individualized support, connect families to resources, and monitor family progress through structured assessments. • Facilitate interactive parent-child activities and monitor outcomes using KIPS to measure improvements in building relationships, promoting learning, and supporting confidence. • Partner with workforce organizations to award certificates in high-demand fields, track completion rates, and assess parent-reported gains in employment or education. • The team will continue to respond to families and community constituents with emphasis on inclusive practices. 	
<p>Partnerships UNO Special Education/Communication Disorders, UNO School of Music, Opera Omaha, PTI Nebraska, Joslyn Art Museum, Nonprofit Association of the Midlands, ASCEND Network at Aspen Institute, Lutheran Family Service, Omaha Public Schools, Nebraska Enterprise Fund, Project Harmon, Heartland Workforce Solutions, Smart Girls Society, SPARK Positivity, The Big Garden, Douglas County Health Department, Food Bank of the Heartland, Latino Center of the Midlands, Omaha Public Library, Omaha Conservatory of Music, Buffett Early Childhood Institute, City Sprouts, Creighton University, Child Saving Institute, Nebraska Extension Office, Omaha Fire Department, Women's Center for Advancement, UNMC Center for Reducing Health Disparities, UNO Service Learning Academy</p>	

<p>2.2 Parent University at The Learning Community Center of North Omaha</p>	
<p>CAP Goal 2.2 Parent University at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha – The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify effective strategies for strengthening the capacity of parents of high poverty backgrounds to support their children’s learning.</p> <p>2.2.1 By 2029, students of parents participating in the program for two years or more will demonstrate increased educational outcomes by effectively engaging parents in their child’s school.</p> <p>2.2.2 By 2029, students of parents participating in the program for two years or more will demonstrate improved educational outcomes as evidenced by stronger attendance (65% missing fewer than 10 days) and academic performance in the average</p>	

range on NWEA MAP reading and math assessments.

2.2.3 By 2029, parents participating in ESL or GED cohorts will show measurable gains in English and literacy, with at least 70% advancing one or more levels on CASAS after 40+ hours of instruction.

2.2.4 By 2029, parents will demonstrate individualized gains in parent-child interactions, with at least 65% achieving medium-to-high quality interactions (Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, Supporting Confidence) as measured by the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale.

By 2025, children ages birth–5 whose parents participate in Parent University will demonstrate measurable gains in early development and social-emotional growth, as assessed by the Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC-2) and Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA).

For more information about the program, please see the annual report: www.learningcommunityds.org.

Strategies/Activities

- Provide ESL and GED instruction with bilingual supports, tracking progress through CASAS.
- Deliver parenting education workshops (Circle of Security, Love & Logic, Growing Great Kids, trauma-informed supports) that strengthen protective factors and parenting strategies.
- Utilize Educational Navigators to create individualized family action plans, conduct monthly home visits, and connect families with resources based on student and parent needs.
- Facilitate parent-child interactive activities and monitor progress through KIPS™ assessments.
- Use DAYC-2 and DECA assessments to evaluate children’s language, development, and social-emotional skills, and adjust programming to address identified needs.
- Expand Parent University with a satellite location by 2027 to extend access to additional North Omaha families.
- The team will continue to respond to families and community constituents with emphasis on inclusive practices.

Evaluation Plan

- CASAS: Track adult English language acquisition.
- GED enrollment/completion: Monitor parent educational attainment.
- KIPS: Measure parent-child interaction quality.
- DAYC-2 and DECA: Assess child development and social-emotional growth.
- NWEA MAP: Monitor student achievement in reading and math.
- Attendance records: Track chronic absenteeism and improvements over time.

Partnerships

Boys Town, Williams Consulting, Abundant Life Consulting, Bellevue University, Family Housing Advisory Services, Empowerment Network, Eastern Nebraska Action Partnership, Omaha Bridges out of Poverty, Life Coach Academy, Goodwill Industries, Creighton University, PTI Nebraska, Project Harmony

2.3 Intensive Early Childhood Classrooms at The Learning Community Center of North Omaha

CAP Goal

2.3 Intensive Early Childhood Classrooms at the Learning Center of North Omaha – The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify effective strategies for intensive, high quality preschool experiences that measurably improve the educational outcomes for children from high poverty backgrounds.

2.3.1 By 2029, students enrolled in IEC classrooms will demonstrate measurable improvements in school readiness skills as evidenced by significant gains in vocabulary, literacy, and numeracy measured through the DAYC-2 and teacher-reported assessments.

2.3.2 By 2029, children will show growth in social-emotional development, with at least 90% scoring within the average range by spring as measured by the DECA.

2.3.3 By 2029, IEC classrooms will maintain high-quality environments, with CLASS domain scores (emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support) meeting or exceeding national quality thresholds.

2.3.4 By 2029, students will demonstrate gains in executive functioning, with at least 90% achieving scores in the average range on school readiness and classroom-based measures.

For more information about the program, please see the annual report: www.learningcommunityds.org.

Strategies/Activities

- Partner with OPS to deliver 13 high-quality preschool classrooms in six schools, serving children ages 3–5.
- Implement CLASS observations annually to ensure teaching practices provide strong emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional quality.
- Use the DAYC-2 to monitor vocabulary, communication, and cognitive growth, adjusting curriculum and teacher supports to address gaps.
- Use the DECA to track children’s protective factors (initiative, self-control, attachment) and guide social-emotional learning supports.
- Provide inclusive supports for children with IEPs, ensuring differentiated strategies that promote both language and social-emotional growth.
- Facilitate professional development and coaching cycles for teachers, grounded in continuous quality improvement and IEC best practices.

Evaluation Plan

- NWEA-MAP® Growth™.
- Ninety-five percent of Nebraska school districts will be able to identify at least one high- quality early childhood educational program accessible to all of the district’s resident preschool age population, by 2029.
- CLASS: Evaluate classroom quality in emotional support, organization, and instructional support domains.
- DAYC-2: Track student growth in vocabulary, communication, and cognitive skills.
- DECA: Measure social-emotional development and protective factors.
- Executive functioning tools: Monitor student growth in attention, self-regulation, and problem-solving.
- Attendance: Track chronic absenteeism to ensure regular participation in early learning experiences.

Partnership

Omaha Public Schools, Educare, Buffett Early Childhood Institute

2.4 Partnership with IEC and Child Care Centers at the Learning Community Centers of North and South Omaha

2.4 Partnership with IEC and Child Care Centers at the Learning Community Centers of North and South Omaha – The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate with Omaha Public Schools’ Intensive Early Childhood Partnership and local agencies to strengthen partnerships with childcare centers near the North and South Learning Community Centers. The goal is to extend high-quality early learning practices into community-based settings, improving school readiness and long-term educational outcomes for children from high-poverty backgrounds.

2.4.1 By 2029 at least 15 childcare centers in proximity to the North and South Centers will participate in ongoing professional development and coaching through partnerships with IEC staff and Learning Community facilitators.

2.4.2 By 2029, participating centers will demonstrate measurable improvement in classroom quality, with CLASS score in emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support meeting or exceeding national thresholds.

2.4.3 By 2029, at least 70% of childcare staff engaged in Rooted in Relationships or coaching cycles will report increased confidence and skills in supporting children’s social-emotional and language development.

2.4.4 By 2029, children attending partner childcare centers will show measurable growth in DAYC-2 developmental domains (language, cognitive, communication) and DECA protective factors (initiative, self-control, attachment).

For more information about the program, please see the annual report: www.learningcommunityds.org.

Strategies/Activities:

- Leverage the **IEC Community Facilitator role** to engage childcare centers near the North and South Learning Community Centers, building trust and providing professional development.
- Expand the **Rooted in Relationships program** to include additional centers, focusing on social-emotional development, responsive caregiving, and family engagement practices.
- Provide **CLASS observations and feedback cycles** in participating centers to drive continuous quality improvement.
- Offer **joint professional learning communities** between IEC teachers and childcare providers to share strategies and strengthen alignment.

Evaluation Plan

- CLASS observations: Monitor classroom quality and improvements in instructional practices.
- DAYC-2 and DECA assessments: Track growth in children’s developmental and social-emotional outcomes in partner centers.
- Childcare staff surveys: Measure increased knowledge, skills, and confidence in supporting children’s learning.
- Family engagement data: Track referrals and connections from childcare centers to Learning Community Navigators and parent education programs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect childcare centers with Learning Community Navigators to help families access parenting education, ESL/GED, and workforce development opportunities. • Collaborate with OPS and Buffett Early Childhood Institute to align training and resources across systems. 	
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Partnerships
 Omaha Public Schools, Buffett Early Childhood Institute, Educare, Rooted in Relationships (Nebraska Children & Families Foundation), Project Harmony, OneWorld Community Health Centers, Family Housing Advisory Services, and local childcare providers in North and South Omaha.

2.5 Workforce Development Initiative at the Learning Community Centers of North and South Omaha

2.5 Workforce Development Initiative at the Learning Community Centers of North and South Omaha – The districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties will collaborate to identify effective strategies for expanding workforce development opportunities that strengthen the capacity of parents to achieve educational advancement, economic stability, and improved family well-being—directly supporting children’s learning outcomes.

2.5.1 By 2029 at least 250 parents will complete workforce development pathways, including GED completion, certificates, and career readiness credentials.

2.5.2 By 2029, at least 70% of participants will report improved employment, enrollment in higher education, or increased wages as a result of their training.

2.5.3 By 2029, participants will demonstrate measurable gains in digital literacy, financial literacy, and workforce readiness skills as evidenced by course completion and post-training surveys.

2.5.4 By 2029, parents participating in workforce programming will also report increased capacity to support their children’s education, as measured through navigator surveys and follow-up interviews.

For more information about the program, please see the annual report: www.learningcommunityds.org.

<p>Strategies/Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Metropolitan Community College, Heartland Workforce Solutions, and other community agencies to expand certificate and credentialing opportunities in high-demand fields. • Provide on-site workforce development classes at the North and South Centers and OPS satellite locations, including bilingual instruction and flexible scheduling. 	<p>Evaluation Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates and credential tracking (customer service, workforce ethics, GED completion, digital literacy). • Participant employment/education follow-up surveys to measure changes in income, employment, or continued education. • Navigator data on family progress in self-sufficiency and stress reduction.
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- Integrate **career coaching, resume building, interview preparation, and job search strategies** to ensure workforce readiness.
- Offer **digital literacy, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship courses** to broaden pathways for parents and promote long-term self-sufficiency.
- Connect workforce participants to **Educational and Social Assistance Navigators** to align family economic goals with children’s educational success.

- **Parent feedback surveys** to capture perceived impact on ability to support children’s education.

Partnerships

University of Nebraska at Omaha, Creighton University Metropolitan Community College, Heartland Workforce Solutions, Latino Center of the Midlands, Family Housing Advisory Services, Empowerment Network, Project Harmony, and other local workforce and community partners.

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Section 3: Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC) Collective Impact (CI) Achievement Plan

<p>CAP Goal 3.1 Students and families are engaged in high-quality early childhood experiences, so they are successful in the primary grades.</p>	
<p>Strategies/Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A MOEC work group on Early Literacy has worked with 11 school districts and national consultants to better embed the Science of Reading into school curricula. • MOEC has supported more than 130 teachers in a semester-long workshop/course related to early literacy that was offered 5 times throughout the past 2 years. • MOEC has collaborated with Buffet Early Childhood Institute, as well as select school districts, to develop a data collection process for the metric regarding the number of children enrolled in a high-quality early childhood program, and they implemented a pilot for the data collection process, with the intention of expanding to all schools in the next two years and provided documentation throughout the process. 	<p>Evaluation Plan Data for the following metrics, except the first one, are being collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enrolling in school-based Pre-K or kindergarten who are at age-appropriate developmental milestones or had been enrolled in a high-quality early childhood program. • Early childhood teachers who are properly credentialed: Data for 2024: 86% total, 45 to 100% district range. • Entering kindergarten students meeting the state-approved threshold for a student to be progressing toward future reading success: Data for 2024: 50% total, 8 to 95% district range. • Students who meet expectations for proficiency in literacy by the end of 3rd grade: Data for 2024: 61% total, 40 to 93% district range. <p><u>NOTE:</u> Data includes aggregated metrics for all MOEC districts.</p>
<p>Partnerships The 11 school districts in Nebraska: Bellevue, Bennington, Douglas County West, Elkhorn, Gretna, Millard, Omaha, Papillion LaVista, Ralston, Springfield-Platteview, Westside; one school district in Iowa: Council Bluffs. Philanthropic support from local foundations. UNO College of Education, Health, and Human Services; Buffett Early Childhood Institute; Nebraska Department of Education.</p>	

CAP Goal

3.2 Students complete P-12 education and are prepared to successfully engage in a career pathway.

Strategies/Activities

- The Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC) regularly convenes cross-district work groups related to early literacy, mathematics, FAFSA completion, and dual enrollment.
- MOEC is leading multiple attendance improvement cohorts that bring together school teams from several districts and all grade levels to work together to improve school attendance in their own building, with the goal of decreasing the chronic absence rate in the metro.
- MOEC is supporting a Saturday conference for metro-area K-8 mathematics educators to engage in rich professional learning and networking with the goal of improving math instruction and student success.
- MOEC is advancing dual enrollment by advocating for streamlined approval processes for high school instructors; collaborating with public schools, higher education institutions, and community partners to expand course offerings; and raising awareness among families and students about the benefits and career pathways connected to dual enrollment opportunities.
- MOEC includes representatives from member postsecondary institutions UNO, Metro Community College, and Iowa Western Community College on all work groups and most task force groups. The collaboration has especially positive outcomes in conversations about dual enrollment in high school and in work to improve student success in high school math classes. Monthly meetings include leaders of 12 school districts, two service units and three postsecondary institutions to share challenges and successes.

Evaluation Plan

Data for the following metrics are being collected:

- Students who meet expectations for proficiency in literacy (ELA) by the end of 8th grade: Data for 2024: 62% total, 38 to 91% district range.
- Students who meet expectations for proficiency in math by end of 8th grade: Data for 2024: 53% total, 21 to 90% district range.
- Students who meet expectations for proficiency in literacy (ELA) by the end of 11th grade: Data for 2024: 44% total, 20 to 80% district range.
- Students who meet expectations for proficiency in mathematics by the end of 11th grade: Data for 2024: 40% total, 14 to 76% district range.
- Students who graduate from high school having successfully completed four years of math: Data for 2024: 50% total, 20 to 100% district range.
- High school freshmen who are on track to graduate by the end of 9th grade: Data for 2024: 82% total, 62 to 100% district range.
- Number of students who missed 10% or more days of school during the year: Data for 2024: 25% total, 7 to 41% district range.
- Students enrolled in postsecondary education within a year of high school graduation who are academically prepared for math: Class of 2024: 37% total; 18 to 72% district range.
- Students enrolled in postsecondary education within a year of high school graduation who are academically prepared for English: Class of 2024: 39% total; 24 to 78% district range
- Teachers/instructors approved to teach dual enrollment courses: Data for 2024: 17% total, 10 to 37% district range.

- Students who complete at least one dual enrollment course prior to high school graduation: Data for 2024: 48% total, 1 to 88% district range.

NOTE: Data includes aggregated metrics for all MOEC districts.

Partnerships

The 11 school districts in Nebraska: Bellevue, Bennington, Douglas County West, Elkhorn, Gretna, Millard, Omaha, Papillion LaVista, Ralston, Springfield-Platteview, Westside; one school district in Iowa: Council Bluffs. Postsecondary institutions in Nebraska: University of Nebraska at Omaha, Metropolitan Community College; postsecondary institution in Iowa: Iowa Western Community College. Philanthropic support from local foundations. Nebraska Department of Education.

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CAP Goal

3.3 Students complete postsecondary experiences prepared for career success.

Strategies/Activities

- The Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC) collaborates with postsecondary partners to share and analyze data on persistence, credit completion, and degree attainment, using insights to inform K–12 preparation and student supports.
- MOEC engages in joint initiatives with higher education institutions to align high school coursework, dual enrollment, and general education requirements to reduce remediation and accelerate degree completion.
- MOEC has been invited to participate in the development of a Nebraska partnership with the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) to apply best practices in supporting college access, persistence, and completion for underrepresented students throughout the state.

Evaluation Plan

Data for the following metrics are being collected:

- Students enrolled in any postsecondary institution within a year of high school graduation: Class of 2023: 64% total; 35 to 86% district range.
- Students who successfully complete math program/degree requirements by the end of the first year of postsecondary education: Class of 2023: 40% total; 28 to 67% district range.
- Students who successfully complete English program/degree requirements by the end of the first year of postsecondary education: Class of 2023: 64% total; 55 to 83% district range.
- Recent high school graduates who persist from first term to second term in postsecondary education: Class of 2023: 90% total; 78 to 100% district range.
- Graduates who complete a 4-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time: Class of 2017: 36% total; 20 to 67% district range.
- Graduates who complete a 2-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time: Class of 2020: 6% total; 3 to 59% district range.

NOTE: Data includes aggregated (and range) metrics for MOEC high school graduates attending MOEC postsecondary institutions; most of the data points do not measure post high school performance of students who attend other postsecondary institutions.

Partnerships

The 11 school districts in Nebraska: Bellevue, Bennington, Douglas County West, Elkhorn, Gretna, Millard, Omaha, Papillion LaVista, Ralston, Springfield-Platteview, Westside; one school district in Iowa: Council Bluffs. Postsecondary institutions in Nebraska: University of Nebraska at Omaha, Metropolitan Community College. Postsecondary institution in Iowa: Iowa Western Community College. Philanthropic support from local foundations.

CAP Goal

3.4 Business and community partners are engaged in collaborations with educators to create career and employment opportunities.

Strategies/Activities

The Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium’s (MOEC) work with business, community, and postsecondary partners is still in the early stages, but these collaborations are essential for preparing students for future careers. Initial efforts focus on building connections with the Greater Omaha Chamber, local employers, and higher education institutions to explore opportunities for work-based learning and career pathway development.

- MOEC is beginning conversations with the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce and other community partners to explore ways to connect students with local career pathways and work-based learning opportunities.
- MOEC will share information and best practices across districts regarding existing business–school partnerships (e.g., internships, job shadowing, career fairs) to identify scalable models for broader implementation.
- MOEC will continue to invite employers and community representatives to participate in task force discussions where career readiness and workforce alignment are emerging topics of focus.
- MOEC will explore opportunities to collaborate with postsecondary partners and employers on pilot programs that provide students with early exposure to industry-recognized credentials.

Evaluation Plan

Data for one of the following metrics are being collected while the rest are under development:

- Number of unfilled teaching positions: Data for 2024: 3% total, range of 0% to 9% by district.
- Students who participate in high school pre-apprenticeship/ internship experiences.
- Students who complete an industry-recognized credential or degree by high school graduation before transition to a career, military or higher education.
- Students who participate in postsecondary internships, apprenticeships, clinical practices, and other experiential training opportunities that lead to employment.

Partnerships

The 11 school districts in Nebraska: Bellevue, Bennington, Douglas County West, Elkhorn, Gretna, Millard, Omaha, Papillion LaVista, Ralston, Springfield-Platteview, Westside; one school district in Iowa: Council Bluffs. Postsecondary institutions in Nebraska: University of Nebraska at Omaha, Metropolitan Community College. Postsecondary institution in Iowa: Iowa Western Community College. Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce.

Section 4: Superintendents’ Attendance Plan

<p>CAP Goal: To improve student attendance and learning by offering assistance to youth and families, accomplished by early assessment and prompt delivery of coordinated interventions that promote school attendance and decrease at-risk behaviors.</p>	
<p>Strategies/Activities This plan operationalizes the Superintendents’ statutory responsibility to lead a collaborative, preventative, and restorative response to chronic absenteeism, as outlined in NRS 79-209 and supported by the LC Coordinating Council. The Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate cross-district implementation of the Superintendents’ Attendance Plan, emphasizing early intervention and community-based solutions to attendance. • Convene monthly, semi-annual, and annual meetings of the MOEC School Attendance Workgroup, comprised of Student Services leaders and district-appointed representatives, to share data, monitor trends, and identify effective strategies. • Host annual multi-sector convenings that include juvenile court, county attorneys, DHHS, probation, Region VI, school districts, and nonprofit partners to review system data and determine aligned responses. • Ensure alignment with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) frameworks across districts, building consistent, proactive supports at Tier I, II, and III levels, including case conferencing, restorative justice practices, and academic interventions. • Support implementation of district-specific collaborative attendance plans prior to any legal referral, in compliance with state law and informed by best practices in prevention and diversion. 	<p>Evaluation Plan MOEC will collect and report the following information to the Learning Community Coordinating Council annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregated school attendance rates by grade level (based on data collected by Nebraska Department of Education). • Data on legal agency disposition of school-district referrals to county attorneys. • A list of current recognized community support organizations. • A summary of successes and challenges incurred in the prior academic year.
<p>Partnerships: Systems-level collaboration and partnerships across education, justice, health, and human services sectors: The 11 school districts in Nebraska: Bellevue, Bennington, Douglas County West, Elkhorn, Gretna, Millard, Omaha, Papillion LaVista, Ralston, Springfield-Platteview, and Westside; Douglas and Sarpy County Attorneys’ Offices; Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Assessment Centers; DHHS; NDE; multiple community-based organizations.</p>	

2022-2023

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

Evaluation Report



learning
community
DOUGLAS
SARPY


Buffett
Early Childhood
Institute
at the University of Nebraska

 UNMC
MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE

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Executive Summary

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP) was introduced in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the fall of 2015. It offers an innovative, comprehensive approach to reducing achievement gaps for young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. The 2022-2023 school year marks the 8th program year of the Superintendent's Early Childhood Plan. The full implementation of School as Hub takes place in eight elementary schools across six school districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. This year's evaluation is employing a new strategy based on the findings of a landscape assessment completed in 2021-22. The evaluation is grounded in a value engaged evaluation approach with primary outcomes of focus of program improvement and program quality assessment. A combination of assessments and methodologies will be used to evaluate the collaborative relationship between BECI and school districts as well as district-level and school-level changes. Specific focus will include components of School as Hub, home visiting, school supports for PreK to Grade 3 families, educator professional development and change in educator practice.

Birth through Grade 3 Approach



Evaluation Questions

The goals for the 2022-2023 evaluation are split across the three domains of focus (Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence and Family and Community Partnership and Engagement). In addition, a collaboration evaluation is being conducted to understand the relationship between the Institute and district partners. Finally, additional efforts supported within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan include the Instructional Toolkit Workgroup and PD for All opportunities. Evaluation questions for each of these programs are cited below.

Action Planning Guide Outcomes

SECP Collaboration

1. What is the level of collaboration between the Institute and program stakeholders?
2. What are the barriers and facilitators for collaboration between the Institute and program stakeholders?

Leadership Effectiveness

1. What effect does the SECP have on principal leadership?
2. What effect do SECP leadership activities (i.e., action planning, birth through grade 3 workshops) have on district-level goals?

Instructional Excellence

1. What effect does the SECP have on classroom practices?

Family and Community Partnerships Engagement

1. What effect does the SECP have on how family facilitators, community facilitators and/or home visitors engage with families?
2. What effect does the SECP have on family perceptions of family engagement?

Additional Efforts

PD for All

1. What is the reach of the "bite-size" PD for All approach?
2. If and how are early childhood educators implementing knowledge learned?
3. What are the best practices and barriers to new knowledge implementation within instructional settings?

Instructional Toolkit

1. What is the work group's self-efficacy for tool implementation through the lens of self-efficacy theory?
2. How does the workgroup experience influence perceptions of the six essential child experiences?
3. What are the best practices and barriers to workgroup program implementation?

SECP Collaboration

1. What is the level of collaboration between the Institute and program stakeholders?
2. What are the barriers and facilitators for collaboration between the Institute and program stakeholders?

In the Spring of 2023, Evaluators within the Munroe Meyer Institute conducted an external collaboration evaluation between the Buffett Early Childhood Institute and its key partners within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. The two primary objectives of the evaluation were (1) to determine the level of collaboration between the Institute and plan stakeholders within school districts and (2) to determine the barriers and facilitators for collaboration between the Institute and plan stakeholders. A total of 59 surveys were completed by plan stakeholders across 9 school districts (6 full-implementation districts, 3 customized assistance), followed by 12 interviews. Survey respondents included 3-to-5 year-old classroom educators/paraprofessionals (n=10), Home Visitors/Family Facilitators (n=15), school-based leaders (n=13), and district-based administrators (n=21). Interviewees included: Home Visitors/Family Facilitators (n=3), school-based administrators (n=4), and district-based administrators (n=5). Twelve Institute staff members also engaged in a similar survey, with 10 staff members participating in a follow-up interview. Key findings are shared in the following report.



SURVEY FINDINGS

A survey was developed in collaboration between a Munroe Meyer Institute Education and Child Development Faculty member and Buffett Early Childhood Institute Research and Evaluation Staff. The District survey was comprised of 21 closed/open-ended questions and included an adapted version of a previously validated "Level of Collaboration" scale.* Questions were developed based on the Action Plan program domains of focus noted below. Respondents were asked to identify the level of collaboration they believe they have had with Institute Staff and with other Districts within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan in each of the following areas. Institute staff members were given a similar survey and asked to identify level of collaboration with Districts as a whole. Mean and standard deviations were calculated for each survey item.

PROGRAM DOMAINS OF FOCUS

Leadership Effectiveness	Instructional Excellence	Family and Community Partnership Engagement
District Organization and Capacity	Foundations for Early Learning	Family Focus
School Leadership	Essential Child Experiences	Community-School Connections

LEVEL OF COLLABORATION

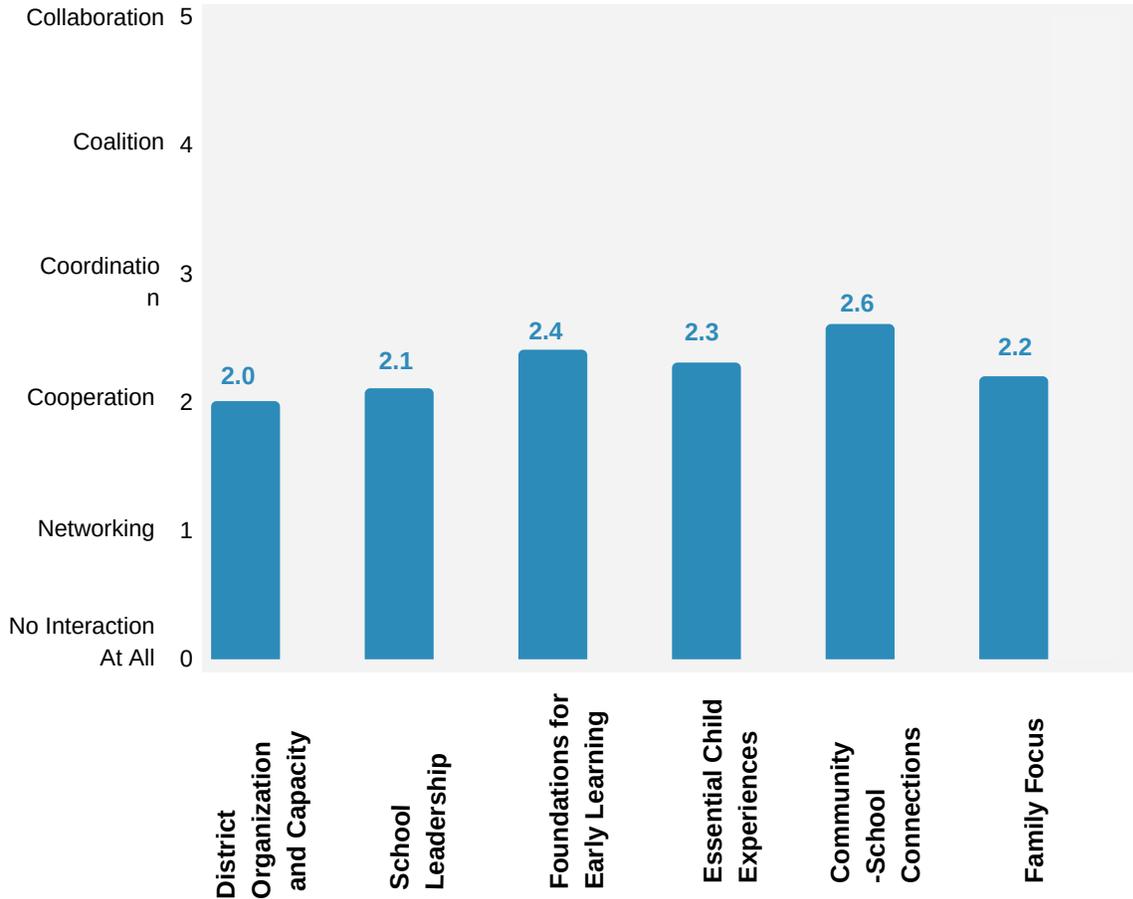
Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5
-Loosely defined roles -Little communication -All decisions are made independently	-Provide information to each other -Somewhat defined roles -Formal communication -All decisions are made independently	-Share information and resources -Defined roles -Regular communication -Some shared decision making	-Share ideas, information, and resources -Regular and focused communication -Frequent shared decision making	-Frequent and strategic communication -Mutual trust -Shared decision making in all decisions -Consensus reached in all decisions

*Survey adapted from: Frey, B. B., Lohmeier, J. H., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring collaboration among grant partners. *American journal of evaluation*, 27(3), 383-392.

INSTITUTE STAFF SURVEY FINDINGS

Institute Staff members were asked to identify the level of collaboration they have with all district/school stakeholders on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. **Institute collaboration** perceptions had a mean of 2.2 indicating a level of **cooperation** was typical.

Level of Collaboration



Institute staff (n=12) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

I am able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (m=4.17±.1.1)



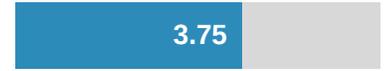
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

My ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration (m=4.17±.1.1)



Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

Power is shared between the Buffett Institute and Districts (3.75±.1.1)

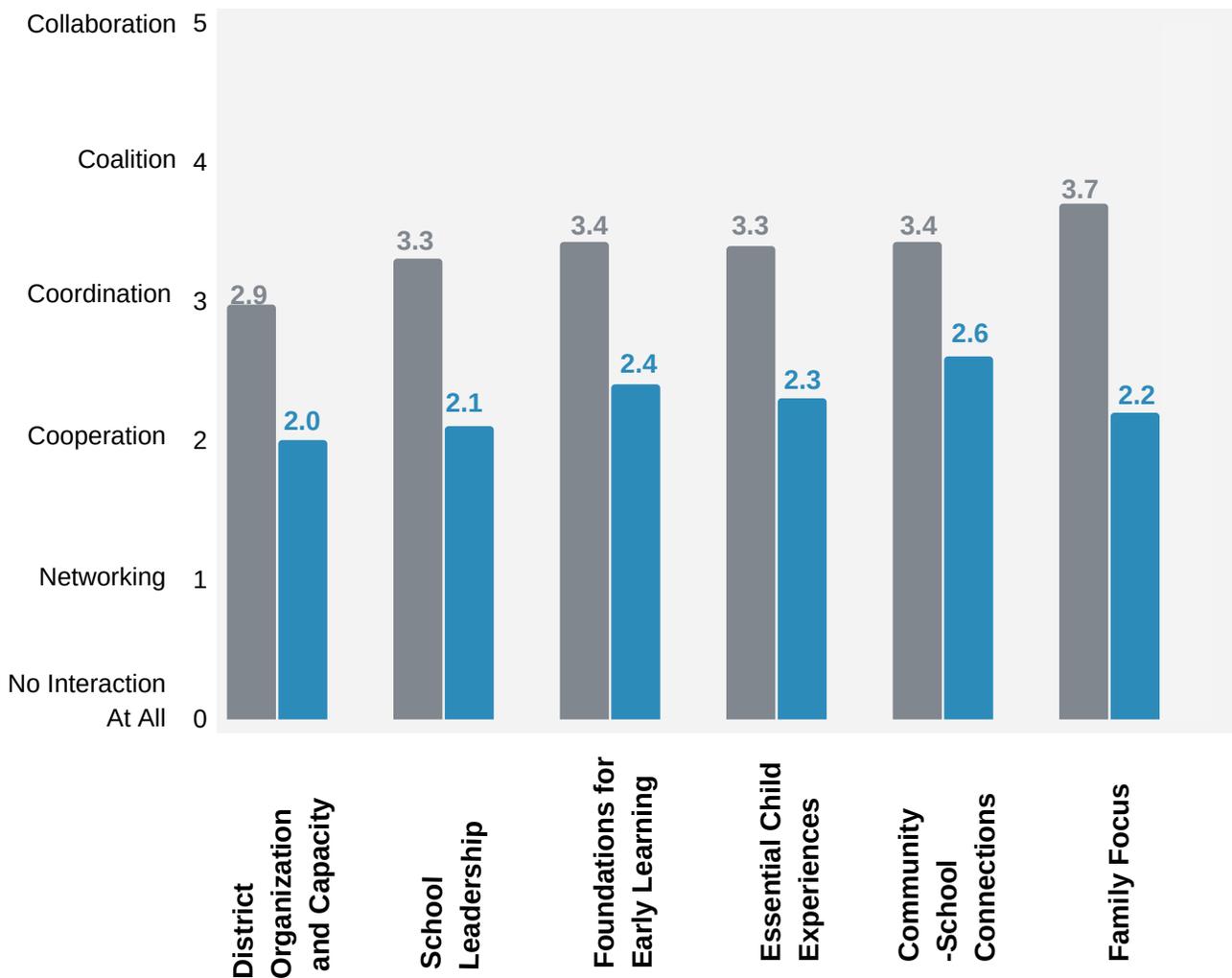


Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

FULL IMPLEMENTATION DISTRICTS SURVEY FINDINGS

School/District Program stakeholders involved in the action planning process (n=33) were asked to identify the level of collaboration **they have with one another** on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Findings for full implementation district respondents (n=6 districts) can be seen below in **grey**. These districts included Bellevue, DC West, Millard, Omaha Public Schools, Ralston and Westside. Findings for Institute respondents can be seen in **blue**. Overall, full implementation district respondents typically identified higher rates of collaboration than Institute staff. **Full-implementation district collaboration** perceptions had a mean of 3.3 indicating efforts typically fell within the **coalition** level. **Institute collaboration** perceptions had a mean of 2.2 indicating a level of **cooperation** was typical.

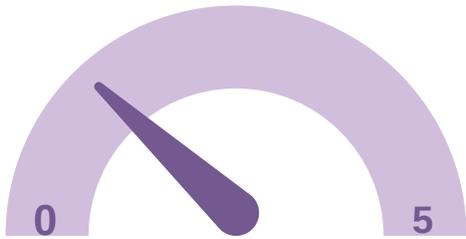
Level of Collaboration



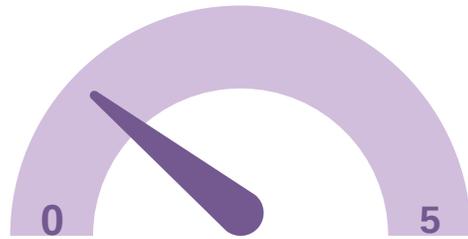
FULL IMPLEMENTATION DISTRICTS SURVEY FINDINGS

The following figures describe the level of collaboration **full implementation district respondents (n=33)** **believed they have with other districts** in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (0=no interaction at all, 1=networking, 2=cooperation, 3=coordination, 4=coalition, and 5=collaboration). *Only individuals that self-identified as involved in the action planning process answered the following questions.* Overall, the average response mean was 1.7. This indicates that districts typically identified as **"networking"** with other districts.

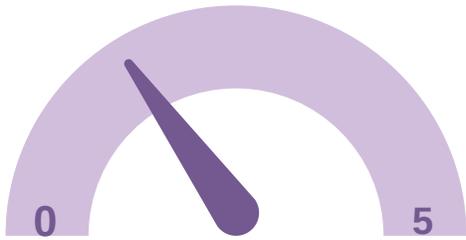
DEVELOPMENT OF
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION
AND CAPACITY
MEAN=1.7±.30



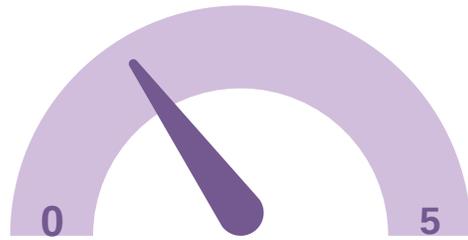
DEVELOPMENT OF
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
MEAN=1.4±.39



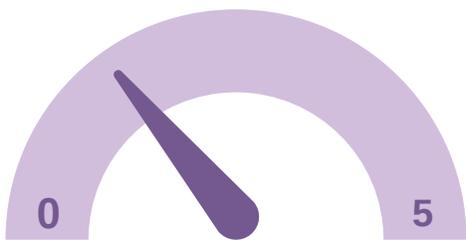
DEVELOPMENT OF
FOUNDATIONS FOR EARLY
LEARNING
MEAN=1.8±.48



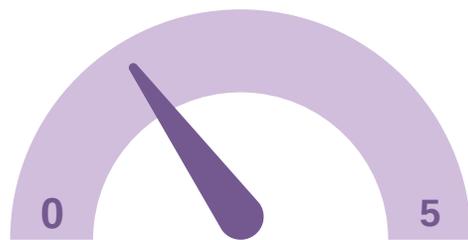
DEVELOPMENT OF
ESSENTIAL CHILD
EXPERIENCES
MEAN=1.9±.57



DEVELOPMENT OF
FAMILY FOCUS
MEAN=1.7 ±.42



DEVELOPMENT OF
COMMUNITY-SCHOOL
CONNECTIONS
MEAN=1.9±.50



FULL IMPLEMENTATION DISTRICTS SURVEY FINDINGS

Plan stakeholders from full implementation districts (n=45) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest level of agreement was related to being able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (m=4.49±.91). The lowest level of agreements were noted in the following statements: the Institute is a key support for achieving action plan goals (3.9±.1.1) and colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help to resolve challenges related to action plan goals (3.9±.95) although responses were still at the level of "somewhat agree". Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

The Buffett Institute is a key support for achieving my action plan goals
3.9±.1.1



My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan are a key support for achieving my action plan goals
4.1±.1.0



The Buffett Institute is responsive to my questions and helps me to obtain answers as needed
4.4±.1.0



My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals
3.9±.98



The Buffett Institute helps me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals
4.1±.86



My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals
3.9±.95



The Buffett Institute helps me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals
m=4.2±.98



My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan are a key support for achieving my action plan goals
4.0±.98



I am able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan
(m=4.49±.91)



My ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration
(m=4.47±.91)



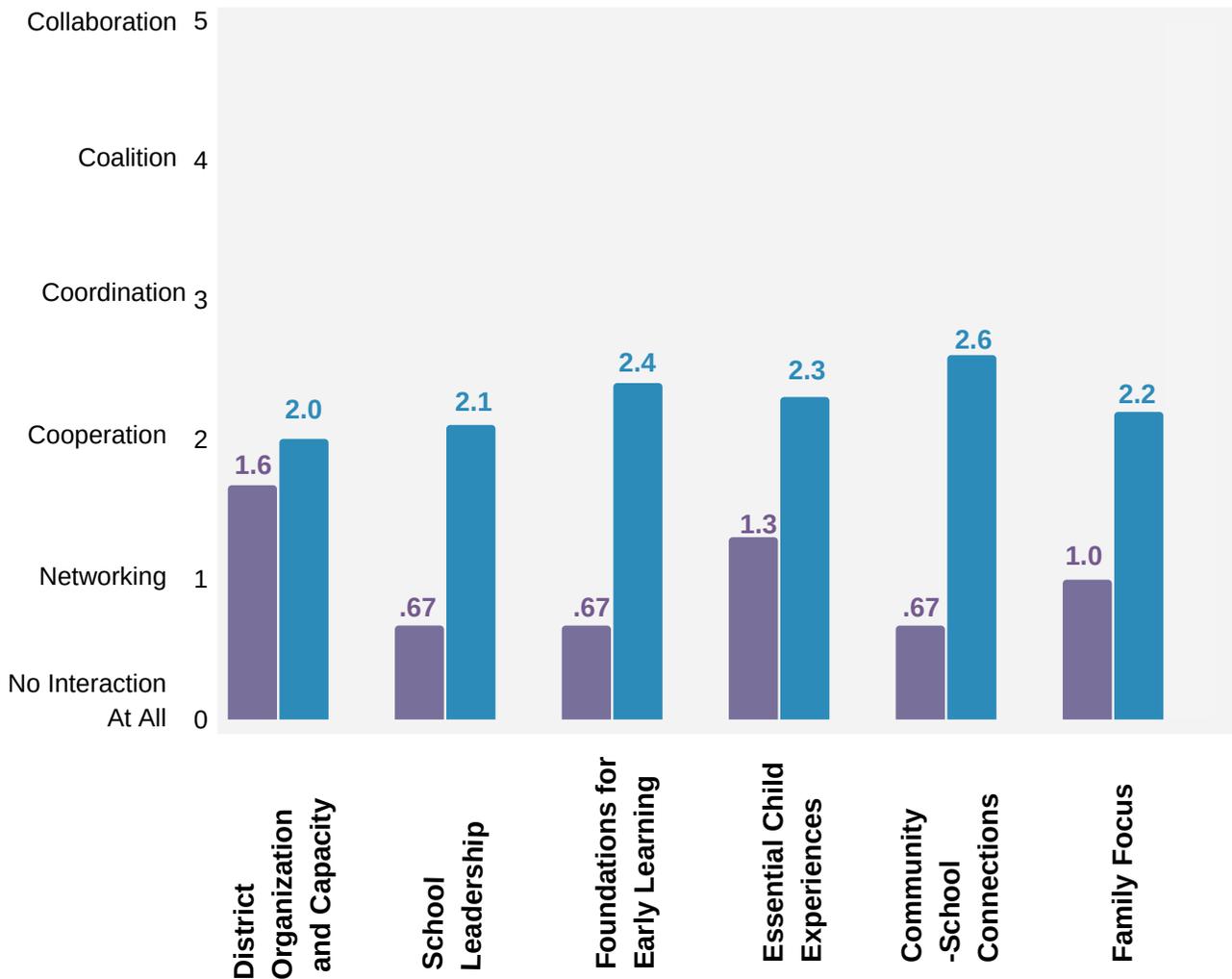
Power is shared between my team and the Buffett Institute
(4.16±.99)



CUSTOMIZED ASSISTANCE DISTRICT SURVEY FINDINGS

District program stakeholders (n=3) were asked to identify the level of collaboration **they have with one another** on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Findings for districts engaged in customized assistance (n=3 districts) can be seen in **purple**. These districts included Bennington, Elkhorn and Papillion La Vista. Findings for Institute respondents can be seen in **blue**. Customized assistance district perceptions had a mean of .99 indicated a collaboration level of **networking**. **Institute collaboration** perceptions had a mean of 2.2 indicating a level of **cooperation** was typical. *Importantly, Institute staff were asked to identify the overall level of collaboration with all districts served. Institute staff were not asked to discuss collaboration with customized assistance and full implementation districts separately.*

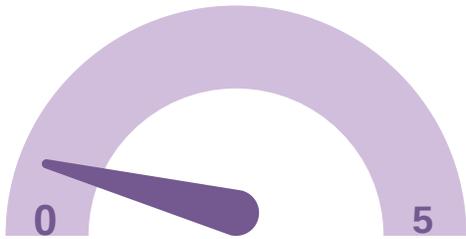
Level of Collaboration



CUSTOMIZED ASSISTANCE DISTRICT SURVEY FINDINGS

The following figures describe the level of collaboration **customized assistance district respondents (n=3 districts) believed they have with other districts** in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (0=no interaction at all, 1=networking, 2=cooperation, 3=coordination, 4=coalition, and 5=collaboration). Overall, the average response mean was .33. This indicates that districts typically responded as "no interaction at all" across action plan domains.

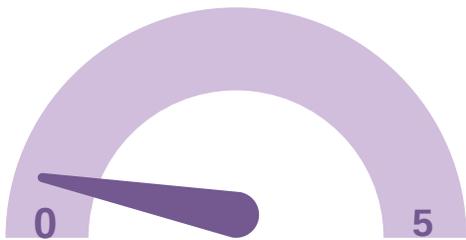
DEVELOPMENT OF
DISTRICT ORGANIZATION
AND CAPACITY
MEAN= .67±.94



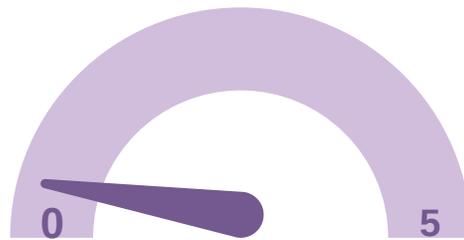
DEVELOPMENT OF
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
MEAN=0.0±0.0



DEVELOPMENT OF
FOUNDATIONS FOR EARLY
LEARNING
MEAN=.33±.47



DEVELOPMENT OF
ESSENTIAL CHILD
EXPERIENCES
MEAN=.33±.50



DEVELOPMENT OF
FAMILY FOCUS
MEAN=.33±.47

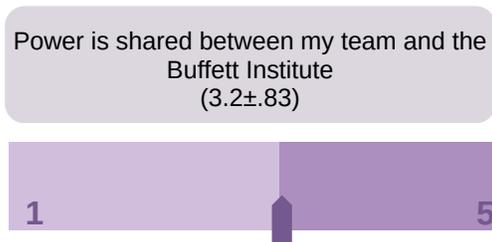
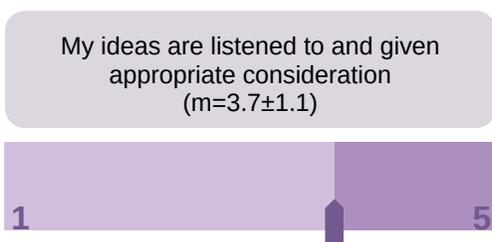
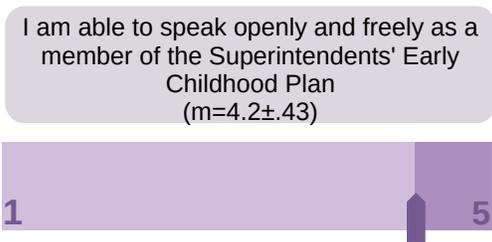
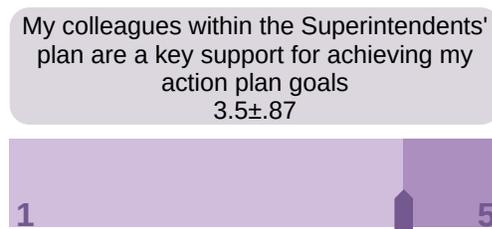
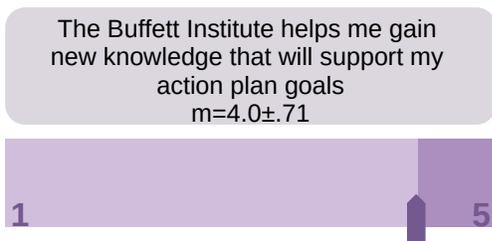
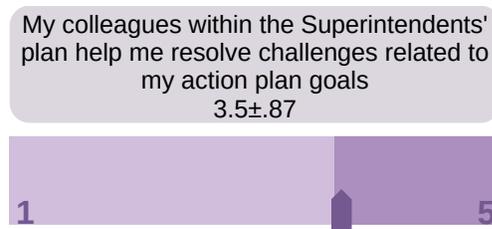
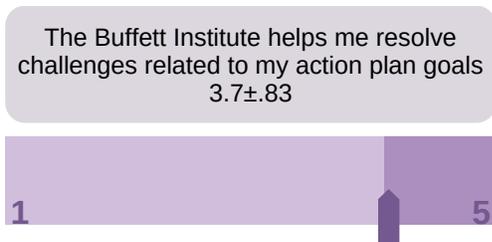
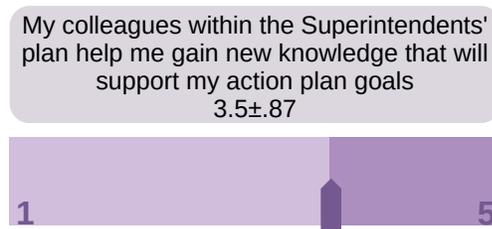
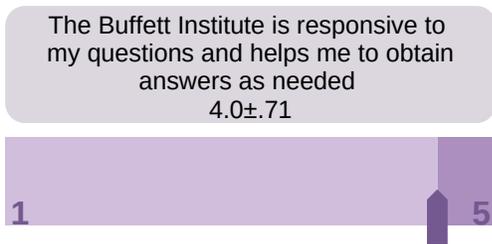
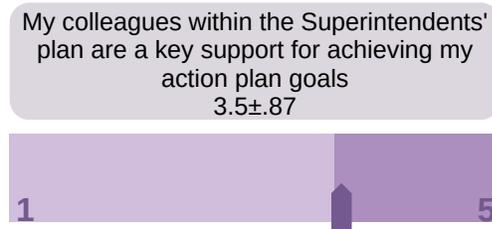
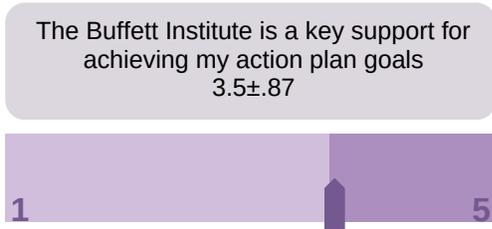


DEVELOPMENT OF
COMMUNITY-SCHOOL
CONNECTIONS
MEAN=0.0±0.0



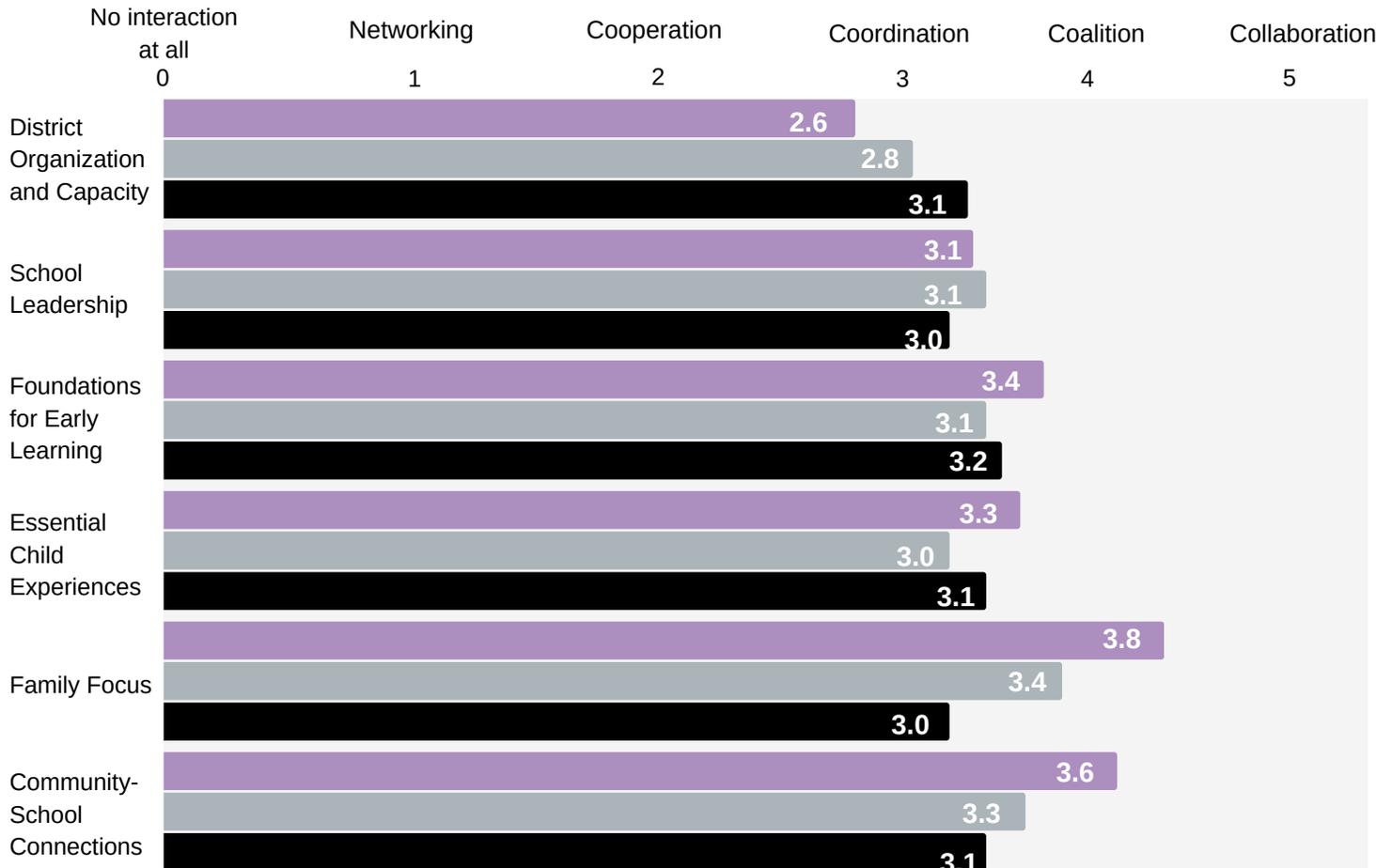
CUSTOMIZED ASSISTANCE DISTRICT SURVEY FINDINGS

Plan stakeholders from customized assistance districts (n=4) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest level of agreement was related to being able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (m=4.2±.43). The lowest level of agreement was noted in the following statement: power is shared between my team and the Buffett Institute (3.2±.83). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

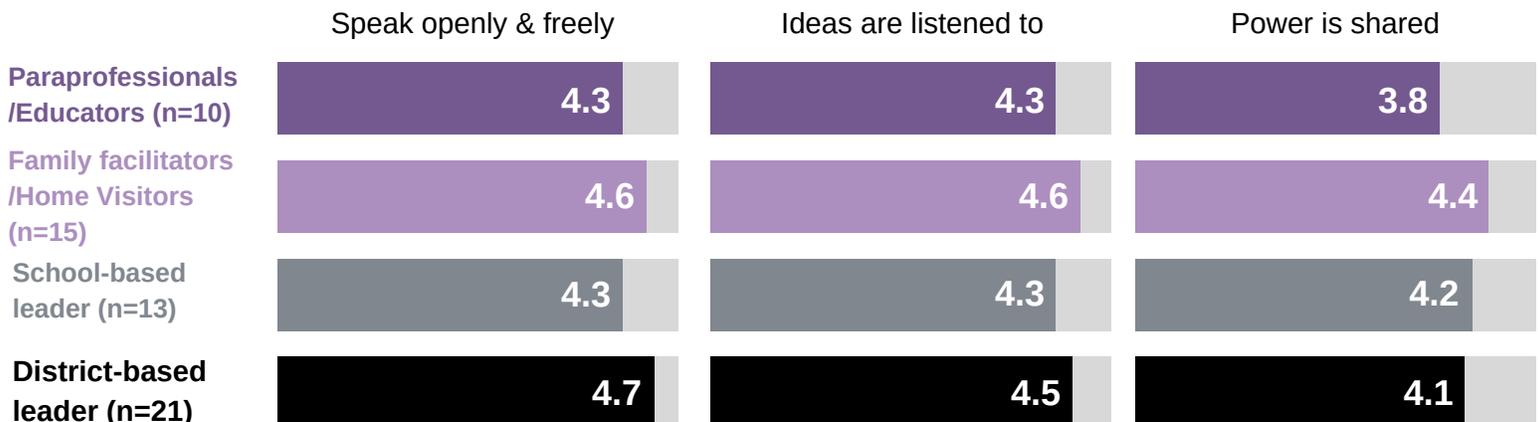


COMPARISON OF FINDINGS BY STAKEHOLDER TYPE

A comparison analysis for the level of collaboration **between the Institute and all districts** (full implementation and customized assistance) across action plan domains was completed across district stakeholder type. Responses were split into 3 groups: **(1) family facilitator/home visitor (n=11)**, **(2) school-based leader (n=7)**, and **(3) district-based leader (n=18)**, only individuals that self-identified as engaged in the action planning process answered the collaboration scale questions. Mean findings were based on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all, 5=collaboration).



Findings are separated by District stakeholder type for the following: (1) School and District staff are able to speak openly and freely as members of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, (2) School and District staff ideas are listened to and their ideas are given appropriate consideration, and (3) Power is shared between the Buffett Institute and School and District staff. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)



SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Institute staff members typically identified collaboration with districts involved in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan to fall within a level of "cooperation". Full implementation districts typically perceived collaboration with Institute staff to fall within the "coalition" level. Customized assistance districts typically identified collaboration to be occurring at the "networking" level.

When considering an agreement scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= somewhat agree, and 5=strongly agree), Institute respondents "somewhat agreed" that the Institute and districts effectively share power (mean=3.75) and that District staff ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration (mean=4.17). Full implementation districts had higher levels of agreement and identified a mean of 4.16 related to power being shared between the Institute and districts and a mean of 4.49 related to being able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. Customized assistance districts identified a mean of 3.2 related to power being shared and 4.2 related to the ability to speak openly and freely.

In addition, full implementation district staff and customized assistance staff typically somewhat agreed that Institute staff are responsive to questions, effective at resolving action plan goal-related challenges, and a key support for achieving action plan goals. Furthermore, all district respondents somewhat agreed that their colleagues within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan are a key support for action plan goal achievement, help them to gain new knowledge to support their action plan goals, and help to resolve challenges related to action plan goals. However, customized assistance districts means were typically lower (mean=3.5 vs 3.9) when considering Institute-specific questions (mean= 4.1 vs 3.8) and colleague-specific questions (mean=3.5 vs 3.9)

Specific to Action Plan domain constructs, full implementation district respondents and Institute respondents identified community-school connections (mean=3.4 vs. 2.6) to allow for the greatest level of collaboration with the Buffett Institute. Conversely, full implementation district respondents and Institute respondents reported the construct of District organization and capacity to have the lowest level of collaboration (mean=2.9 vs. 2.0). Customized assistance respondents identified district organization and capacity (mean=1.67) to have the highest level of collaboration with Institute staff.

When considering findings by all district stakeholder types, Family Facilitators/Home Visitors, School-based leaders, and District-based leaders reported collaborating with the Institute at the level of coordination (mean=3.3 vs. 3.1 vs. 3.1). When considering the ability to speak openly and freely as members of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, District-based leaders reported the highest level of agreement on the 5-point scale with a mean response of 4.7, while paraprofessionals/educators and school-based leaders somewhat agreed (mean=4.3). All stakeholder types somewhat or strongly agreed that their ideas were listened to and given appropriate consideration, with District-based leaders and Family Facilitators/Home Visitors having the highest levels of agreement (mean=4.5 vs. 4.6). Finally, all stakeholder types agreed power was somewhat shared between the Buffett Institute and school and District staff, with paraprofessionals and educators reporting the lowest level of agreement (mean=3.8) and Family Facilitators/Home Visitors reporting the highest (mean=4.4).

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Qualitative information was gathered from the open-ended survey questions within the District and Institute surveys and from subsequent interviews that took place with 10 Institute staff members and 12 full implementation district stakeholders (3 home visitors, 4 school-based administrators, 5 District-based administrators). Open-ended survey questions focused on benefits, strengths, accomplishments, and challenges of engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. Interview questions asked participants similarly focused questions but also asked individuals to expand on survey responses with respect to progress, challenges, and opportunities related to each program domain area (i.e., Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence, and Family & Community Partnership Engagement). Qualitative data were analyzed via a process of immersion and crystallization using a deductive content analytic approach. Overlapping survey and interview findings were combined in an open coding process. Three evaluators split initial transcription coding and met to discuss thematic findings. A qualitative expert then reviewed all codes and findings until a consensus was reached.

GREATEST BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT IN THE SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

There were three primary themes found related to benefits of engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan from the perspectives of District stakeholders. These included (1) a shared focus between the Institute and school districts, (2) increased family engagement, and (3) access to resources and supports. The following quotes highlight these findings:

(1) *"A renewed strong focus on the importance of early childhood. The ongoing partnership helps us keep our focus on this work and provides excellent resources for the work."*

-District Administrator

(2) *"The most beneficial part is seeing more family engagement at our school than ever and creating a safe space for families."*

-District Family Facilitator

(3) *"Having an outside support system to help develop leaders, teachers, and students in the work of the SECP."*

-District Administrator

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN

DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

Reaching Families Before School Years

"One of the biggest things is really reaching the families prior to them coming into school, when they are...under five, having them feel they are welcome at school and part of the [school name] family"

-School Administrator

Value of the Birth to 3rd Grade Approach

"I automatically think of that prenatal through third grade..in all decisions, it's not an afterthought anymore"

-School Administrator

Value of the Birth to 3rd Grade Approach

"10 years ago someone understood the importance of early childhood, the need for us to be successful as a community here in Omaha, Nebraska"

-Institute Staff Member

A Mind for Equity

"One of our goals is to close the opportunity gap. I feel like in some schools and districts we've seen that awareness of cultural responsiveness of parent and family engagement and all of these things that have now become built into a system instead of sprinkling equity on top"

-Institute Staff Member

INSTITUTE PERSPECTIVE

GREATEST STRENGTHS OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN



GREATEST CHALLENGES OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN

DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

Balancing Expectations

"Trying to balance the expectations of Buffett and our school to ensure we meet everyone's needs"

-Family Facilitator

Clarity of Expectations

"The new plan has promise but still isn't fully clear. [We] just need time and to build the connections with the right people and see how we can make it work for us"

-District Administrator

Time Commitment

"Time commitment. This is an important component to our school/district plan but it can be very time consuming for me"

-Principal

Communication

"Communication! We have not been included in the district-level communication and invites to meetings are inconsistent. It is confusing who the leads are in the districts I work in"

-Institute Staff Member

Clarity of Expectations

"[There is] inconsistency in Institute expectations, they vary from district to district"

-Institute Staff Member

Clarity of Outcomes

"Undefined outcomes or ways of measuring success. Priorities are constantly being shifted and changed. [There are] unclear expectations"

-Institute Staff Member

INSTITUTE PERSPECTIVE

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Interviewees were asked to identify how the Institute has supported progress related to leadership effectiveness goals as well as any challenges they experienced. In addition, interviewees were asked how they would like their districts to make improvements related to leadership effectiveness in future years.

Construct	District Perspective	Institute Perspective
<p>Progress</p>	<p>District-based administrators believe School-based leaders are grounded in the Birth-to-3rd-grade approach and appropriate professional development has been given to allow for buy-in.</p> <p><i>"They [Principals] take that full leadership because now they not only have the knowledge, they have the confidence on how to bridge that gap, meet with staff and be engrained with the whole school"</i> -District Administrator</p>	<p>Institute staff report the utilization and integration of evidence-based strategies to be beneficial to progress. Specifically, the Community of Practice available to principals was identified multiple times as a positive aspect of this domain.</p> <p><i>"I'm really proud of the work done in this area. There's a couple of districts that have taken the work and really integrated it into their principal leadership"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>Time and follow-through were identified as challenges. Administrators felt that while buy-in was apparent, competing demands sometimes stalled progress. Interviewees identified the COVID-19 pandemic as a key influencer for competing priorities.</p> <p><i>"The challenge I feel is for the Institute. This work is 100% what they do...it is one small piece of a much larger puzzle...we have many priorities competing for our time and attention"</i> -District Administrator</p>	<p>Institute staff reported the alignment of leadership goals to school-wide goals can be a challenge. Some Institute staff members identified principals as having different goals than other district staff members while others reported issues of district staff or district buy-in. In addition, time as a barrier was commonly mentioned.</p> <p><i>"The Principal might be ready to start addressing things, but the district is not ready"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>
<p>Future Strategies</p>	<p>There was a desire among interviewees to disseminate the knowledge principals had obtained from the Community of Practice to principals at other schools as well as at the teacher/paraprofessional level.</p> <p><i>"I think just kind of share that vision...spread the knowledge and the wealth...I want to expand it from my school to all the elementary principals"</i> -School Administrator</p>	<p>Institute staff members want to continue to find ways for districts to collaborate with one another regarding how they are implementing strategies learned with the Community of Practice.</p> <p><i>"Just the districts continuing to share ideas that work for them...the districts being able to share and collaborate on how things work and what we can do to make it work [at another district]"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>

INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

Interviewees were asked to identify how the Institute has supported progress related to Instructional Excellence goals as well as any challenges they experienced. In addition, interviewees were asked how they would like their districts to make improvements related to Instructional Excellence in future years.

Construct	District Perspective	Institute Perspective
<p>Progress</p>	<p>School and District administrators identified the implementation of social-emotional professional development opportunities and curriculums as signs of progress. Several districts reported implementing a new curriculum or providing a new educator training.</p> <p><i>"They [Institute] chose the curriculum we use and we use it across [district name]. Then I got training on it in my one on ones with [Institute staff]. If I ever have questions about how to implement things...she's very helpful with that"</i> -District Administrator</p>	<p>Institute staff noted there were diverse opportunities in place for educators to receive professional development through opportunities such as PD for All, Instructional Toolkits and Coaching. In addition, staff felt they were starting to understand how to best meet needs across districts.</p> <p><i>"There are some common themes that are showing in all of the districts, that's really allowing us to become an expert at what we're delivering"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>Interviewees report challenges translating knowledge into practice. Individuals stated school-based personnel were receiving additional education/training/curriculums but sometimes struggled to implement these changes.</p> <p><i>"We have the training, we just don't know how to connect it"</i> -School Staff Member</p>	<p>In addition to the challenges of time and teacher workload, a challenge discussed by some was a concern for information overload for educators. Some worried that the professional development opportunities provided may not be leading to substantial changes in practice.</p> <p><i>"Maybe we are trying to do too much and not go deep enough"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>
<p>Future Strategies</p>	<p>Interviewees would like to develop new solutions to support educators and paraprofessionals to effectively engage in the evidence-based strategies they have learned.</p> <p><i>"How do we build off of what we have done this year and continue to make sure that we're providing that equal PD [professional development] to teachers as well as our paraprofessionals because they work with students also?"</i> -District Administrator</p>	<p>Institute staff report a desire to evaluate data collected in this domain with the schools they serve to allow for continuous improvement to occur.</p> <p><i>"Just take the time to look at it [data] and really go through that continuous improvement cycle. And it takes time. They have to come. You know, it takes time in addition to the school and team meetings that we have to really reflect and look at it"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Interviewees were asked to identify how the Institute has supported progress related to family & community partnership engagement goals as well as any challenges they experienced. In addition, interviewees were asked how they would like their districts to make improvements related to family & community partnership engagement in future years.

Construct	District Perspective	Institute Perspective
Progress	<p>School and District administrators identified increases in drop-in plays and socializations as something worth celebrating over the past year. In addition, interviewees report a solid foundation for family and community facilitators to build off of in future years. In addition, the resources the Institute is able to provide were reported as integral to current practices.</p> <p><i>"They [Institute] support us with training our staff when it comes to family and community partnerships. They're just the expert"</i> -School Administrator</p>	<p>There was a level of agreement that the institute had effectively conveyed the importance of family and community partnership engagement to the schools and districts they work with.</p> <p><i>"I think the Institute has supported that effort [family & community partnership engagement] in showing the importance of starting early through home visitation and bringing that concept to schools"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>
Challenges	<p>Interviewees identified barriers such as parents' time, trust, and the COVID-19 pandemic as factors that negatively impact their ability to provide family engagement services to the degree they would like.</p> <p><i>"The families that we need to engage with the most are the hardest...the challenge has been finding ways to give a voice to families who historically have felt like they didn't have a voice at the school"</i> -District Administrator</p>	<p>Institute staff reported competing priorities within some schools that can hinder progress in this domain. Staff noted that sometimes schools needed additional support to facilitate community engagement.</p> <p><i>"I think that there are some systems that make it difficult to promote family engagement and community engagement, and really, it's up to the districts to disassemble and recreate a system"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>
Future Strategies	<p>Future strategies that were discussed included: being flexible to parents needs, additional training, support for home visitors and developing plans to increase engagement in family-wide events.</p> <p><i>"It's not a one-size fit all, not all parents want the same thing, just to be able to hone in on what our parents need and give them multiple opportunities, different ways to show what engagement and true partnership looks like"</i> -School Administrator</p>	<p>Institute staff would like to continue to find opportunities to develop programming that directly supports families diversity and allows for greater cultural considerations when developing engagement strategies. Staff members discussed the need for schools to meet the specific needs of the families they serve.</p> <p><i>Every district is different. What is your true definition of family engagement? What do you want it to look like and be able to confidently say these are the great things we do?"</i> -Institute Staff Member</p>

HOW CAN THE INSTITUTE SUPPORT FUTURE GOALS?

DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

Support to Continue to Hone In on Program Focus
"Family engagement has been a huge part of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. I know there is a lot of insight and knowledge and resources in that area and kind of asking for their support with our teachers"

-School Administrator

Strategies to Align Program Goals with Ongoing Efforts
"I think sometimes things get duplicated between where we get supports from...we action plan with [other organizations] and sometimes it's hard to go to people to be like, let's join another initiative"

-District Administrator

Additional Concrete Support
"I feel like there is a lot of talk about philosophy and goals, but I don't feel like there is a lot of concrete examples or action steps to accomplish our goals"

-School Administrator

Continue to Develop Strategies for Accountability
"Maybe we could grow in the accountability space to make sure goals are moving forward. And when they are not, how do we address that?"

-Institute Staff Member

Greater Community Involvement
"Definitely getting the community more involved in what we do...Family/community is the bridge to academic success"

-Institute Staff Member

Continue to Try and Align School/District Goals with Domains
"I feel like being a little more intentional about making the connection between the three domains, the three domains should align with the goals"

-Institute Staff Member

INSTITUTE PERSPECTIVE

SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute was perceived by District interviewees (n=12) as an effective source for information dissemination and expertise. District stakeholders reported they value the Birth-to-3rd-grade approach and believe a great accomplishment since program onset has been the ability to reach families before school begins. In addition, District respondents reported that they are well -equipped with the resources and/or curriculums they have received from the Institute and see Institute staff as expert leaders in their respective areas. By comparison, Institute staff (n=10) saw the greatest accomplishments of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan as the value placed on the Birth-to-3rd-grade approach, and a developing foundation for ensuring equitable practices across districts.

Related to identified barriers, District interviewees identified challenges when trying to balance expectations of the Institute with expectations of their schools and districts. Both Institute and District interviewees desired enhanced clarity of programmatic expectations. However, several reported that clarity had improved over the course of the 2022-2023 academic year. When considering barriers within the domains of Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence, and Family & Community Partnership Engagement, time, workload, and translation of new knowledge into practice was prevalent across Action Plan domains. This knowledge translation refers not only to principals sharing information learned with teachers and paraprofessionals but also to Home Visitors and/or Family/Community Facilitators translating information and/or curriculums learned with families. In addition, there was some concern that information overload could be hindering translation of knowledge into practice. Once again, aligning program priorities across schools and districts was commonly discussed as a barrier across domains.

Related to leadership effectiveness, District and Institute interviewees indicated that they would like to enhance collaboration among District leaders as well as improve strategies for disseminating knowledge learned from the Principals' Community of Practice. Specific to instructional excellence, there was a desire from Institute leaders to use data more strategically to improve programmatic efforts, and District interviewees wanted to find ways to build on the professional development received over the past year. Finally, with regard to family & community partnership engagement, District interviewees wanted to maintain flexibility to meet families where they are and Institute staff wanted to build on efforts to ensure culturally considerate programming.

Overall, it was reported by District interviewees that the Institute can continue to support school and district progress by helping schools hone in on their program focuses. In addition, Districts indicated they would like more concrete support for their educators to support translation of philosophy into practical strategies. Institute representatives believed the Institute should continue to find ways to help districts maintain accountability for their action plan goal progress as well as increase community involvement and buy-in for programmatic efforts. Once again, Institute and District interviewees reported a desire to develop strategies to align programmatic strategies within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan with ongoing school priorities and curriculums.

Leadership Effectiveness

1. What effect does the SECP have on principal leadership?

A self-reflective assessment from the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) was disseminated to Principals from 8 Omaha-based schools. This survey tool measured progress made within the Principals' monthly community of practice meetings that took place with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. The community of practice focused on 2 NAESP competencies ("Develop and foster partnerships with families and communities" and "Ensure equitable opportunities".) Principals were asked to complete a self-reflective assessment at two time points (January & May). Reflective assessments provided several constructs and asked respondents to rate themselves on a scale of (1) highly inaccurate, (2) inaccurate, (3) accurate or (4) highly accurate.



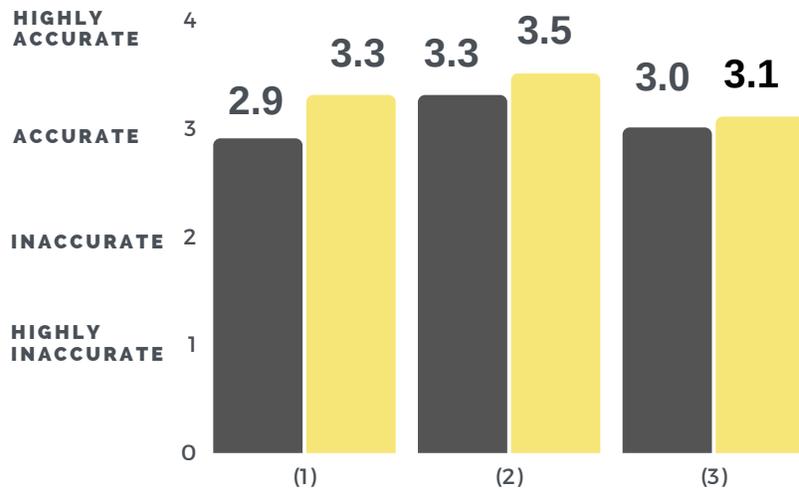
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

Self-Reflective Assessment

Survey findings for all participating Principals

Mean scores are reported in the report below at each time point with pre scores reported in Grey and post scores reported in Yellow.

COMPETENCY 2: DEVELOP AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

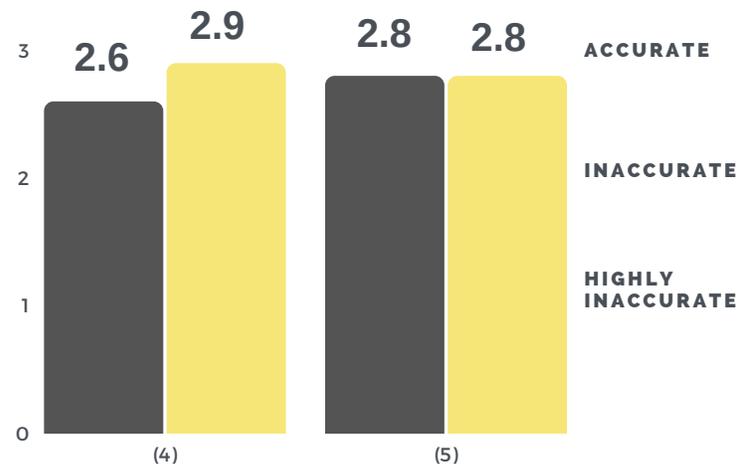


Strategy 2.1: Engage intentionally with families, especially those who have been traditionally marginalized.

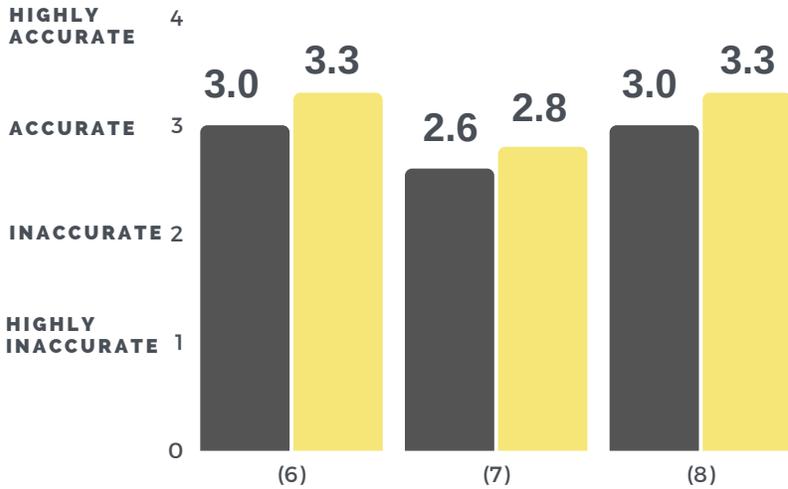
- (1) As a principal, I have full awareness and understanding of the varied needs that exist for my students Birth through 3rd grade and their families.
- (2) There are dedicated spaces in our school to encourage families to visit and collaborate with others.
- (3) Our school enacts a communication plan that includes multiple strategies to partner with families and provides services and supports to families depending on their individual needs (e.g., home language, disability status).

Strategy 2.2: Establish relationships and support collaboration with early care and education, including home visitors. Birth to entering school (ECE) programs in the community

- (4) I am familiar with and have established relationships with ECE programs in my community.
- (5) Our school provides opportunities and supports to kindergarten teachers to meet with ECE teachers staff (both those on-site and in community-based programs and including home visitors).



COMPETENCY 2: DEVELOP AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

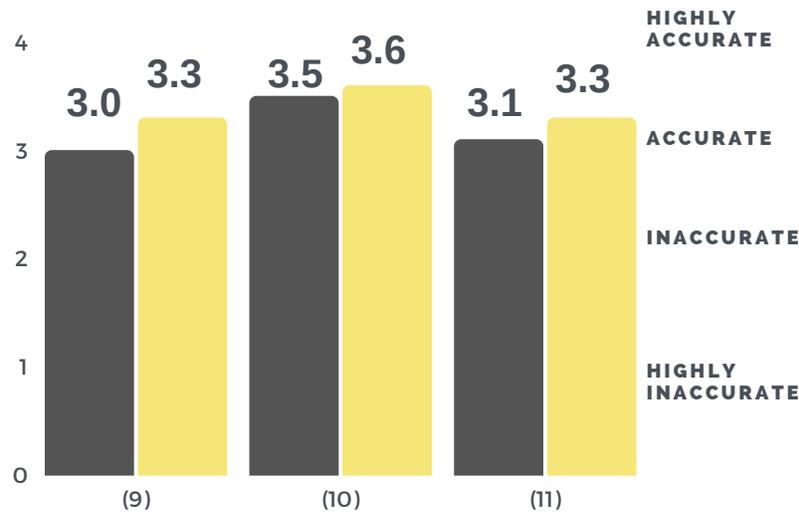


Strategy 2.3: Ensure smooth transitions for students and families not only between the variety of ECE programs and kindergarten, but also across the birth through 3rd grade continuum.

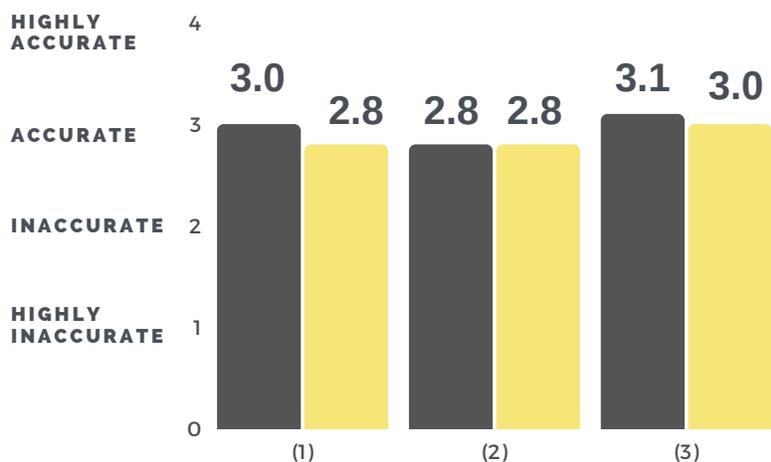
- (6) Our school has a transition plan in place to welcome and embrace students and families new to our school.
- (7) We reach out to and partner with ECE programs and community organizations to support the transitions of students and families.
- (8) We have a well-defined, manageable, and shared process to help parents register at our school. (i.e., supportive of languages other than English)

Strategy 2.4: Facilitate linkages with community supports and services to meet the needs of Birth-3rd grade students and families.

- (9) I am aware of or know where to find community supports that will meet the needs of all students and their families.
- (10) As a school, we have defined a process and identified dedicated personnel to serve as family liaisons to inform/coordinate external support for families with Birth through 3rd grade students.
- (11) Our students are provided with opportunities to participate in a variety of enrichment learning activities outside of the school day and during the summer.



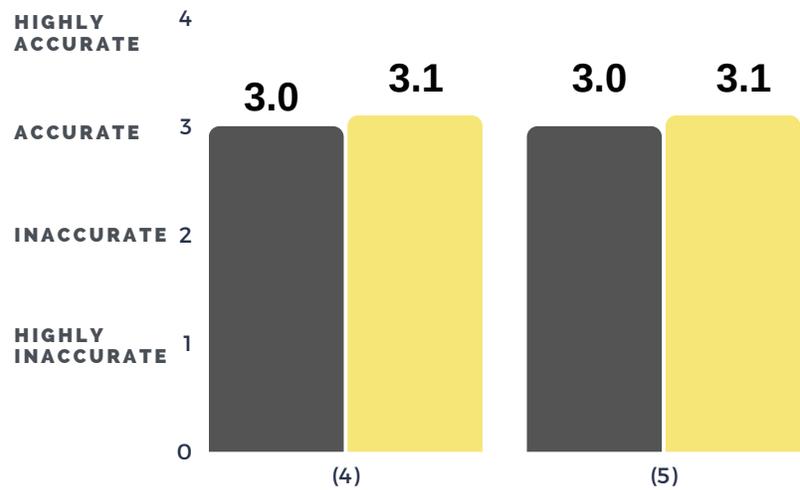
COMPETENCY 4: ENSURE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES



Strategy 4.1: Develop critical self-awareness and knowledge of oppression, privilege, and cultural competence.

- (1) As a leader, I engage in professional learning to examine how race and privilege impact my own values, beliefs, perceptions, leadership, and decision-making.
- (2) I have developed, and regularly revisit, my own personal action plan to develop my capacity to be an equity-minded leader.
- (3) I engage in conversations with students, families, and staff to better understand their perspectives and experiences pertaining to race, culture, socio-economic status, and gender identity.

COMPETENCY 4: ENSURE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES

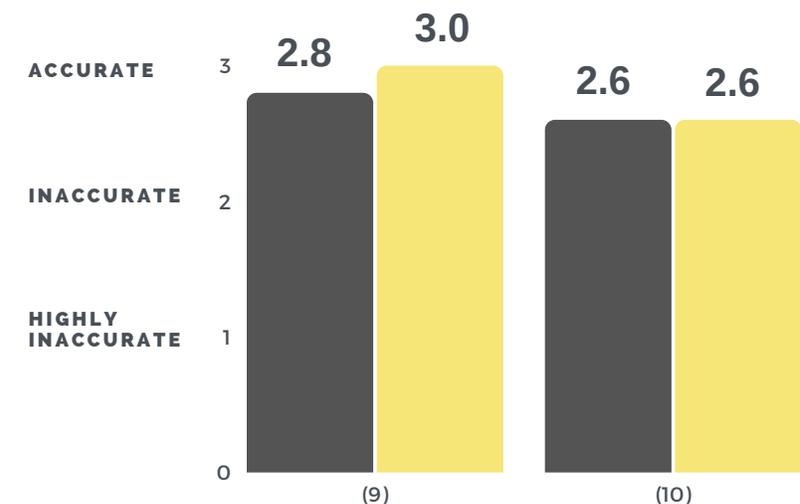
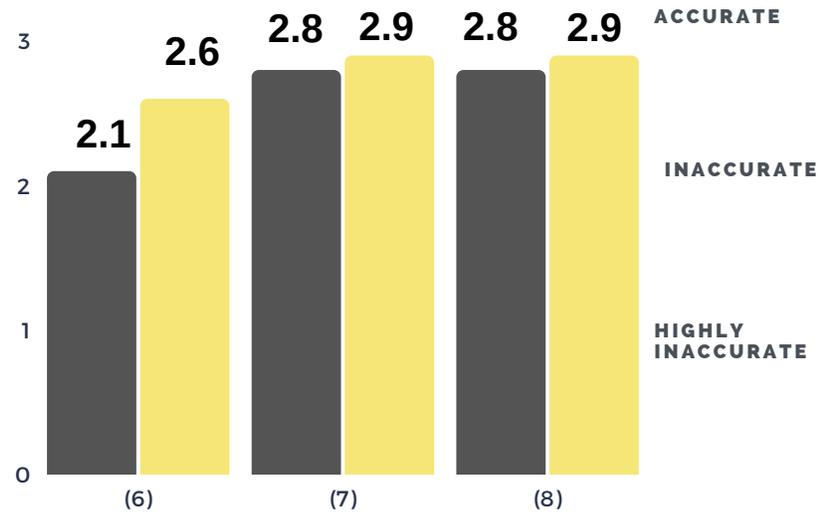


Strategy 4.2: Establish a school climate that is open, inclusive, and affirming of differences (for staff, students, and their families).

- (4) I have established trusting, respectful relationships with all stakeholder groups to create a climate that is open, equity focused, and affirming of difference.
- (5) As a school, we engage in professional learning that improves our culturally responsive and sustaining practices to help staff create learning environments that are inclusive and identity affirming for students Birth through 3rd grade.

Strategy 4.3: Facilitate linkages with community supports and services to meet the needs of Birth-3rd grade students and families.

- (6) As a school, we have conducted an equity audit with a team of stakeholders that mirrors the demographics of the school. We have examined a wide range of data and used this information to identify areas of disproportionality and disparities.
- (7) To focus on equity in Birth through 3rd grade, we intentionally examine data related to enrollment in home visiting, suspension/expulsion, attendance, inclusion of children with disabilities, access for dual language and English learners, and engagement of diverse family voices.
- (8) As a school, we have developed an on-going process to monitor the implementation of equity measures, examine new data, and evaluate progress with an equity lens to inform our continuous improvement process.



Strategy 4.4: Differentiate resources and strategies to ensure students, teachers, staff, and families have equitable opportunity to succeed.

- (9) I am aware of inequities that exist in my school and can identify how these disparities show up in programming, student achievement, resource allocation, and family engagement.
- (10) As a school, we have established clear ways for traditionally marginalized Birth through 3rd grade families to share their perspectives, ideas, and concerns, thereby informing the adjustment of school practices and policies.

Leadership Effectiveness

2. What effect do SECP leadership activities (i.e., action planning, birth through grade 3 workshops) have on district-level goals?

During the annual Action Planning Retreats within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, focus groups were held with full implementation Districts (Bellevue Public Schools, DC West Community Schools, Millard Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools and Westside Community Schools. District team members were asked to reflect on their engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan over the past year. A 5-question semi-structured interview guide was utilized to evaluate progress, challenges and future directions within the three primary program domains of Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence and Family & Community Partnerships Engagement.



Qualitative data were analyzed by Evaluators within the Munroe Meyer Institute. Evaluators transcribed focus group recordings verbatim and engaged in a process of immersion/crystallization of findings. Data was coded using a deductive coding framework in which codes were collapsed into categories based on the established questions. The following report shares findings from all focus groups.

PROGRESS MADE IN 2022-2023

Individuals were asked to rate their self-perceived progress for their action plan goals in each domain on a scale of 1-100. If multiple ratings were given within one district, the mean scale score was utilized. The mean score across all six districts can be seen below. Family and Community Partnerships Engagement related goals were identified to have the greatest progress with a mean progress score of 83.8 out of 100 being provided. Leadership effectiveness had the lowest mean progress score with a score of 70.8 out of 100.

**LEADERSHIP
EFFECTIVENESS
(70.8)**



**INSTRUCTIONAL
EXCELLENCE
(79.6)**



**FAMILY & COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS
ENGAGEMENT
(83.8)**



LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Focus group participants were asked to discuss progress and challenges specific to each domain within the action plan. Findings related to progress and challenges for each domain (Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence and Family and Community Partnerships Engagement) can be seen below.

Construct	Identified Themes	Example Quotes
<p>Progress</p>	<p><i>Effective professional development has been given to school/district leadership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals felt the professional development opportunities provided to school/district leadership enhanced understanding and appreciation for the Birth to Grade 3 approach. <p><i>A solid foundation has been laid</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents believed a foundation has been set to allow leadership to effectively build relationships with school staff and to support staff's ability to engage with students and families 	<p><i>"We were presenting...what are our foundations of early childhood and how what we're doing now will effect long-term in terms of developing that social-emotional awareness and equipping both kids and adults with the skills necessary."</i></p> <p><i>"I like that we had a system in place... We're having the ability to have those conversations [about early childhood] and really set aside some time to — in a busy year — to have some really specific focus."</i></p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p><i>Time is limited</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lack of time was frequently discussed as a key barrier to action plan progress. Competing demands at the district and school level were often identified <p><i>Leadership Staff Capacity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts reported leadership staff capacity to limit goal progress due to staff buy-in, staff turnover and staff capacity while addressing competing demands. 	<p><i>"I think a challenge with all of this work is, it kind of goes back to that time piece. This is competing with a whole lot of things that are priorities for a school."</i></p> <p><i>"One of our goals was to be able to do some personalized learning and some coaching. And just as I found myself covering more in classrooms and doing that and not as much time coaching except on the job or in the hallway type things, I know that the district felt that as well."</i></p>

INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

Construct	Identified Themes	Example Quotes
<p>Progress</p>	<p><i>Improved Early Childhood Knowledge Base</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals felt that the curriculums implemented by the Institute and the coaching/professional development opportunities provided had increased school/district staff knowledge <p><i>Effective Instruction is Happening</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some interviewees reported that their teachers were meeting expectations of district leadership related to instructional practice. Others reported beginning to see growth from the curriculums and professional development opportunities that had been implemented over the past year. 	<p><i>"That's really helpful to have Buffett come in and help with the Second Step...That was incredible to have the consistency of that."</i></p> <p><i>"I feel like they [teachers] do exactly what we ask of them and they do an awesome job."</i></p> <p><i>"We worked a lot on those academic conversations and then pulled that into our play and learns, and we pulled that into our socialization groups."</i></p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p><i>Time is limited</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lack of time to engage in new curriculums or implement new strategies learned was frequently acknowledged. <p><i>Identifying the right strategies to support students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents felt that students required varied strategies for support especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some districts desired further support from the Institute to help develop skills related to engaging learners 	<p><i>"I think the biggest barrier again comes down to time to cover everything and really effectively support teachers in everything that they need to have to be effective teachers."</i></p> <p><i>"You hear everyone say, like, post-COVID, kids are a little bit different and they're a little bit more on edge. And so I think we're we're dealing with behaviors and family structures that are different than what we might have had pre-COVID. And I do think teachers are feeling that."</i></p>

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ENGAGEMENT

Construct	Identified Themes	Example Quotes
<p>Progress</p>	<p><i>Community and Family Partnerships Have Improved</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every district felt that their engagement with families and/or community partners had increased over the past year. Some respondents felt their district had made great strides in increasing the number of community partnerships while others reported improved family relationships. Evidence cited for this included higher numbers of families enrolled in home visiting, increased attendance at school and/or school events and improved scores on the annual Family Engagement Survey. 	<p><i>"We hear from our kids in the classroom about these things all the time, going to the library, all the stuff you're doing [community events], our kids are talking about it. They love it."</i></p> <p><i>"Then I think it's back to the overall goal.. of families just feeling welcome in the school. The more they're relaxed... the more they feel a partnership with the school, I think our outcomes only go up from there."</i></p> <p><i>"I think based on our measure [family engagement survey], we had great success for this. In terms of engagement, the amount of responses you've got on the family engagement survey...tons of things to celebrate."</i></p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p><i>Improving trust between families and schools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several respondents reported difficulties engaging with families due to some families lack of trust or belief that they would benefit from services, such as home visiting. Multiple respondents felt the dynamic between schools and parents had shifted negatively since the COVID-19 pandemic. <p><i>Developing Authentic Relationships with Families</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some respondents felt the increases in family reach were apparent but there was still room for improvement related to the quality of the relationship with families. Multiple districts desired additional support from the Institute in this area. 	<p><i>"I think the interest has shifted and the challenge to get people out of their comfort zone is more difficult because for the past two years it was acceptable for, 'Oh, you don't have to come out. Stay home and do everything virtually. We can keep a distance. It's dangerous to be together."</i></p> <p><i>I think we're asking families how they want to be engaged, which feels different than what they've experienced, and so that's a barrier. Even though it's the right way to approach it, it feels different.</i></p>

FUTURE STRATEGIES

Focus group participants were asked to identify what they need to be successful in achieving their action plan goals for the 2023-2024 academic year. Findings from all districts can be seen below.

Leadership Effectiveness

1. Expand professional development opportunities to additional school/district staff
2. Enhance focus of action plan goal to make more achievable
3. Continue the Principal Community of Practice Meetings
4. Continue to engage with district/school staff to enhance buy-in of goal efforts



Family & Community Partnerships Engagement

1. Identify innovative strategies to improve quality and quantity of home visiting families
2. Develop strategies to improve quality of family partnerships
3. Increase community partnership outreach opportunities
4. Learn from existing strategies/Institute strategies that can leverage family partnerships effectively

Instructional Excellence

1. Continue training staff on foundational skills and scaffolding for educators
2. Continue to support implementation of evidence-based practices
3. Continue and enhance new social emotional learning curriculum efforts
4. Support educators ability to try new strategies and evaluate their impact



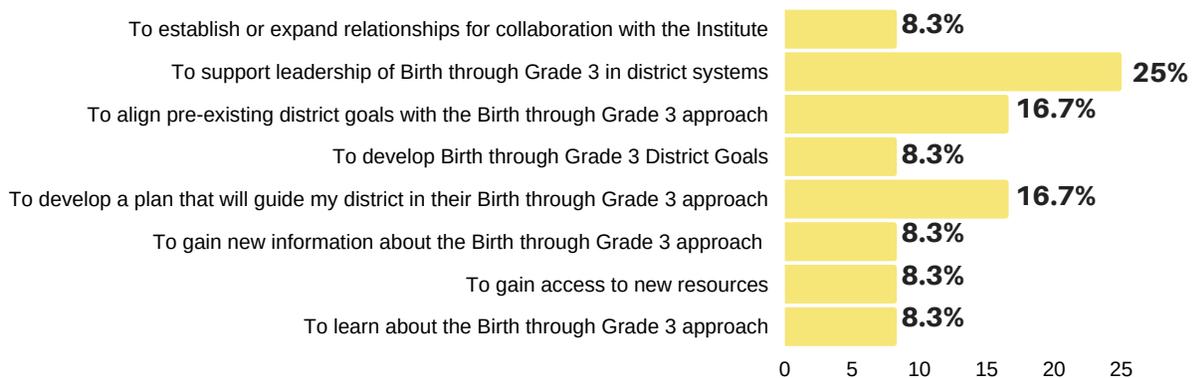
Leadership Effectiveness

Birth through Grade 3 Leadership Workshops

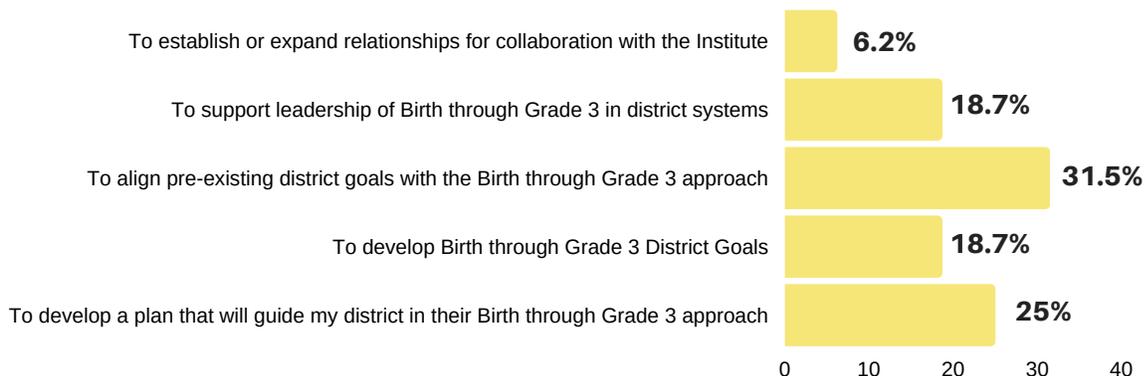
In the Summer of 2023, two Birth through Grade 3 leadership workshops took place with School Districts residing in the Douglas/Sarpy County area. The purpose of these workshops was to identify the current status of a district to assist in determining their readiness in implementing a Birth through Grade 3 approach. The first workshop took place with Papillion La Vista Community Schools on May 31st, 2023 and focused on the utilization of a P3 Audit Tool to support an internal assessment of birth through 3rd grade alignment to district policies, procedures and practices. The 2nd workshop took place on June 20th with administrators from Papillion La Vista Community Schools and Gretna Public Schools and focused on understanding the Buffett Early Childhood Institute's Birth through Grade 3 approach and to support building district cohesion related to the Birth through Grade 3 approach. A post-workshop survey was disseminated to participating individuals immediately following each workshop. The survey was designed to gather feedback related to workshop experience, impact and future directions. Descriptive findings for each survey can be seen below. The most common reason for participation cited in workshop 1 was "to support leadership of Birth through Grade 3 in district systems" (25%). The most common reason cited for participation in workshop 2 was "to align pre-existing district goals with the Birth through Grade 3 approach (31.5%).

MOST COMMON REASONS DISTRICTS CHOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN BIRTH THROUGH GRADE 3 LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOP 1 (N=7)



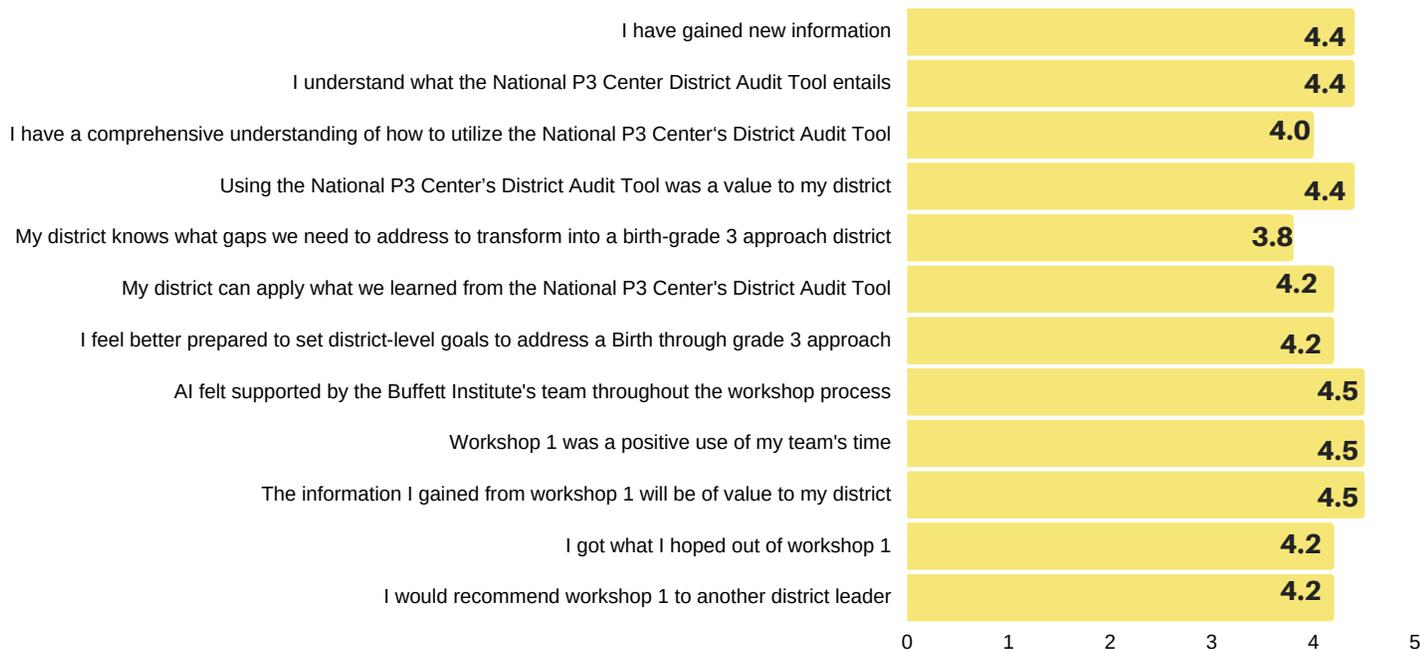
WORKSHOP 2 (N=6)



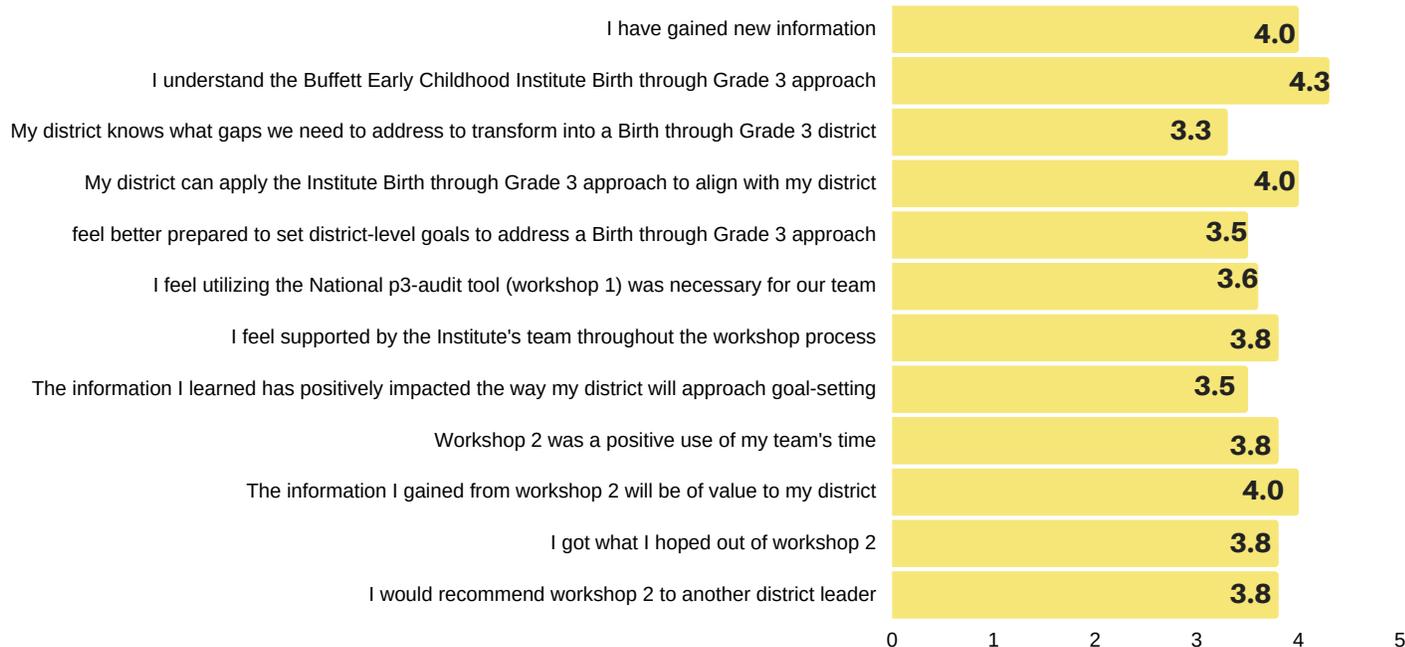
Workshop Evaluation Findings

Workshop participants were also asked to identify their level of agreement with the following statements on a 1-5 scale (1, strongly disagree, 5, strongly agree). Mean responses can be seen below. The highest level of agreement within Workshop 1 was found for the following statements: "I felt supported by the Buffett Institute's team throughout the workshop process (4.5); Workshop 1 was a positive use of my team's time (4.5) and the information I gained from workshop 1 will be of value to my district (4.5). The highest level of agreement from workshop 2 was the following item: "After workshop 2, I understand the Institute's Birth through Grade 3 approach"(4.3). The item with the lowest level of agreement after both workshops included: "my district know what gaps we need to address to transform into a Birth through grade 3 approach district (3.8 & 3.3).

AFTER WORKSHOP 1...



AFTER WORKSHOP 2...



Instructional Excellence

1. What effect does the SECP have on classroom practices?

Survey Overview

In the spring of 2023, a survey was disseminated to educators engaged in Professional Development within the Buffett Early Childhood Institute's Superintendent's Early Childhood Plan. Educators were asked to reflect on the evidence-based instructional practices and learning opportunities they had engaged in over the last year for evaluation purposes. This report highlights the descriptive findings from the survey.

100%

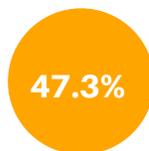
of survey respondents reported that the instructional opportunities they engaged in during the 2022-2023 academic year had been helpful to support overall social-emotional development of children in their program

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- A total of 19 surveys were completed by educators and paraprofessionals from two school districts
- Respondents had worked with an Institute coach for an average of 7.2± 2.35 months
- 52.6% of respondents identified their current role as educator followed by 47.4% as paraprofessional
- 73.6% of respondents identified as Caucasian/White
- 57.9% of respondents had worked in early childhood for at least 5 years
- 94.4% of respondents typically supported preschool age children with one individual supporting kindergartners

MOST COMMON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Participants were asked to identify what professional development opportunities they engaged in since June 2022. The top activities included:



One on One Coaching



Pyramid Model Training



TPOT Classroom Observations

Respondents were asked to identify the best part of receiving Professional Development through the Superintendent's Early Childhood Plan. Responses centered around effective strategies, resource sharing, and a supportive network.

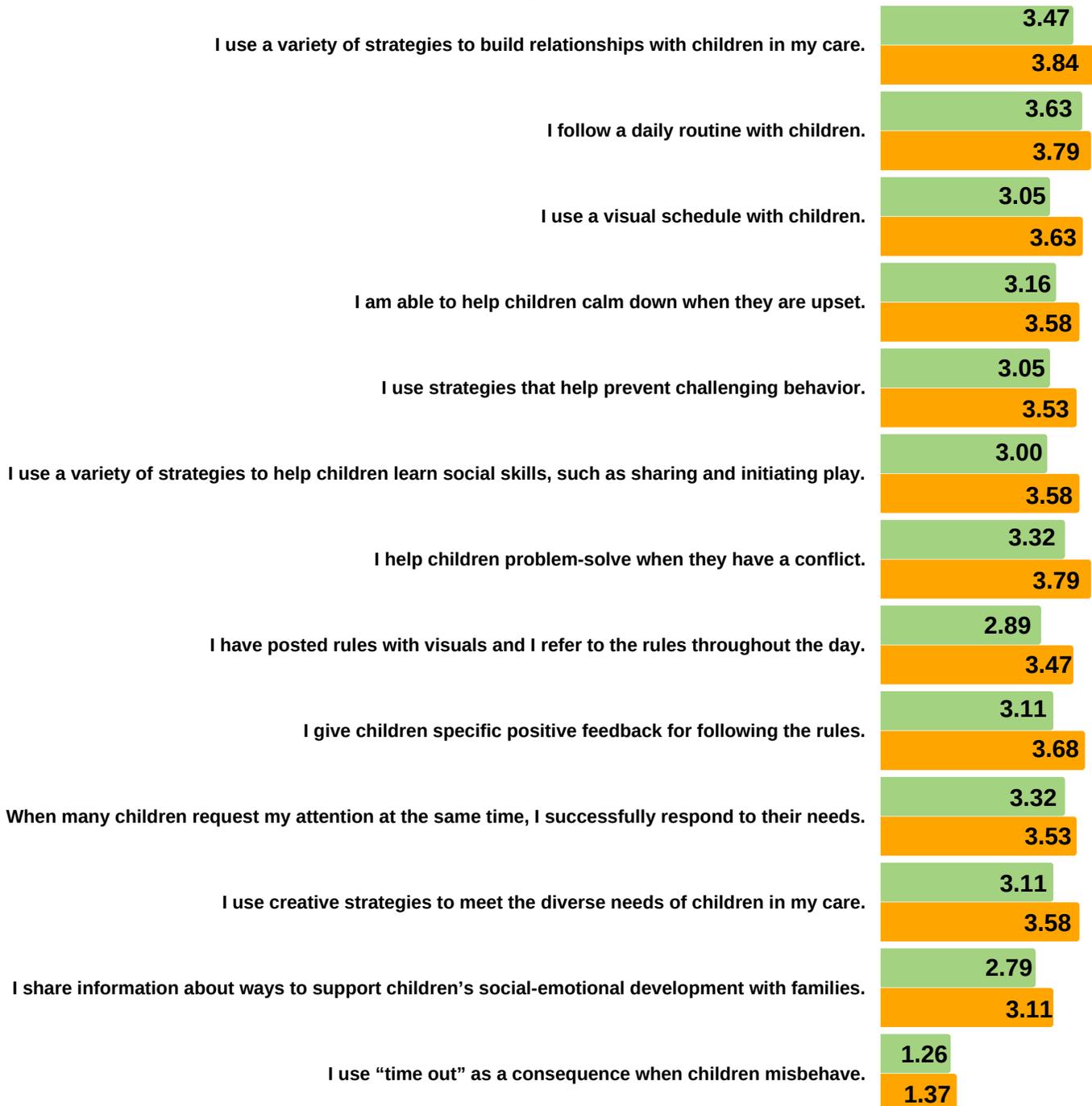
"Getting the training and the support from the school. Being trained on effective strategies we use often with the students."
-Paraprofessional

"It [Coaching] helps to support student needs with additional resources and allows us to problem-solve when students have high needs or challenging behaviors."
-Educator

"Knowing that there is help whenever we need it, also giving us ideas we might not think of."
-Paraprofessional

Classroom Related Skills

Educators were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements related to engaging in evidence-based classroom-related skills. Respondents were asked to reflect on how their instructional practices have changed from before the current academic year (2022-2023) to the time of survey completion. Respondents were asked to rank survey items as Not Applicable or on a scale of 1-4 (1=Almost Never, 4=Almost Always). Mean scores are reported below for each time point. Practices before the 2022-2023 academic year are in **Green**, and current practices are noted in **Orange**. A few of the largest self-reported increases in agreement include "I use a visual schedule with children" and "I use a variety of strategies to help children learn social skills such as sharing and initiating play."



Child-Specific Skills

Educators were asked to identify if there was a child in their care with ongoing challenging behaviors. 100% of respondents reported "Yes" and were asked a series of child-specific questions. Respondents were asked to reflect on their practice before the 2022-2023 academic year and their current practice. Once again, educators were asked to mark Not Applicable or select an option on a scale of 1-4 (1=Almost Never, 4=Almost Always). Mean scores are reported below for each time point. Practices before the 2022-2023 academic year are in **Green**, and current practices are noted in **Orange**. The largest increases in agreement between the two timepoints were seen for "I use effective strategies to address this child's challenging behavior or social-emotional issues" and "I have coping skills that keep me calm when this child's behavior pushes my buttons."



Educator Perceptions

Educators were asked to reflect on their experience working with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute since June 2022. They were asked to rate from 1 to 5 (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree) the extent to which they agreed with the following statements. Findings indicate:

57.8% of respondents somewhat agreed (15.7%) or strongly agreed (42.1%) the Institute changed the way they approach their instructional practice.



77.7% of respondents somewhat agreed (33.3%) or strongly agreed (44.4%) the Institute had given them new ideas for how to approach their instructional practice.



72.1% of respondents somewhat agreed (33.3%) or strongly agreed (38.8%) the Institute had given them new resources to use in their instructional practice.



Respondents were asked to identify the biggest challenge they have faced when changing their instructional practice over the past year. Typical responses focused on two general areas: time commitments for trainings and meetings and administrator/peer buy-in. Example quotes can be seen below.

"Making sure the staff is on the same page with regards to student needs and providing consistent supports." – Educator

"The extra trainings and meetings were time consuming." – Educator

In conclusion, educators and paraprofessionals self-report that their ability to engage in evidence-based practices increased over the 2022-2023 school year. Opportunities related to the Pyramid Model were most commonly reported, and survey respondents view the Institute as a supportive partner for resource dissemination and as a supportive network. Future consideration could be given to time management of professional development opportunities and developing strategies to encourage school-wide buy-in.

Family and Community Partnerships Engagement

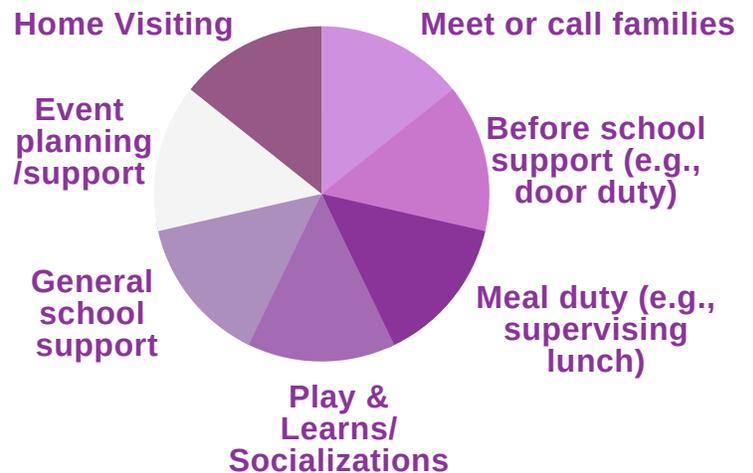
1. What effect does the SECP have on how family facilitators, community facilitators and/or home visitors engage with families?

In April 2023, two focus groups took place with a cohort of home visitor/family facilitators and community facilitators (n=7). These individuals directly support efforts within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. Individuals were interviewed in-person by Evaluators from the Munroe Meyer Institute and were asked to share their thoughts and experiences related to their current role. Questions were guided by constructs of Social Support Theory seen below. Focus group data were transcribed verbatim and entered into Nvivo qualitative analysis software. A constant comparative analysis was employed. This process involved three major stages which included: (1) open coding data into small units or chunks with a common descriptor or phrase (2) grouping codes into categories and (3) developing themes that express each grouping.

CONSTRUCT	DEFINITION
EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	Expressions of empathy, love, trust and caring
INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT	Tangible aid and service
INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT	Advice, suggestions and information
APPRAISAL SUPPORT	Encouragement, information useful for self-evaluation

Individuals were asked to start the focus group by describing their roles and responsibilities within a typical day. Please note these varied based on type of role (i.e., community facilitator, family facilitator and/or home visitor). The following graph describes the most common responses.

"I don't know that I've had two days that are exactly the same in the whole year. My day always starts out with greeting kids at the front door, so I have morning duty. And then from there, it just depends on what's needed to be done. I have some socialization playgroups that happen during the week. I have some home visiting that happens during the week. I support the pre-K program when they need it. I have a clothing closet and a SNAP program..so every day looks different just depending on what's needed in the building." -Reflection on typical day in current role



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Interviewees were asked to discuss the following (a) how they provide emotional support to the families they serve, (b) if there is any type of emotional support they wish they could provide but can't, (c) what resources they would need to provide additional emotional support and (d) what challenges they encounter when providing emotional support. The following themes were identified related to emotional support.

Identifying as a trusted resource

Interviewees felt they provided support for parents by being seen as a trusted resource that they could talk to. They reported parents saw them as a safe space to come to.

“

Sometimes it's just holding space, holding space for parents, especially moms, who maybe don't have a good support system. And you are their person that they know they can kind of vent to and express their concerns to.

”

Concern that they are not enough

Interviewees report being concerned that their services are not enough for the families they work with. Individuals reported worrying about their families after work and wanting services such as therapy or counseling for both parents and children to be more easily accessible.

“

One challenge for me is a lot of these families could use counseling and sometimes finding a therapist or finding counselors in our community..that can be a challenge. In my case, my families are Spanish-speaking.

”

A desire to educate parents further

Related to resources needed to provide emotional support, there was a desire to learn more about how to support families when they were dealing with challenging behavior from a child.

“

It would really be nice to have like Conscious Discipline training or somebody that can have these [trainings] like once a quarter for these parents to come to.

”

INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

Interviewees were asked to discuss the following (a) how they provide instrumental support to the families they serve, (b) if there is any type of instrumental support they wish they could provide but can't, (c) what resources they would need to provide additional instrumental support and (d) what challenges they encounter when providing instrumental support. The following themes were identified related to instrumental support.

Sharing curriculum resources

Interviewees discussed various curriculums they provide to the families they serve. Some reported trying to eliminate resource barriers and bringing families the materials they needed to engage in curriculum-based activities at home.

“

I would say a lot of times even though our curriculum does encourage families to use things from their home, I do like to bring items because I don't want to assume that they have it or I don't want to send them on a wild goose chase in their home to have those resources.

”

Helping to meet basic needs

Some interviewees reported supporting or providing services that meet basic human needs such as a clothing closet for families, a backpack program, drive thru pantries or snack programs.

“

We have a clothing closet as well that we help run. Also backpacks. We have like a food to-go bag, so we stow them to help disburse them to families in need.

”

A desire to share more resources

Although one individual reported having a grant to support book purchases other individuals wished they could give families more books to take home. Others desired to bring in resources to meet the needs mothers face. For example, to bring in driving instructors to help mothers learn to drive or behavioral health specialists that could be made available to parents and children.

“

If we can provide like driving classes or like a driving instructor once a week, once a month, that'd be phenomenal to change those kids and mothers lives.

”

INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT

Interviewees were asked to discuss the following (a) how they provide informational support to the families they serve, (b) if there is any type of informational support they wish they could provide but can't, (c) what resources they would need to provide additional informational support and (d) what challenges they encounter when providing informational support. The following themes were identified related to informational support.

Providing feedback to parents related to child development

Interviewees reported that in addition to general information sharing through curriculum based learning they provided feedback to parents regularly. Some reported using developmental checklists to pinpoint areas of focus.

“

I think the developmental checklists are really helpful too..just to let them know like "you're doing great and look at how much they're growing" or on the flip side, if you have a little one where you may be concerned. A lot of the ASQ [ages and stages questionnaires] are really helpful, just to start conversations about screening.

”

Adjusting information to meet parents needs

Some individuals reported that they follow the parents lead when it comes to information sharing. This may influence whether paper copies are provided, how materials are translated or the tone of the conversation.

“

I feel like meeting their needs, like some parents do want physical printouts from like activity, their curriculum that we're using and some are like, don't give it to me because they literally leave it like just send me a picture or an email. So following their leads.

”

Having tough conversations

Some individuals reported no barriers to providing informational support. Others stated they were challenged by difficult conversations at times when trying to share information, especially with families of a child experiencing a developmental delay.

“

I'm starting to have a lot of families that have children with a delay..I had one mom, she was told that her son might have autism and that is an area I don't know enough about. So just kind of hearing her and seeing what kind of information she was given by the doctor and reassuring her not to stress too much, talk to the provider, get all the information you can. I think that is a challenge for me because I do not have experience or wouldn't know where to start.

”

APPRAISAL SUPPORT

Interviewees were asked to discuss the following (a) how they provide appraisal support to the families they serve, (b) if there is any type of appraisal support they wish they could provide but can't, (c) what resources they would need to provide additional appraisal support and (d) what challenges they encounter when providing appraisal support. The following themes were identified related to appraisal support.

Encouragement with verbal and nonverbal Communication

Interviewees report being a cheerleader for their families and finding ways to give encouragement through positive praise and reinforcement on a regular basis.

I would tell mom, "you are doing an amazing job". A smile, eye contact, showing interest in her and the children. Remind them you know, being a parent is challenging enough.

Improving upon ways to respond in emotional situations

A majority of interviewees reported a desire to further their knowledge related to child development discussions and tough conversations that can arise when parents have a concern.

It never hurts to have more training, a lot of people just need training on how to handle emotional moments or how to respond because sometimes people can respond in a way that could really damage a relationship.

A desire to provide praise in other ways

Some individuals noted they would like to be able to celebrate families accomplishments in other ways such as with small incentives.

We do a lot of verbal [praise] or text messages for families like, "Oh my God, they just did it. They just went to the bathroom." We've been talking about potty training for months, and of course you celebrate. But wouldn't it be nice..to write a nice little card and have postage and maybe a gift card to buy underpants instead of just trying to get something donated..that would be amazing.

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Interviewees were also asked to identify their greatest accomplishment so far in their current role. Participants largely reported their greatest accomplishments to be linked to developing trusting relationships with parents/families and being seen as a source of support not only within schools but in the community as well. In addition, seeing children succeed developmentally was identified frequently as an accomplishment. Overall, there was a consensus that the work being done had value and was effective despite the barriers they faced.

I guess knowing this mom has faith in me and trusts me to help her and support her. When we celebrate together...like when her child gets into preschool and he's ready and he's reaching milestones, when they tell you about their lives without you even asking anymore.. you are more than just a social worker, you're a family to them.

I think my biggest accomplishment is just building the relationships with families. I think that's really the foundation of the program working, having that relationship where they are texting you and saying "o my gosh, look at what their [child] did". We're seeing those big milestones and little milestones and celebrating them together.

I feel like we really make strong partnerships. It's very odd that family just stop coming..typically they're there for the long run because they feel like you genuinely care and you want to work alongside them and they see the growth.

Family and Community Partnerships Engagement

2. What effect does the SECP have on family perceptions of family engagement?

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 the eight full implementation schools in an online format. Families enrolled in home visiting or family facilitation also received the surveys. The survey was available in 19 languages to accommodate the language needs of all the families at the participating schools.

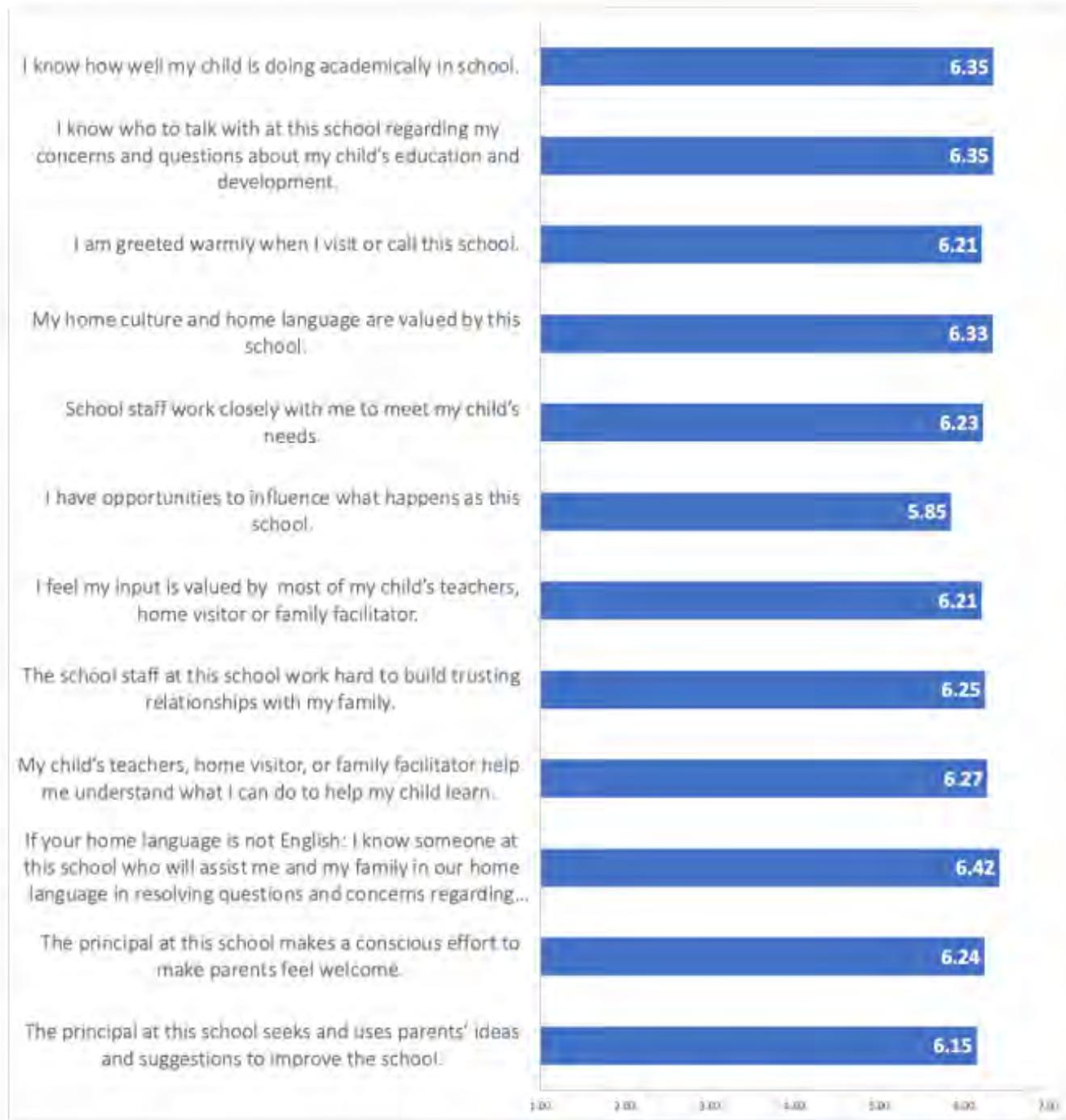
A total of 499 families with at least one child age birth to grade 3 responded to the survey across the eight schools, with 98 (19.7%) of these families reporting speaking a language other than English in the home. The majority of the families reported their race as White (n=343; 68.7%) with the next largest race category reported being "Two or more races" (n=67; 13.4%), followed by Black (n=40; 8.0%) and Asian (n=24; 4.8%). Sixteen respondents (8.2%) preferred not to report their race. Almost a quarter of the families (n=117; 23.4%) reported their ethnicity as Latinx. Almost half of the families (n=228; 45.8%) reported qualifying for the Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program, with 40 families (8.0%) preferring not to answer this question. Across the schools, the number of families responding to the survey ranged from 40 to 78 per school.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high), families rated schools very positively, with item averages ranging from 5.85 (SD=1.83) to 6.42 (SD=1.79) out of 7. The highest-rated item across the schools was "If your home language is not English: I know someone at (school) who will assist me and my family in our home language." The lowest-rated item, while still very positive, was "I have opportunities to influence what happens at (school)." Figure 1 displays the families' ratings for each item. It is important to note that COVID-19 may have had negative impacts on school-family connections during the 2022– 2023 school year.

Reference

Ishimaru, A. M., & Lott, J. (2015). User's Guide for Road Map Family Engagement Survey: Data Inquiry for Equitable Collaboration. Retrieved from the Equitable Parent-School Collaboration Research Project website: <https://education.uw.edu/epsc>

Figure 1. Ratings of Family-School Partnerships



PD for All

- 1. What is the reach of the "bite-size" PD for All approach?**
- 2. If and how are early childhood educators implementing knowledge learned?**
- 3. What are the best practices and barriers to new knowledge implementation within instructional settings?**

The theme of "PD for All" in the Spring of 2023 was building and sustaining powerful partnerships with families. A total of three sessions took place over a six-month period. Twitter and social media analytics were used to identify the reach of the "bite size" approach. A post-session survey was utilized to evaluate perception and feasibility of the approach. Finally, a mixed-methods cohort design (n=13) was employed to evaluate the influence PD for All had on an educator's self-determination to build and sustain family partnerships. The cohort was also utilized to identify perceptions, satisfaction and opportunities for improvement for the bite-size approach over a longitudinal period. Cohort members were asked to complete surveys and interviews throughout the 6-month period.

Session Overview

Each session, a video was disseminated via social media that discussed that session's content area, session titles can be seen below. The video was followed by two twitter chats each with a focused topic. After the twitter chats an infographic was shared via social media as well as through an emailed summary that highlighted key pieces from that session's content. The email summary also housed a post-program survey that requested participation from any individuals that had engaged in any of the elements of the PD for All session.

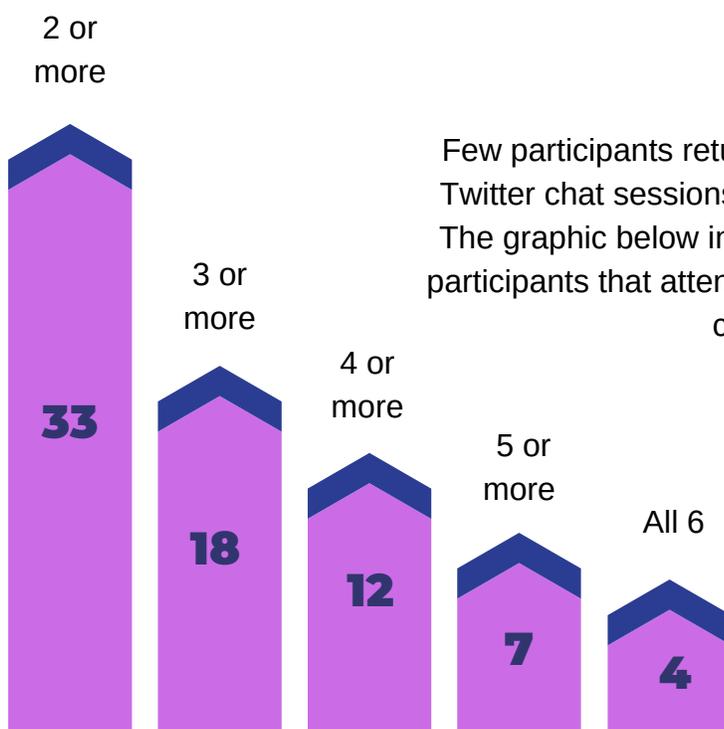
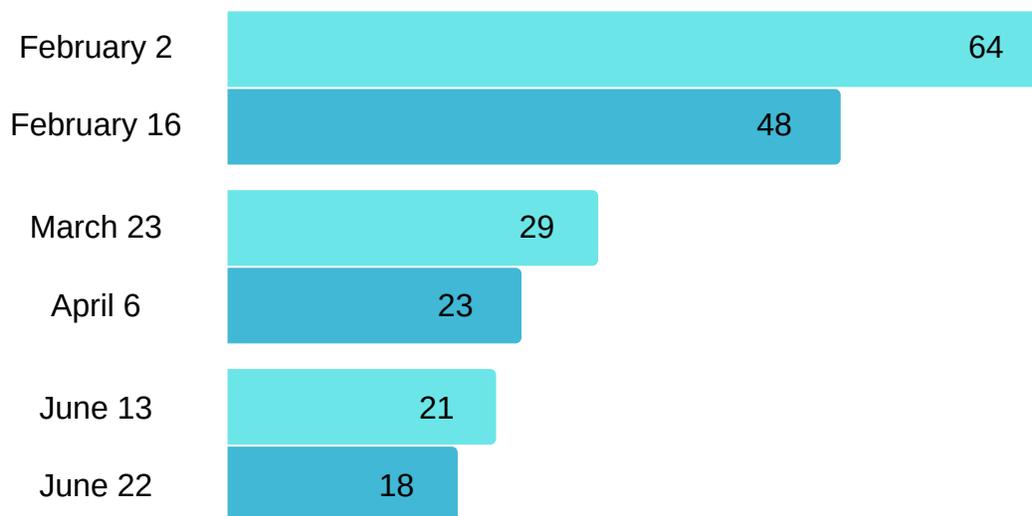
SESSION 1: BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

**SESSION 2: SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS BY
ADVOCATING TOGETHER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

**SESSION 3: "WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF SUPPORT:
CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO
SUSTAIN POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS"**

Question #1: What was the reach of the bite-size approach?

A total of six *Twitter* chats were offered across the 6-month time period with two chats offered for each session. Participation in the *Twitter* chat sessions decreased steadily over time. 133 individuals (unduplicated count) attended at least one of the *Twitter* chat sessions held. The chart below shows the total number of participants that attended each *Twitter* chat (excluding BECI team support). During the first series, 15 participants who attended the first chat returned to attend the second, 14 participants attended both chats in the second series, and 5 participants attended both chats in the third series.



Few participants returned to attend multiple *Twitter* chat sessions throughout the series. The graphic below indicates the numbers of participants that attended more than 1 *Twitter* chat.

Twitter Analytics



Session 1

@BuffettECI

Several Tweets from the February 2 and February 16 chat series had an average range of views of 1,000-2,200



Session 2

@BuffettECI

Several Tweets from the March 23 and April 6 chat series had an average range of views of 1,000-2,300

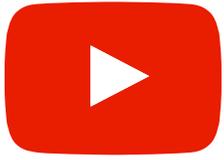


Session 3

@BuffettECI

Several Tweets from the June 13 and June 22 chat series had an average range of views of 650-1,600





YouTube Video Views

A total of four videos were created (1 for each session + an overview introductory video) across the 6-month time period. The session 2 video had the highest number of views with 483. The session 3 video had the lowest number of views with 160 views. Video views are current as of July 14th, 2023.

Overview/Introductory Video

198 views

Average view duration: 1:19 minutes

Video length: 2:39 minutes

386 views

Average view duration: 3:28 minutes

Video length: 10:41 minutes

Session 1 Video "Building Trusting Relationships"

Session 2 Video

"Advocating Together for Student Success"

483 views

Average view duration: 2:41 minutes

Video length: 10:34 minutes

160 views

Average view duration:

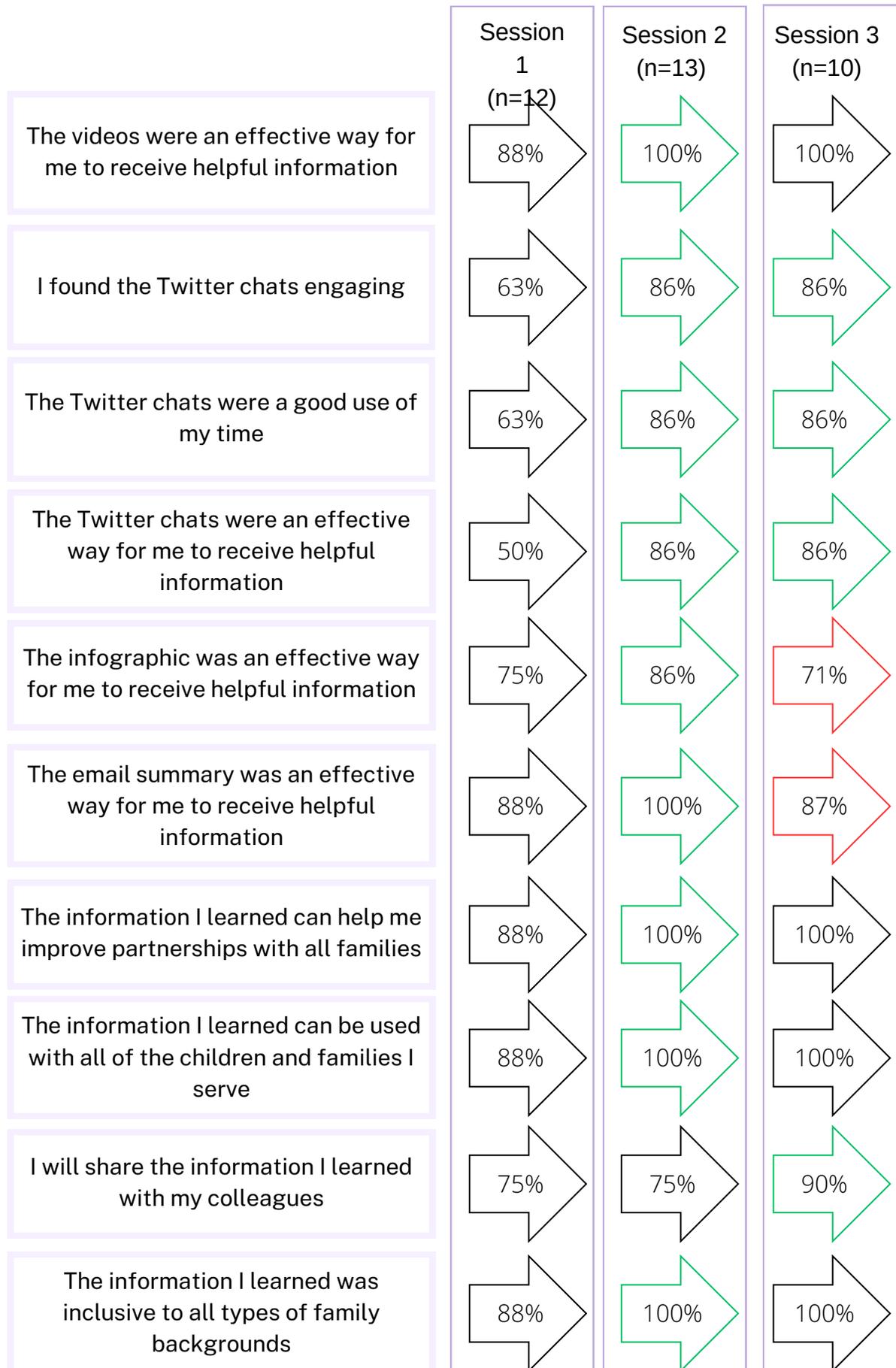
3:44 minutes

Video length: 10:59 minutes

Session 3 Video "Widening the Circle of Support"

Question 2: How satisfied were participants with the bite-sized approach?

A survey was sent in the email summary after each session and asked individuals to select a level of agreement from 1-5 (1, strongly disagree, 5, strongly agree). The summary below compares **all survey respondents across the 3 sessions** that selected **somewhat agree or strongly agree** for each item across the three survey time points. Please note individuals were only asked questions for items they identified that they had viewed or received.



Summary of Q1 & Q2 Findings

Twitter chat participation decreased steadily across the 6-month time period. Furthermore, tweet view ranges were lowest for 3rd session chats. After session 1, 63% of survey respondents somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the *Twitter* chats were worth their time and 50% felt *Twitter* chats were an effective way to receive information. Although levels of agreement for these items increased for these items in Sessions 2 and 3, the number of individuals that reported attending the *Twitter* chats decreased.

Specific to the video component, video views were highest for session 2 with 483 views reported however the session 3 video had the longest average view duration of 3 minutes and 44 seconds. Overall, the majority of individuals that reported watching the videos agreed that the videos were an effective way to receive helpful information across the 3 sessions.

Each session a new infographic was disseminated. In all sessions the majority of respondents that viewed the infographic agreed that it was an effective way to receive new information however level of agreement was lowest after session 3.

Related to the email summary, the majority of respondents that viewed the email summary felt it was an effective way to receive information across sessions with the lowest level of agreement occurring after session 3.

Among survey respondents, there was a large level of agreement across all 3 sessions that the information shared within PD for All could be used to help improve family partnerships and the information could be shared with colleagues. Finally, the majority of survey respondents felt the PD for All content was inclusive to all types of family backgrounds.

Question #3: How did engagement in three "bite-size" learning sessions influence self-determination to build and sustain powerful family partnerships?

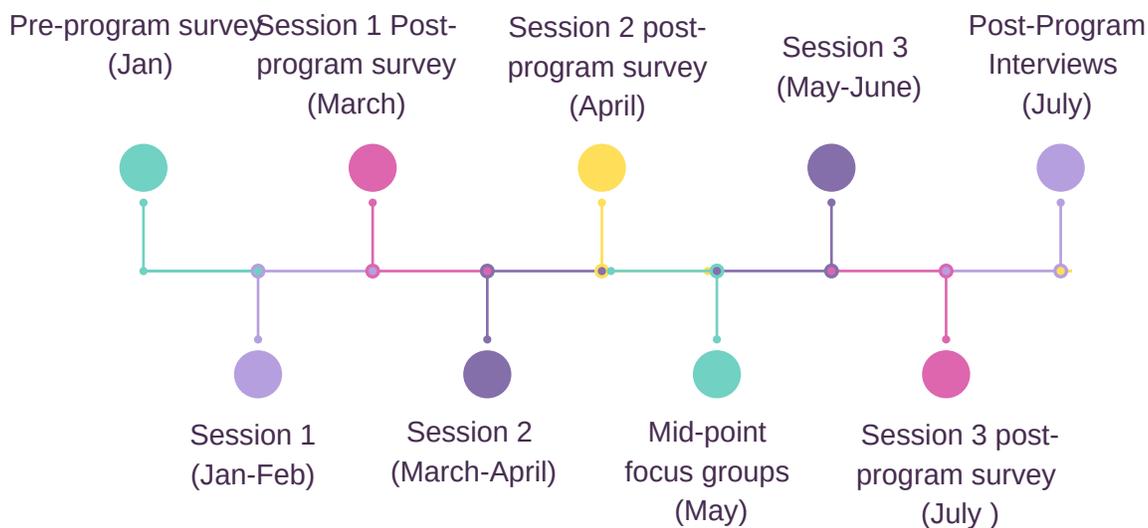
To answer this question a cohort of early childhood professionals was identified by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute's program team (n=13). Cohort members were asked to participate in all 3 sessions of PD for All. Throughout this time they were asked to complete four surveys, one mid-program focus group and one post-program interview. Across time points cohort members were asked questions related to their self-determination to build and sustain powerful family partnerships.

Self-Determination Theory

The goal of the evaluation was to identify how the bite-size learning approach influences an individual's self-determination. Self-determination theory holds two primary assumptions, (1) individuals strive for growth and (2) intrinsic motivation is key. This theory posits that to allow growth or increased motivation in a behavior, such as building and sustaining powerful family partnerships, individuals need to feel autonomous, competent and connected with those around them (relatedness) (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Data Collection/Analysis

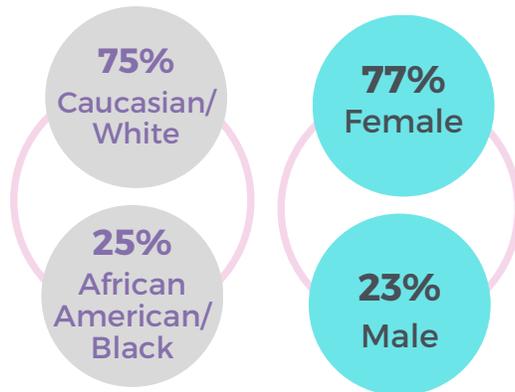
Cohort members were asked several questions related to their autonomy, competence and relatedness to engage with families at several time points. A pre-program survey was disseminated to gather baseline information. Cohort members were also asked to complete a post-session survey shared in each session's email summary. Survey data was analyzed for descriptive findings and compared across time points., pre-program survey data was analyzed independently. Interview data was analyzed via a constant comparative deductive analysis in which thematic findings were found at each time point and compared with one another to assess for change across time points. The timeline below demonstrates when cohort members were asked to complete various data collection pieces.



Cohort Demographics

Cohort demographic information can be seen below. The majority of participants identified as Caucasian/White and female. Most had more than 20 years of experience in early childhood education and identified as an early childhood educator (lead teacher or paraprofessional). The majority identified working in a community-based program (54%) followed by a school-based program (31%). Cohort members were asked to describe demographics related to the children they work with. Most individuals worked with children that identified as non-Hispanic (76%) and were preschool-age (36.1%) or birth to 3 years (30.5%).

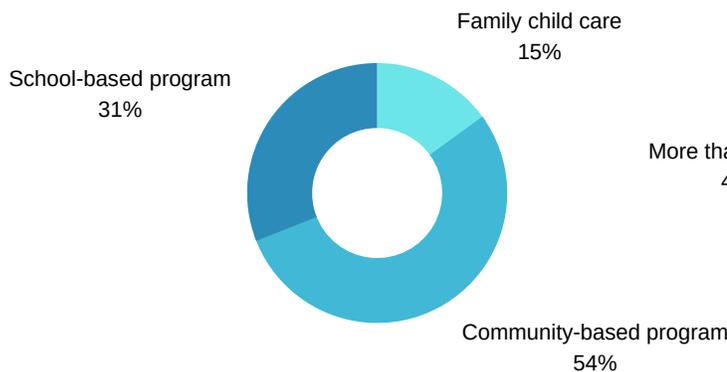
**Race/Ethnicity/
Self-identified gender**



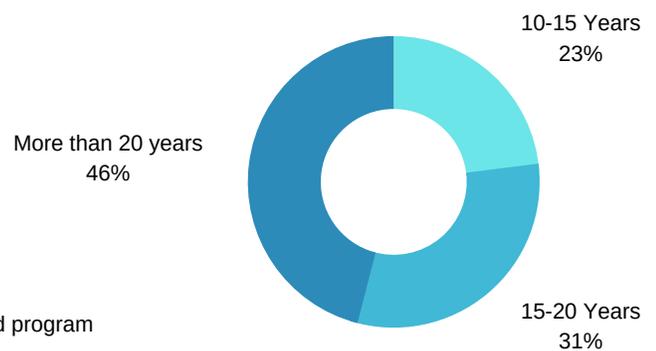
Type of Early Childhood Professional



Educational Setting



Years in Early Childhood education



PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY FINDINGS

Prior to the program beginning, cohort members were asked to complete a brief open-ended survey (January 2023) regarding how they currently obtain information related to sustaining family partnerships and how they engage with families. Most providers reported receiving information about family engagement through learning from personal experiences (90.9%), their organization providing professional development (81.8%), finding professional development outside of their organization (81.8%), or through discussions with colleagues (81.8%). When asked about current engagement strategies, responses varied widely. Respondents discussed efforts related to daily communication such as sending letters home, newsletters or conversations at drop off and pick up. Others reported offering parent participation opportunities through school events and conferences. Some individuals identified promoting community engagement opportunities for families or utilizing social media avenues such as *Facebook* groups to connect with parents. Several respondents identified trust as a key factor in building relationships and noted trusting relationships as something they valued with the families and children they work with.

PRE-PROGRAM PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-DETERMINATION TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Prior to the onset of PD for All cohort members were asked questions to identify their baseline self-determination for building and sustaining powerful family partnerships. Questions related to the individual's feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness were asked.

Autonomy

Cohort members identified high levels of control when asked about their ability to engage with families. Individuals felt they played a large role in families lives and saw themselves as a key source of support for the families and children they work with. As one participant noted, ***"I am a listener for what each family/child needs. I am a resource conduit, sometimes that is providing a needed item, a referral to an agency...or advocating alongside to build the partnership needed for the situation"***.

Conversely, cohort members felt barriers such as family time, language barriers and lack of buy-in from parents to sometimes hinder their ability to give support to the extent they wanted to. One cohort member noted, ***"I would say the biggest challenge is lack of buy-in. Some parents look at us just as a stop to drop their child off, they are in and out quickly"***.

PRE-PROGRAM PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-DETERMINATION TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Competence

A high level of confidence to engage with families was reported among cohort members. Cohort members felt their communication styles with families were effective. These included ensuring face to face discussions as well as written communication were frequent. There was a consensus among cohort members that effective family engagement required going beyond a "one size fits all" approach and individualizing strategies to meet family needs. For instance, "***These strategies seem to work because they vary. We don't use one way to communicate with families***". When asked about resources to increase competence, cohort members desired translation support for non-English speaking families. When asked what knowledge or information they needed some individuals could not identify any while others reported they were always willing to learn new techniques or strategies. One individual stated, "***There's always rooms for improvement. I am looking forward to learning more from these videos***".

Relatedness

When asked to identify who they go to for support when it comes to relationships with families, most individuals identified a co-worker or administrator. As one individual noted, "***I speak with my co-provider often***". One individual in the cohort did not feel like they had anyone to discuss these issues with, "***to be honest, I don't feel like I have many people or organizations to turn to with these issues. I will occasionally turn to management but that can be difficult as well***". When asked if there was someone or something they would prefer to get support from several individuals reported increased support from administrators or experts such as school counselors or child therapists. As one individual stated, "***A child therapist. I feel at a loss for answers for parents sometimes***".

POST-PROGRAM PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-DETERMINATION TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Post-program perceptions were gathered by comparing open-ended survey question responses, mid-program focus group data (n=9 cohort participants) and post-program interviews (n=10 cohort participants). Themes were collapsed across time points via a constant comparative analysis and the top themes for each theoretical construct are identified below.

Autonomy

Cohort members were split when asked to discuss autonomy-related changes since the onset of PD for All. Half of individuals did not feel any changes had been made and still felt in control of their ability to reach families with the skills and knowledge they currently had. Others reported that this experience increased their intentionality when having conversations with students and their families. One provider mentioned, **"I don't think any major changes, it's probably like good reminders of the importance of partnerships with families"**. Cohort members still felt like they lacked control to engage parents that didn't want to be engaged or were not as easily engaged. As one person stated, **"you have those families that when you do try to get more in-depth with them ,they do tend to push away more."** Respondents felt they could navigate these situations by only pushing families to engage a little at a time and felt it was up to the families to reciprocate.

Competence

Respondents varied in their responses when asked to discuss changes in competence. Some cohort members did not feel like their knowledge increased throughout PD for All while others reported new information was learned. As one person noted, **"If someone had any kind of two year or four year degree, most the information would be based on what those programs would have covered. I didn't feel like there was a lot of new information."** Some cohort members reported new information was learned related to the use of interpreters. As one individual noted, **"I think one of the things that was helpful for me was learning about interpreter services and trying to partner with families in their first language as much as you can so that the conversations and the interactions will be more meaningful."** Individuals that identified as teachers or paraprofessionals were more likely to report increased competence from the PD for All experience compared to individuals that identified as administrators or childcare directors. Importantly, several respondents noted that language barriers continue to be a key barrier to engaging with families effectively.

POST-PROGRAM PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-DETERMINATION TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Competence Continued

About half of respondents reported learning and trying out new strategies for family engagement such as utilizing open-ended questions, asking parents to share their stories and meeting parents where they are. One cohort member stated, ***"I think learning to give grace. And by that I mean if a parent did not come to parent-teacher conferences or a parent meeting, like having positive intent. Recognizing that a parent wants to be involved in their child's life but something may have come up"***. Other respondents appreciated discussions around how to engage families since the COVID-19 pandemic. As one individual recalled, ***"We found that a lot of families are like still hesitant [since pandemic]..so we had been trying to like find strategies to get them to come in. So like inviting them to breakfast in the morning and having like a check in system that the parents do with the kids in the mornings"***. Several respondents identified family communication platforms that were discussed that were new to them. Two cohort members reported interest in switching communication systems within their educational setting because of information they received from PD for All. One individual reported already actively making a change since PD for All started while the other wanted to discuss it with colleagues. For example, ***"I'll say we've switched systems from Hi Mama to BrightWheel. We also switched communication systems that we use within the center and then also how we do some family engagement stuff, like sending out email, like reminders and checking up on families more."***

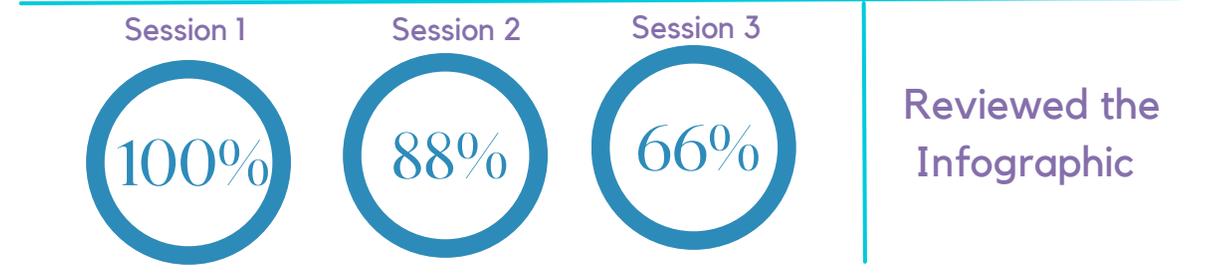
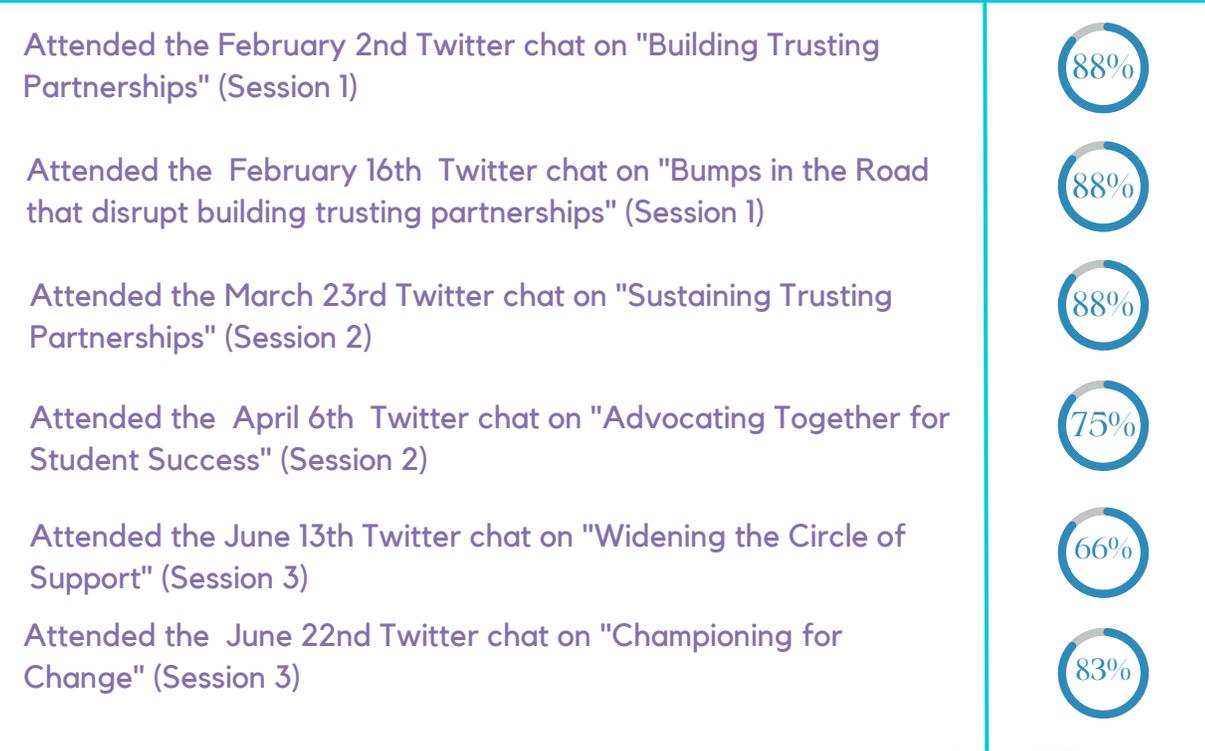
Relatedness

Cohort members enjoyed the opportunity to learn from individuals with diverse backgrounds via the videos and twitter chats but they desired the opportunity to have more conversations with educators from diverse backgrounds. Cohort members reported appreciating the focus groups conducted as part of the PD for All evaluation because it gave them a chance to learn from one another. Cohort members still felt like their administrators or colleagues were a primary source of support when working to improve family engagement but felt like greater opportunities to connect with their fellow cohort members would have been beneficial. A few cohort members did report bringing back information they learned to their workplace. For instance, ***"So after every [Twitter] chat conversation, typically it fell within 2 weeks of our admin meeting. So I would bring back all the information that I learned or discussed from everyone else and all the Twitter conversations and things like that."***

Question 4: How did perceptions and satisfaction for the bite-size design change over time among the cohort?

COHORT ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SESSIONS

Descriptive findings depicting the extent to which each cohort member engaged in each session can be seen below. Overall, cohort participation in the post-program survey was not optimal with 8 out of 13 individuals completing surveys 1 and 2 and 6 individuals completing survey 3.





The survey asked individuals to select a level of agreement from 1-5 (1, strongly disagree, 5, strongly agree). Findings below represent individuals that selected agree or strongly agree for each item.

AGREE

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
 The video was an effective way for me to receive helpful information	88%	100%	100%
I found the Twitter chats engaging	63%	86%	83%
 The Twitter chats were a good use of my time	63%	86%	83%
The Twitter chats were an effective way for me to receive helpful information	50%	86%	83%
 The infographic was an effective way for me to receive helpful information	75%	86%	66%
The email summary was an effective way for me to receive helpful information	88%	100%	83%
 The information I learned can help me improve partnerships with all families	88%	100%	100%
The information I learned can be used with all of the children and families I serve	88%	100%	83%
 I will share the information I learned with my colleagues	75%	75%	100%
The information I learned was inclusive to all types of family backgrounds	88%	100%	100%

Question 5: How can the bite-size learning approach be improved?

Cohort members were asked during the mid-point focus groups and post-program interviews to reflect on their experience with PD for All. Individuals were asked to identify benefits to participation, any challenges they experienced, changes they would recommend and remaining gaps in knowledge and/or resources. Similar questions were asked in each post-program survey as well. Thematic findings were collapsed across the focus groups, interviews and survey findings and are shared below.

PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESSES

APPRECIATION FOR VIDEO-BASED LEARNING

The majority of cohort members reported enjoying the videos. Individuals appreciated hearing from different provider types and appreciated the video length as well. One person noted, ***"I really like watching the videos and listening to all the speakers and the people that are talking, to get a personal reflection on things"***. A few individuals noted they would have preferred longer videos while others noted more videos such as 2 or 3 videos per session.

A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES

Cohort members appreciated the diversity of perspectives and learning from individuals with different backgrounds. As one individual noted, ***"Just a bunch of different information from all these different people was just truly an awesome experience"***. Another individual mentioned, ***"being able to talk to people in different situations and learn the challenges and things that they're doing, gaining that perspective was really, really nice. I would say that was most beneficial for me."***

APPRECIATION FOR THE BITE-SIZE LEARNING MODEL

Individuals appreciated the bite-size learning approach with respect to the time required for involvement and the direct nature of the information shared. One person noted, ***"I think it [bite-sized learning approach] is very informative, I don't think there is any wasted time. Like this is your 8 minutes, this is all of the information you need. There's no fluff to it, no beating around the bush, even with the questions on Twitter-it's very direct, to the point questions."*** Another individual shared similar sentiments and stated, ***"It was stuff that was very quick, very accessible and very easy to navigate. So I appreciate that. I appreciated the Twitter chats that there were an hour...then the infographics and going back to the videos, I think that the fact that they were just short and sweet was helpful."***

PROGRAMMATIC CHALLENGES

TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS HINDERED EXPERIENCE

About half of respondents felt their experience was negatively impacted by the use of Twitter chats due to a lack of familiarity with the Twitter platform. Individuals reported that they struggled to keep up with conversations during the chats and disliked the limited character limit allowed in chats. As one individual noted, ***"I have never used Twitter before..and so it was a bit difficult for me to navigate the conversation. Just how do I follow individual comments on it and see new comments..I'm very familiar with Facebook and Zoom but not twitter. "*** Other cohort members echoed a desire for more Zoom opportunities, ***"Maybe just doing some more Zooms with others instead of just doing Twitter chats so I can actually talk to people. I think that was sometimes missing."***

LACK OF DEPTH IN INFORMATION SHARED

Some respondents felt there was a lack of depth around the information shared across sessions. Several respondents identified themselves as well-trained educators due to their years of experience in early childhood education and reported feeling like the information shared was for a more novice individual. For example,

"I think that because it was so superficial, it was hard for me to feel like anyone walked away with gaining information. And to me, when we're doing professional development, you should walk away with something you gained. It may not all be new information, and I've been in this field a really long time. But I find that when I go to a conference, I may not walk out with the amount of information I walked out when I was a young professional. But I always gained something. And I cannot say that from this experience."

LACK OF TIME TO FULLY ENGAGE IN PD FOR ALL

While cohort members appreciated the concise nature of the education shared, several individuals still struggled to fit the PD for All opportunities into their personal lives. Some disliked the timing of the Twitter chats as they fell over dinner time and others reported struggling to review materials to the extent they would have liked to. Many individuals appreciated being able to review materials on their own time and reported going back to the videos and twitter chats however most still felt like a lack of time hindered their experience. As one person noted, ***"Working a full-time job, some things are just harder than others to find time for."***

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

MORE FOCUS ON HOW TO ADDRESS INEQUITY

Cohort members desired a greater focus on inequity within future programming. Some individuals discussed a focus on barriers that rural early childhood programs face while others wanted to identify ways to support families of lower socioeconomic status. Other cohort members wanted ways to teach their students about various cultures. For instance, ***"Until we start addressing some inequities, we can train people all day long but have to look at what those inequities are so we begin to mobilize and train people to be able to advocate."***

ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEER TO PEER ENGAGEMENT

Individuals enjoyed any opportunity to learn from their peers. Some individuals wished that their colleagues had been with them so they could have further discussion on learning points or work together to apply strategies discussed in the session videos or *Twitter* chats. Others reported a desire to increase networking opportunities. One person noted, ***"I think just hearing the different ideas from different people, we [early childhood educators] suck at networking and for some reason, in this industry, we get stuck in our own world. We focus on our own ideas, our own curriculum, our own philosophies, but at the end of the day we all have this one shared goal and that is to work these kids and these families."*** Another cohort member mentioned, ***"The greatest takeaway for me is that you don't have to do it by yourself. Like I don't have to recreate the wheel. There is another professional that knows how to do what I'm trying to do. So being able to reach out to people and ask for help."***

PROVIDE INFORMATION MORE FREQUENTLY

Cohort members felt it was difficult to remain engaged throughout the six-month period due to the gaps between sessions. Individuals desired more frequent bursts of information. One individual noted, ***"I wish there wasn't such a lull...I don't necessarily enjoy the lulls, if it would have been just more consistent information...over time this kind of went to the back burner, it ramped up and slowed back down."*** Some individuals reported wanting more information via video or infographics while others just wanted information shared more consistently throughout the 6 month period.

Summary of Q3-Q5 Findings

Prior to the onset of PD for All programming, the identified cohort of early childhood professionals reported high levels of confidence and control regarding their ability to engage with families. In addition, most cohort members felt they had a good support system among their colleagues and administrators. Based on the qualitative data gathered throughout the 6-month period, cohort members' perceptions of competence appear to have increased. Cohort members report obtaining new information related to family engagement and have either integrated new strategies into their routine or have plans to do so in the future. Feelings of autonomy and relatedness do not appear to have shifted however cohort members greatly desire the opportunity to learn from other educators, especially when their backgrounds vary from their own. Cohort members still report language barriers to be the greatest challenge when working to connect with families and still desire more resources in this area.

When considering the PD for All format, cohort members liked the video-based learning the most and had the greatest challenges with the *Twitter* chats due to technical barriers. Several individuals desired the inclusion of a platform such as Zoom due to their familiarity with it but also to allow for more engagement with other cohort members. Furthermore, there was a desire to receive information more consistently and a push for information to focus on addressing inequities within early childhood education. Finally, some cohort members felt the level of information provided was superficial and desired a deeper level of learning to occur with future programming.

The reach of PD for All was limited and participation was low beyond cohort member engagement throughout the 6 month period. Cohort members also struggled to engage in program evaluation measures suggesting current expected involvement (i.e., surveys, focus groups and interviews) may be too burdensome.

In conclusion, the bite-size learning approach was well received by cohort members with video-based education being most preferred. Future programmatic efforts could consider the addition of peer engagement opportunities to allow educators to learn from one another. In addition, various online platforms could be considered to reduce the technological barriers identified while using *Twitter*.

Instructional Toolkit

1. What is the work group's self-efficacy for tool implementation through the lens of self-efficacy theory? (Cohort 1)
2. How does the workgroup experience influence perceptions of the six essential child experiences? (Cohorts 1 & 2)
3. What are the best practices and barriers to workgroup program implementation? (Cohorts 1 & 2)

Essential Child Experiences Toolkit Workgroup Description

Early childhood educators and leaders joined the staff at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska to guide the development of an Essential Child Experiences Instructional Toolkit. The Toolkit focused on enhancing quality, expanding equity, and strengthening continuity in classrooms serving children from birth through Grade 3. Workgroup members co-constructed and developed resources that promote deeper understanding, enhanced usability, and increased clarity for successful implementation of the following essential child experiences:

1. Cultural, Linguistic & Personal Relevance
2. Language-Rich Communication
3. Cognitive Challenge
4. Collaboration among Peers
5. Child Decision Making and Planning
6. Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation





COHORT 1 EVALUATION JANUARY-DECEMBER 2022

Essential Child Experiences Toolkit Workgroup 1 Evaluation

From January to December of 2022, 15 educators and 15 school/child care leaders participated in the Instructional Toolkit workgroup. Participation in the Instructional Toolkit workgroup consisted of two phases. In the first phase, toolkit workgroup members participated in four virtual workshops that met in January and February 2022. The second phase included monthly workgroup meetings, beginning in March and ending in December 2022. In order to assess their comfort level implementing the six Essential Child Experiences in their classrooms and their understanding of each Essential Child Experience, toolkit workgroup members were asked to complete a survey at three timepoints across the year-long process: (1) before attending the four workshops (2) after attending the four workshops, and (3) after completing the completion of the workgroup experience. Throughout this report timepoints will be referred to as (1) pre-workshop, (2) midpoint, and (3) post-workgroup.

Comfort with Implementation

Toolkit workgroup members were asked to rate their comfort level in implementing each of the six Essential Child Experiences in the classroom on a scale of 1 (very uncomfortable) to 5 (very comfortable). The average comfort level across the six Essential Child Experiences was 3.97 (n = 32) at the pre-workshop timepoint, 3.93 (n = 27) at the midpoint, and 4.29 (n = 18) at the post-workgroup timepoint. For Cognitive Challenge and Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation, workgroup members' ratings reflected lowest comfort levels prior to completing workshops with scores increasing across the three time points. When rating their comfort implementing Cultural, Linguistic, and Personal Relevance, Language-Rich Communication, and Child Decision Making and Planning, workgroup members scores decreased from pre-workshop to the midpoint, and scores reflected the highest comfort levels after the workgroup was completed. For Collaboration with Peers, workgroup members had the highest comfort ratings prior to completing workshops and ratings dropped across the next two time points. Comfort ratings for each Essential Child Experience across the three timepoints can be seen in Table 1.

Comfort with Implementation

TABLE 1. COMFORT RATINGS FOR IMPLEMENTING EACH ESSENTIAL CHILD EXPERIENCE

	Cultural, Linguistic, and Personal Relevance	Cognitive Challenge	Language-Rich Communication	Collaboration with Peers	Child Decision Making and Planning	Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation	Overall
Pre-workshop	3.97	3.75	4.16	4.39	3.78	3.88	3.97
Midpoint	3.96	3.81	4.07	4.00	3.71	4.05	3.93
Post-workgroup	4.22	4.11	4.76	4.24	4.24	4.25	4.29

The slight changes in comfort scores from pre-workshop to the midpoint following the four workshops could be driven by toolkit workgroup members’ shifts in understanding of the six Essential Child Experiences after participating in the workshops; workshops could have brought toolkit members a greater awareness of the definitions, which could cause them to be less comfortable with implementation. Following the workgroup completion, overall scores increased, which could be a result of increased opportunities to implement learning.

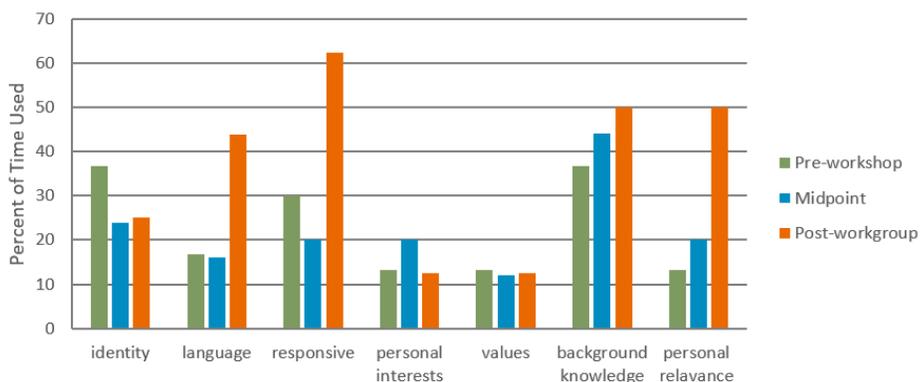
Understanding

Toolkit workgroup members were asked to describe their understanding of each of the six Essential Child Experiences in their own words at each of the three time points (pre-workshop, midpoint, and post-workgroup). To analyze responses, predetermined elements of each Essential Child Experience definition (as presented in the workshops) were identified and a qualitative approach was utilized to evaluate survey responses for the use of the predetermined definition elements.

Cultural, Linguistic and Personal Relevance

In their definitions of Cultural, Linguistic, and Personal Relevance, workgroup members focused on “identity” prior to attending workshops while use of this term decreased following workshops and the workgroup. “Background knowledge” was also used often initially and use steadily increased across the following timepoints. “Personal relevance” which was used less often pre-workshop, also increased in usage across sessions. “Responsive” was used somewhat frequently pre-workshop, less often at the midpoint and appeared most frequently in post-workgroup definitions. Though participants did not use the term “language” in pre-workshop or midpoint definitions, it appeared frequently in post-workgroup definitions. Figure 1 depicts the percent of time the predetermined elements of the definition of Cultural, Linguistic, and Personal Relevance were used by participants across each of the three time points.

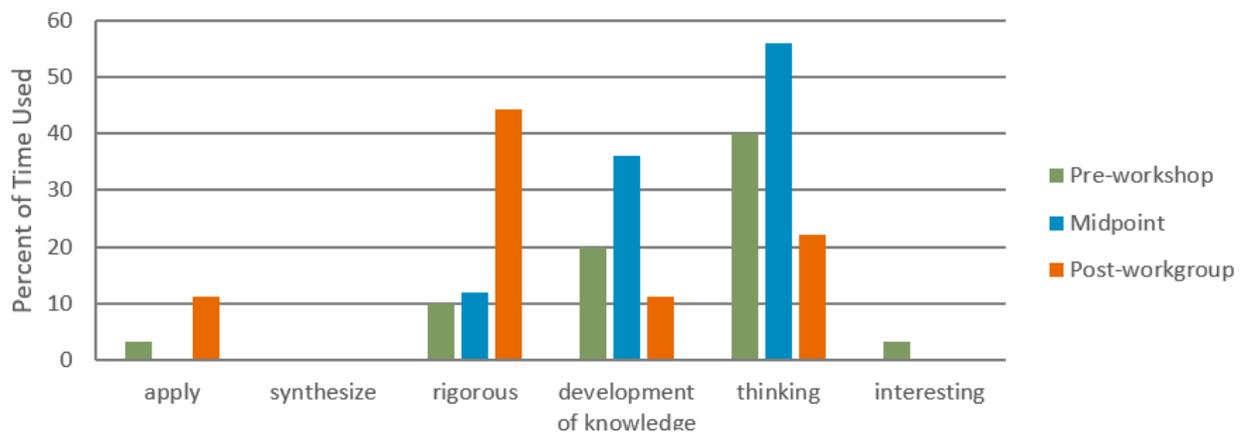
FIGURE 1. CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC, AND PERSONAL RELEVANCE DEFINITION ELEMENT USAGE



Cognitive Challenge

When asked to define Cognitive Challenge, many toolkit members often included “development of knowledge” and “thinking” in their definitions prior to attending workshops. Use of these terms became even more frequent after attending workshops, but following the completion of the workgroup, they were used even less frequently than at the first timepoint, indicating some potential learning loss. Several members used the terms “apply” and “rigorous” in their pre-workshop definitions. At the midpoint, “apply” was not used at all and “rigorous” was used slightly more often. Both terms appeared even more in post-workgroup definitions than in any other time point, with “rigorous” being used more often than any other term post-workgroup. This may indicate that experience with implementing the term was most impactful in relation to these terms. Figure 2 displays the usage of Cognitive Challenge definitional elements across time.

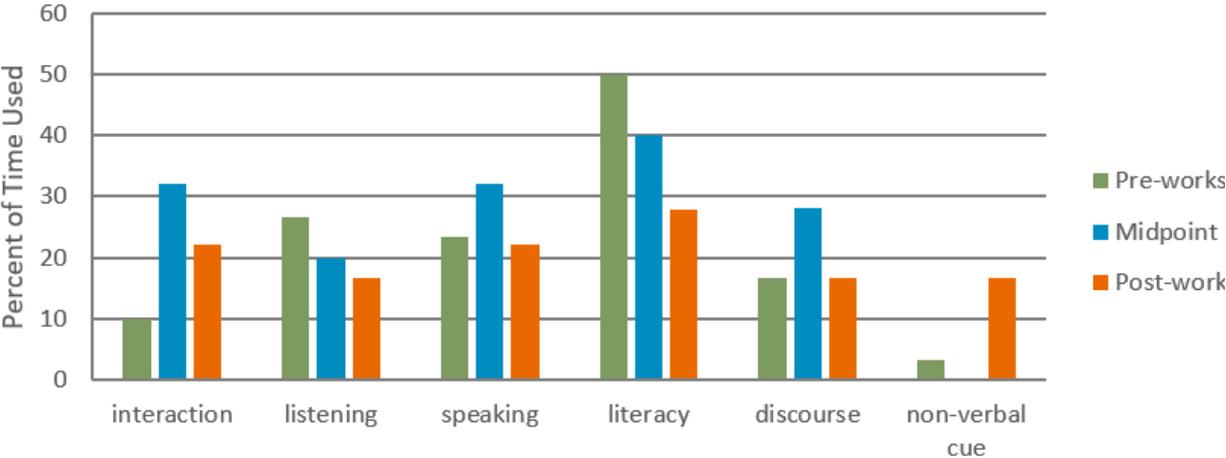
FIGURE 2. COGNITIVE CHALLENGE DEFINITION ELEMENT USAGE



Language Rich Communication

Perhaps the most noticeable shift was how workgroup members defined Language Rich Communication across time points. After completing workshops, members included the terms “interaction” and “speaking” more frequently, but use of these terms decreased following completion of the workgroup. Similarly, “discourse” was used somewhat frequently prior to workshops, most frequently at the midpoint, and returned to baseline usage at the post-workgroup timepoint. In contrast, “listening” was used most often prior to attending workshops decreased across the next two timepoints. This may demonstrate a paradigm shift where workgroup members came to see Language Rich Communication as a two-way interaction rather than a teacher using words and children listening. Slight learning loss may have occurred following separation from the more intensive learning phase of the workshops. Use of the term “literacy” declined steadily across all three timepoints. Conversely, use of “non-verbal cues” increased in frequency from the pre-workshop timepoint to the post-workgroup timepoint. Usage of the definitional elements of Language Rich Communication across time can be found in Figure 3.

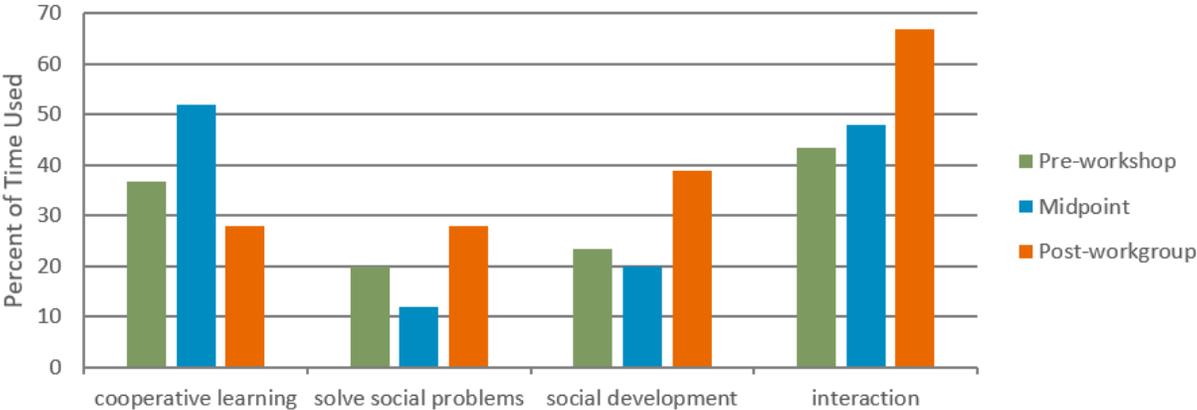
FIGURE 3. LANGUAGE RICH COMMUNICATION DEFINITION ELEMENT USAGE



Collaboration with Peers

In definitions of Collaboration with Peers, the most frequently used terms pre-workshop were “cooperative learning” and “interaction.” Workgroup members used “cooperative learning” even more often at the midpoint, while post-workgroup, it was used less often than at the first timepoint. Use of the term “interaction” increased across all three time points. Other commonly used terms included “solve social problems” and “social development”, both of which were used less often following the workshops, and most often of all following completion of the workgroup. This may be evidence that these terms were most relevant in the real-world implementation of Collaboration with Peers during the window of time where workgroup members were creating tools. See Figure 4 for the percent of time each definitional component of Collaboration with Peers was used across time.

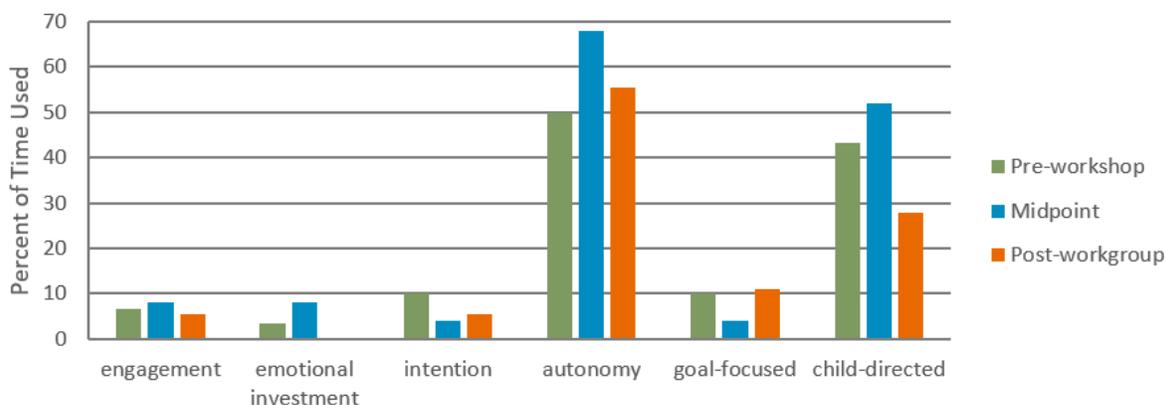
FIGURE 4. COLLABORATION WITH PEERS DEFINITION ELEMENT USAGE



Child Decision Making and Planning

By far, the terms used most frequently to define Child Decision Making and Planning across all time points were “autonomy” and “child-directed.” Both terms were used even more often at the midpoint. Following the workgroup, use of both terms decreased, with “child-directed” dropping below the pre-workshop usage. This may imply that in practice, allowing children to have autonomy was more relevant to Child Decision Making and Planning than having activities be child-directed. Usage of each element of the definition for Child Decision Making and Planning across time is displayed in Figure 5.

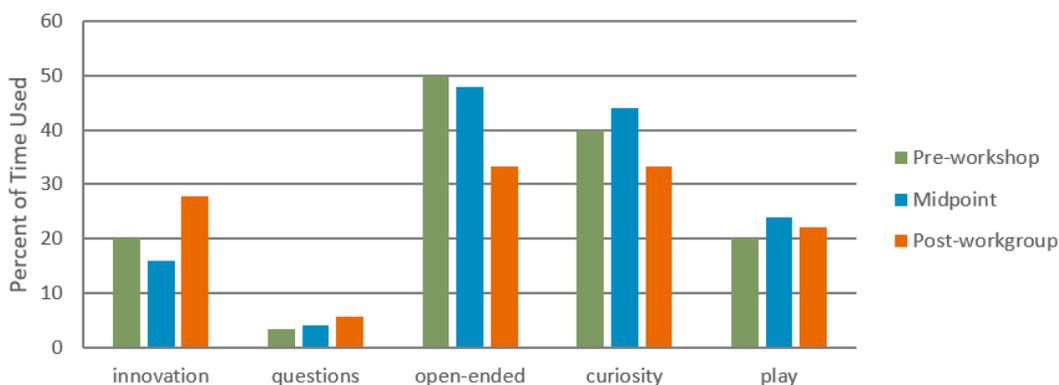
FIGURE 5. CHILD DECISION MAKING AND PLANNING DEFINITION ELEMENT USAGE



Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation

Definitions of Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation included “open-ended” and “curiosity” most frequently across all three time points. At the midpoint, use of “curiosity” slightly increased while use of “open-ended” slightly decreased. Following the completion of the workgroup, these terms were used less often than at any other time point, which may follow suit with the trend of slight learning loss once workgroup members were removed from the more intensive learning atmosphere of the workshops. “Innovation” and “play” were also used somewhat frequently in definitions and slight changes in usage indicate increases in the use of “innovation” following completion of the workgroup. Figure 6 represents the percent of time each definitional element for Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation appeared across the three timepoints.

FIGURE 6. CHILD INITIATED EXPLORATION AND INNOVATION DEFINITION ELEMENT USAGE



Conclusion

Results of these surveys indicate that workshops had the most meaningful impact on how workgroup members defined the six Essential Child Experiences. While workgroup members indicated minimal change in their comfort levels implementing the essential experiences in their classroom, learning was evident in the expanded definitions of these terms following the workshops. Following the completion of the workgroup, definitions of the six Essential Child Experiences continued to shift, with some potential loss in learning. However, participants felt more comfortable with the implementation of the six Essential Child Experiences, demonstrating the implications of the practical experience gained during the workgroup sessions.

Post Program Focus Group Findings-Cohort 1

In January 2023, four focus groups took place with 11 participants of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Instructional Toolkit Cohort #1. Focus groups took place over zoom and lasted an average of 49 minutes. Participants were asked a series of 10 semi-structured questions regarding their experiences participating in the toolkit program.



Questions were developed based on the constructs of self-efficacy theory to investigate three primary evaluation aims:

1. To investigate how the workgroup experience influenced perceptions of the six essential experiences.
2. To determine what influenced work group members' self-efficacy for implementing new knowledge.
3. To identify feasibility of tool implementation.
4. To identify best practices and barriers to workgroup program implementation and provide future programmatic recommendations.

Participants had an average of 16 years of teaching experience and had diverse teaching experiences. These included lead teaching, assistant teaching, owning a childcare center or family childcare home, serving as a director of an Early Childhood Center, or as an instructional coach.

Semi-structured focus group data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed via a deductive content analysis approach. Four evaluators were involved in the data analysis process that consisted of 3 steps. Step 1 involved deductively coding the data within the main constructs of self-efficacy theory. Step 2 involved meeting as a team to discuss codes and reach consensus. Step 3 involved a primary evaluator reviewing all combined codes to ensure appropriate categorization, interpretation, and representativeness. This report depicts primary thematic findings.

HOW DID THE WORKGROUP INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS OF THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES?

Thematic findings related to the six essential experiences included: desire to support children through the lens of the child, greater intention within classroom practice, serving as a model for peers, and validation for current practices. Overall, participants reported an appreciation for the six essential experiences and found this topic area to be extremely valuable to their professional growth and learning. Participants noted that they enjoyed the presentations related to the essential experiences as well as the opportunities for self and group reflections. Example quotes within each thematic area can be seen below.

Desire to support children through the lens of the child

“

I think taking that lens of the child and having that perspective throughout... a child of color and in a kindergarten classroom intentionally because they are marginalized, those are the kids that we're leaving behind, that are left out of the curriculum and just trying to make that shift and also encourage that shift in teachers' brains. I think that was a big takeaway for me.

”

Greater intention within classroom practice

“

I think making me more mindful about providing those opportunities in purposeful ways, you know, getting into those centers and playing with kids and using those everyday experiences to provide these.

”

Serving as a model for peers

“

Just being mindful and being in the classroom and being that model or coach to show them [peer teachers] how they can do that and be a model when they come in [the classroom].

”

Validation for current practices

“

We often find ourselves kind of complaining about this and that. And I said, wait a minute, why are we all here together? What is the purpose of all of us being here? What's the purpose of our staff being here? And then it's for the individual child. Yes, we are in group childcare and our classrooms are full of kids and all of that. But we have little individuals in all of our rooms. And so, for me personally, it brought me back to the very purpose.. right back to my roots of working with children.

”

WHAT INFLUENCED WORK GROUP MEMBERS' SELF-EFFICACY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE?

Performance Outcomes

- Appreciation for final product creation
- Drive to improve practices based on new knowledge
- Strong belief in ability to implement created tool if tool was finished

Verbal Persuasion

- Substantial peer support
- Encouragement from others was greatly valued
- Hearing diverse perspectives increased drive to implement new learning

Emotional States

- Appreciation for time spent together
- Positive perception of group dynamic
- Perceived institute staff as supportive and passionate

Vicarious Experiences

- Value for diverse voices with respect to child age and program location
- Desire to emulate shared practices

WHAT IS THE FEASIBILITY OF TOOLKIT IMPLEMENTATION?

Specific to the tools developed within each affinity group, the majority of participants felt confident they could implement these tools in their own early childhood practice. When asked to rate this confidence on a scale of 1 to 5 (1, low-5, high), the average score was **3.9**. Thematic findings related to confidence level included: identifying the tool as valuable and self-appreciation for tool development. Specifically, participants felt that the tool was a worthwhile resource because of the choices they made when creating the tool. For example, one participant stated:

We have a lot of resources. I think it's just knowing what to use and when and just becoming more efficient with those resources, but I feel like this tool could help that, you know, to hone in on it. How to get the most bang for your buck.

Participants were also asked to share any anticipated barriers they thought might occur when asking an individual not currently engaged in the workgroup to implement the tools. The main thematic finding was related to limited resources. Participants were concerned that not all early childhood professionals would have access to resources such as funding and materials to utilize the tools effectively. In addition, several participants mentioned a concern related to language within the tools. Participants worried that several of the tools used "**teacher talk**," and that some individuals in early childhood wouldn't have an understanding of this terminology.

Because that was the one thing, like if you're going to make this toolkit and you're going to make it accessible for everybody...if you don't have the materials, then you can't use those things, and that was like a huge conversation we had because I had a girl in my group that was from a daycare and she's like, 'Well, you know my funding - I have to go to the goodwill to get things and stuff.' And so we had a lot of conversations about how can we make something that doesn't require you to go and have blocks or have these books or all these kinds of things.

WHAT WERE THE PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESSES?

NEW KNOWLEDGE WAS OBTAINED

Participants enjoyed the information given in the presentations at the beginning of the program, especially information related to the six early childhood experiences. Most individuals felt they gained a deeper understanding of their specific affinity group and felt this knowledge would shift their day-to-day actions in their practice.

"I feel like I made a goal to do more from the affinity group that I was in, thinking about [affinity group], and I think I still am taking some of that into my work, but I think that was my capacity of just being able to focus on that one. And I didn't dive into the others as much, but it's also because there's just so much going on when it comes to planning and so many other things that we have to take into consideration."

INSTITUTE STAFF WERE APPROACHABLE AND SUPPORTIVE

The majority of participants felt that the Institute staff were always approachable and supportive. Institute staff were reported to always be available for questions and troubleshooting. Participants noted that institute staff always followed up when they had questions and were available to be thought partners. As two participants noted:

"They were definitely approachable. I really liked the presentations."

"They wanted to see this come together and stuff. She [institute staff] always had a lot to say and was very knowledgeable about everything."

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION WITH PEERS AND INSTITUTE STAFF

The majority of participants stated they enjoyed the opportunity to dialogue and engage with their peers. Participants often stated that the diversity of program participants with respect to background and experience was a huge benefit to the program. Interviewees appreciated the opportunity to receive insights and viewpoints from the institute staff, especially related to the final products. A few participants shared:

"I really liked how us, as peers, all the different educators in the group, would go in and evaluate our final projects. But I also liked how then they as an institute went and looked at it and gave ideas from their viewpoint too."

"You know, we all worked well together...I loved meeting different educators from around the metro - that was really neat, and just learning about their roles, where they work and teach. So that was fun."

WHAT WERE THE PROGRAMMATIC CHALLENGES?

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE MAY BE LIMITED TO AFFINITY GROUP

Some participants felt that they would have preferred to work with more than one affinity group. Individuals noted that they had been asked to select an affinity group early in the process, and by the end of the process, they may have chosen a different group. Many noted they had a desire to learn more about other affinity groups but identified time as a barrier to doing so. For example, one interviewee stated:

"I feel like I know the most about my own affinity group though, and like once I dove into that, I kind of forgot about some of the other ones,"

However, several individuals did feel they had a deep understanding of their chosen affinity group, and this translated into classroom practice changes. For instance:

"When I go to do my everyday job, I probably focus on the one that I dived deepest into, and so that's the one I implement the most, and you know, really think about when I'm teaching."

UNCLEAR PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

The majority of participants reported being unsure of program expectations at program onset. This was especially true for the affinity group process. Several participants noted they were unsure of what this process would entail and stated they would have selected a different affinity group if they had known the process. One participant shared:

"I would say that having more direction at the beginning, because I felt like in the beginning, and I know maybe because it was a new experience that they were trying, but I just felt like it was all over the place."

GROUP DYNAMICS

Participants reported frustration with a lack of consistency among affinity groups and among Institute staff. Individuals noted Institute staff turnover and confusion over who was involved from the Institute. However, this improved as the program continued. Some individuals reported affinity group members changing throughout the program, while others felt that the individuals they were paired with did not put in enough effort. Conversely, some felt they worked well in their affinity groups and saw themselves as a "team."

"I was an original member of the group, and I can't remember when we started those. That was around July, I believe. But my group changed members many times. I'd have one month, there'd be two of us, and then the next month, that person wouldn't be there. And then I was told, 'Oh ya, you're getting this person,' and I don't, you know, I started thinking it was me."

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT?

MORE TIME FOR GROUP WORK

The majority of participants felt they didn't have enough time to accomplish the program objectives they were tasked with. A few individuals felt there was too much time spent outside of the expected hours of involvement. Further, a few individuals reported unclear expectations related to time commitment to the program and believed some individuals left the program because of the time commitment required.

"I feel like we only probably tapped the tip of the iceberg because of the time frame that we had. And then, you know, we have these good intentions of, 'Hey, let's do a meet up on some other time,' and we just never could get it all together."

LOGISTICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Several participants gave suggestions for logistical improvements. These included: (1) ensuring participants receive mailed materials prior to meetings, (2) adding checkpoints with institute staff during affinity group work to ensure they are on the right track, (3) providing indicators for each meeting with what will be discussed and accomplished (4) allow cross-collaboration between affinity groups (5) support for technological barriers. Specific to the technological barriers, participants reported barriers related to the various platforms utilized and desired fewer platforms be included. Several participants reported issues with utilizing Google Docs.

"But then one thing, I was one [affinity group], and there was two groups, and we always wondered what the other group was doing, but we never got to collaborate with that other group or even come back and see."

"I'm not a Google Docs person. I don't really know how to do it. So one girl kind of stepped up, and she'd always like, kind of type for us, and we would all try to, you know, like work together to make sure she would pull it up on our screen so we could see it, which that, you know, that makes it so much easier for everybody to be able to contribute at the same time."

COHORT 2 OVERVIEW

JANUARY-JUNE 2023

Data Collection Methodologies

- Focus groups were conducted prior to the program start and at the immediate end of the program. In the pre-program focus group, individuals were given a brief description of each essential child experience and asked to describe what each definition meant to them. Individuals were also asked to describe how they integrate that experience into their teaching as well as share challenges to integration. Finally, individuals were asked to share their perceptions related to the term "lens of the child" and how they perceive their personal biases influencing their practice. In the post-program focus group individuals were asked to describe how the integration of each essential child experience, lens of the child and their biases had changed since beginning the instructional toolkit program as well as share thoughts related to program tool development and program quality improvement.
- A post-program survey was disseminated in June 2023. This consisted of a confidence scale (1-low; 7, high) that asked individuals to rate level of confidence in their ability to integrate essential child experiences into their instructional environment. In addition, an experiencing scale was included to evaluate how the workgroup experience influenced experiential learning based on the Kolb cycle of learning. The experiencing scale is a 20-item instrument that asks individual to rate their experience across several constructs (Stock & Kolb, 2021). Example questions from both instruments can be seen below.

On a scale of 1-7 (1, low confidence, 7, high confidence) how confident are you in your ability to integrate the following essential child experiences into your instructional environment?

Cultural, Linguistic and Personal Relevance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Each child experiences learning built upon the foundation of what they already know and through familiar approaches to learning. They have ample opportunities to connect new ideas to their background knowledge, cultural values and interests.							

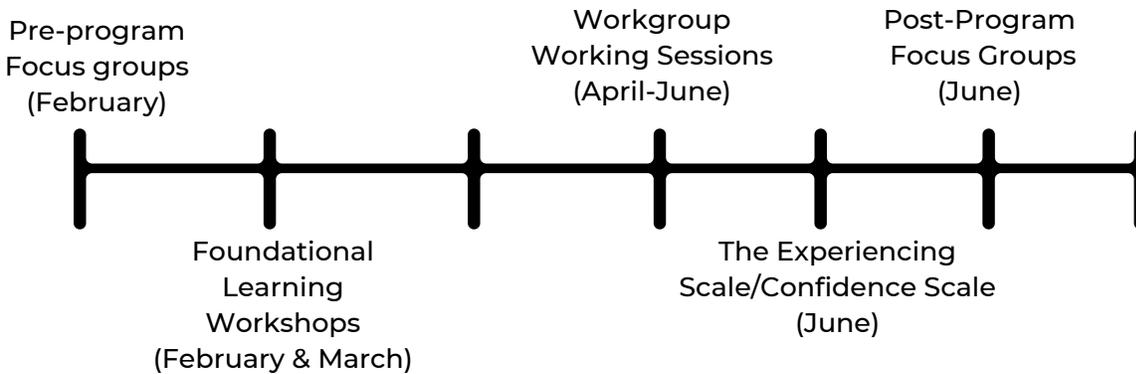
Figure 1. Confidence Scale Example Question

1	I saw things in new ways	<input type="radio"/>	My views did not change.						
2	It was fresh & new.	<input type="radio"/>	It was pretty much as I expected.						
3	I learned something new.	<input type="radio"/>	I didn't learn anything new.						
4	I was deeply involved.	<input type="radio"/>	I was uninvolved.						
5	I was alert and aware.	<input type="radio"/>	I was easily distracted.						
6	I actively participated.	<input type="radio"/>	I did not participate.						

Figure 2. The Experiencing Scale Example Questions (Stock & Kolb, 2021)

COHORT 2 OVERVIEW

Program & Evaluation Timeline



Focus Group Data Analysis

Focus group data were transcribed verbatim by evaluators within the Munroe Meyer Institute. Data was then entered into NVivo qualitative analysis software and analyzed by three evaluators. Evaluators reviewed initial transcripts through a process of immersion/crystallization. A deductive content analysis approach was employed and guided by the definitions of the six essential child experiences. Evaluators met to discuss initial codes and collapse overarching categories. A trained qualitative expert then reviewed all codes and resolved any coding discrepancies. This process was conducted separately for the pre-program findings (February) and the post-program findings (June). Upon completion, the primary qualitative researcher completed a constant comparative analysis utilizing axial coding to draw connections between pre and post program findings specific to the integration of the six essential child experiences. Findings are reported below.

Survey Data Analysis

Confidence scale scores in the post-program survey were analyzed for descriptive means. Confidence scores were then compared with pre-program focus group findings as individuals were asked to provide the same scale rating. The Experiencing Scale was scored based on the scoring information associated with this instrument. Specific scale items were identified to demonstrate level of engagement in learning from novelty to presence to embodiment. Responses leaning to the left side of the scale line were identified as being in line with the experiencing self. Dots leaning towards the right side indicated the participant may be less engaged in the learning process. For our purposes reverse scoring occurred and scale dots were provided a numerical score of 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. A mean scale score was calculated for each subconstruct of novelty, presence and embodiment with a higher score indicating greater engagement in the learning process.

QUESTION #1 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE INTEGRATION OF THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Cultural, Linguistic and Personal Relevance-Before Workgroup

How integration is happening

Respondents commonly discussed identifying ways to link children's home experiences into their educational environment. In addition, respondents reported meeting children where they are at and taking a child's culture into consideration when developing curriculum.

"Making sure that my lesson and what I am doing is culturally respectful, linguistically respected and that the material is relevant."

What else they would like to do

Respondents desired to educate administrators further in this area. In addition, discussions of reducing personal biases were shared. Respondents reported a wish for more culturally relevant classroom resources and access to community resources to continue their personal cultural education.

"A lot of the materials we have are not up-to-date...we have a big long list of books that we are passionate about, about a lot of different issues that we want to add to our classroom."

Cultural, Linguistic and Personal Relevance-After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...

Some respondents did not identify changes in this area as they felt like this was an area they already excelled in. Others reported increased confidence to apply new strategies to the knowledge they had before the workgroup. Furthermore, some reported an increased awareness of how to support a child's cultural or personal relevance.

"If my students are...any other culture, if they don't know something, this has allowed me to be a little bit more aware of maybe..is this a cultural aspect or is this something on a personal or familial level? It allows me to reflect a little bit more before I jump in and say, well they just don't know this"

QUESTION #1 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE INTEGRATION OF THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Language Rich Communication- Before Workgroup

How integration is happening

Strategies related to integrating language rich communication included: asking open-ended questions, connecting existing words to knowledge, holding meaningful conversations with children and allowing children to expand language in a safe environment.

"Just giving them opportunities to talk to the teacher, talk with their peers and having those conversations flow, expanding on them [conversations] through learning and giving a chance to talk and ask questions."

What else they would like to do

When asked what additional strategies they might like to utilize, ideas included: adding labels to the classroom, narrating classroom materials into multiple languages and learning new techniques to engage children at the infant/toddler level.

"I would still love to learn little new techniques to help children learn language, especially infants and toddlers."

Language Rich Communication-After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...

Some respondents reported their integration had not shifted since the workgroup experience. Others reported an increased awareness related to the value and importance for child conversation and peer to peer verbal interactions.

"I think that just understanding that to help like younger kids' kind of develop their voice..we probably need to talk more and also listen more. And give them time to kind of like express their feelings, even if it starts off as just babbles and just allowing them to kind of have that back and forth or allowing them to kind of explain what they are seeing."

QUESTION #1 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE INTEGRATION OF THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Cognitive Challenge-Before Workgroup

How integration is happening	What else they would like to do
<p>When considering cognitive challenge, respondents reported that they tried to help children solve problems with "just enough" support. In addition, finding opportunities for children to feel a sense of autonomy and accomplishment were highlighted. Finally, identifying innovative strategies to push children to think differently were mentioned.</p> <p><i>"When I think of cognitive challenge, I think of working through things on their own and figuring out how the world works. Whether it be putting a puzzle together or building big structures and they fall down and then they do it again. Unfortunately, we have very little time for that kind of activity."</i></p>	<p>Educators reported a desire for more classroom time to devote to cognitive challenge opportunities. In addition, they hoped for more administrator buy-in and opportunities for professional development around integration of cognitive challenge.</p> <p><i>"Getting K-12 administration to sort of understand what early childhood should look like would help."</i></p> <p><i>"PD [Professional Development]...with some make and takes would help."</i></p>

Cognitive Challenge-After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...
<p>Respondents reported engaging in more child-led activities to promote cognitive challenge since they began their workgroup experience. A few individuals reported pushing themselves beyond their comfort level to try new strategies that they had learned. In addition, some individuals reported making curriculum choices more focused on meeting children's interests in order to help them push their critical thinking skills.</p> <p><i>"I've had to push myself more because I feel like I've been teaching long enough now where I'm like, I know this works this is how I do it...it has helped me to think of different ways to do things."</i></p>

QUESTION #1 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE INTEGRATION OF THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Collaboration among Peers-Before Workgroup

How integration is happening	What else they would like to do
<p>Strategies shared included: allowing children to work together during activities as well as giving children a goal and objective to work towards together. Play-based learning strategies were often cited.</p> <p><i>"I think it looks like giving examples of appropriate interactions. We're using social stories, we have several social emotional curriculums that we implement...really try to teach empathy and build community in my classroom."</i></p>	<p>Respondents desired more administrator buy-in and more time to allow for peer collaboration opportunities to occur.</p> <p><i>"Just the time, really the time to make it happen would really be nice to allow for it"</i></p> <p><i>"To educate the people that are enforcing all of this to happen, the curriculum, the time constraint, if they are really educated on the benefits of all this [peer collaboration]."</i></p>

Collaboration among Peers-After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...
<p>Discussions related to this essential experience focused on an increase in intentionality. Cohort members discussed trying to be more intentional about providing opportunities that allow for peer to peer interaction.</p> <p><i>"I've become more mindful of how I have the kids interact with each other, not just letting them go off and do it [activity]. Thinking of different techniques I can do and making it more meaningful."</i></p>

QUESTION #1 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE INTEGRATION OF THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Child Decision Making and Planning-Before Workgroup

How integration is happening

Respondents reported utilizing child choice when making lesson decisions. There was a common desire to allow children to feel "in charge" of their learning.

"Allowing children to have the chance to make decisions and feel like they are contributing to planning things in the classroom."

What else they would like to do

There was a desire for increased administrator buy-in and more time to focus on what children were interested in learning.

"I would give kids more opportunities to play together and to make choices about how they want to learn about something."

Child Decision Making and Planning-After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...

Cohort members report they are now more comfortable with giving up control and allowing children to help plan their day. There was an overall increase in child autonomy that was frequently mentioned.

"Releasing that control and letting kids strive for learning because it might cause a mess, or it might cause an opportunity to problem solve or something like that that, people get anxious. They're [children] fully capable of it and they're telling us what they need and want. For me, I've seen a lot of room for growth in my program to be able to say like, here's all the benefits of that child directed learning, and here's how you can do it."

QUESTION #1 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE INTEGRATION OF THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation-Before Workgroup

How integration is happening

Strategies such as providing hands on learning opportunities and providing activities based on child interest were cited. Allowing opportunities for children to ask questions and make predictions were also reported.

"Having a variety of materials that kids can explore and create with."

"It's about children bringing the ideas to the forefront and then teachers following their lead."

What else they would like to do

There was a desire to increase parent education of the value of learning through play. In addition, increased opportunities for child play and a reduction of curriculum expectations were desired.

"Parents don't understand what we're doing and how much they [children] are learning from exploration and how much they are learning not only that social interaction, that cognitive development, they're learning so much from those exploration pieces."

Child Initiated Exploration and Innovation-After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...

Cohort members reported they were trying to be more intentional in giving children opportunities to learn from one another. In addition, cohort members reported trying to provide chances for children to be autonomous and seeing the value of children making mistakes and learning from them. A few cohort members did report they were confused on the difference between exploration and innovation.

"A lot of my kids were having trouble finishing tasks and initiating things because they're afraid they are going to make a mistake. I feel like the research really helped me promote a growth mindset around that and how to do that."

QUESTION #2 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO LENS OF THE CHILD?

Lens of the Child Before Workgroup

How integration is happening

Lens of the child was described as an understanding of how a child experiences and sees the world. Respondents reported strategies such as providing children with autonomy over what they are learning and opportunities to talk and interact as examples of utilizing the lens of the child.

"I feel like it is how they experience the world. It's amazing to me even after I think we've had a bad day they are like, no we had fun today..so see it through their lens."

What else they would like to do

Some individuals did not share additional information related to what else they would like to do. Those that did, reported a desire to continue to improve their empathy and understanding for the children they work with.

"I'm really trying to hone in on this and really explain..that's really something I try to work on"

Lens of the Child-After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...

Respondents reemphasized a drive to always try and see things through the lens of the child. Some educators reported enhanced empathy to be a result of their workgroup experience. Others reported that the workgroup experience helped them to reflect on how a child would see and experience typical classroom routines.

"They played a video like within one of the first few sessions and it was like from the lens of a child, it was like when my teacher tells me to catch a bubble, they feel silenced. And I think that was a really eye opening video to have shared because when they're getting in line or when you're teaching and you're just like, okay, catch a bubble, like, voices off I am talking. You're not able to hear it from their point of view."

QUESTION #3 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE INDIVIDUAL BIASES?

Perceived Biases- Before Workgroup

How integration is happening	What else they would like to do
<p>Educators reported trying to always ensure children were being treated equally and receiving an equal opportunity in their education regardless of their demographic characteristics.</p> <p><i>"Just like making sure that as an educator, we're giving each student an equal opportunity to get the best education and the best support possible."</i></p>	<p>Educators desired strategies to continue to improve their ability to treat children equally no matter the child's background or what they learn about the child.</p> <p><i>"To not let the things that parents tell me affect how I treat the child or how I treat the parent and treat them all with respect and dignity."</i></p>

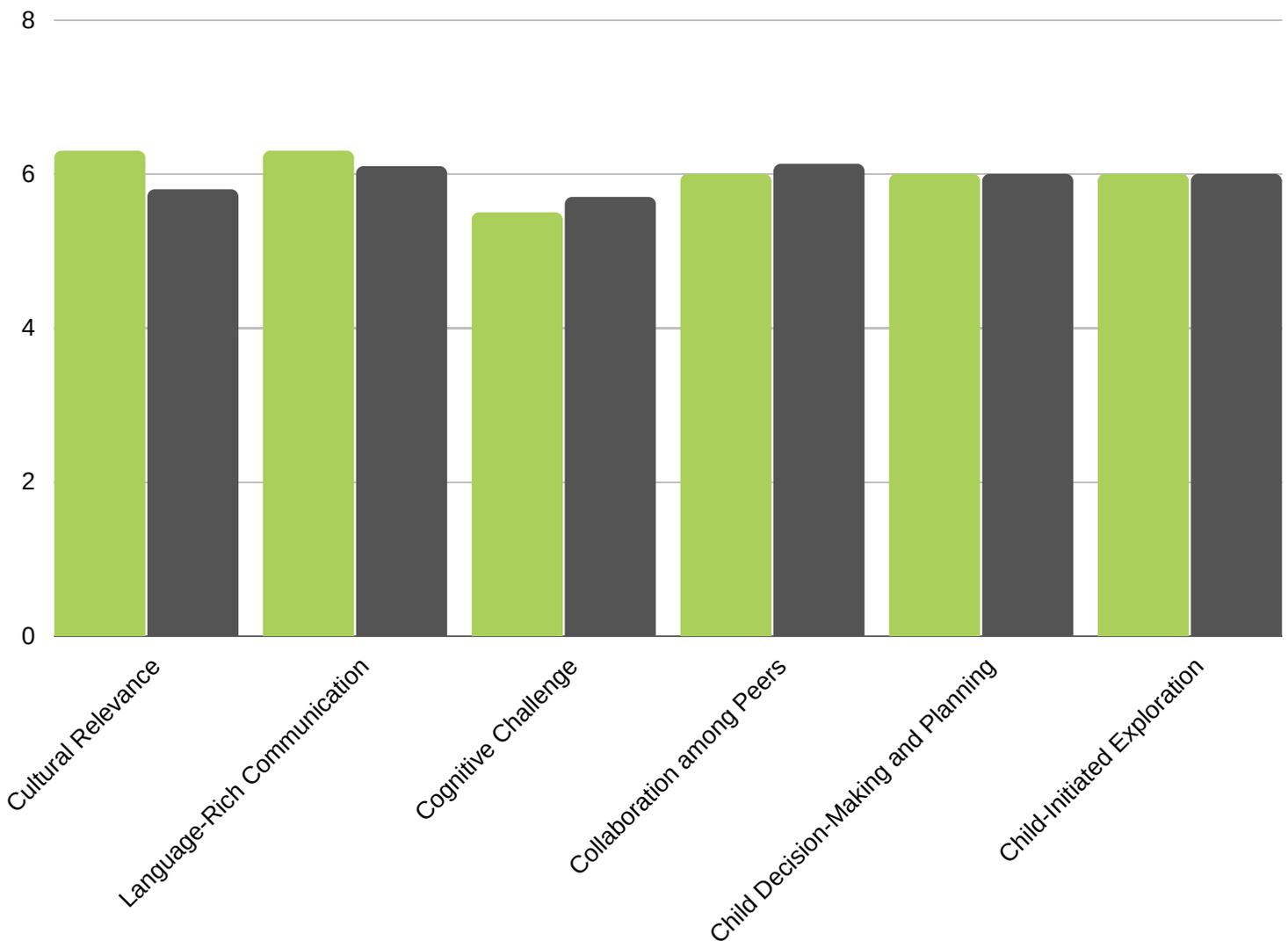
Perceived Bias- After Workgroup

How integration has changed since the toolkit workgroup experience...
<p>Workgroup members were split when asked about how the workgroup experience influenced perceived biases. Some individuals felt there was limited discussion on biases while others felt there was a large focus on biases. Overall, individuals reported a desire to continue to work on their own biases.</p> <p><i>"I feel like during the group, like this was just kind of gone over, I feel like it wasn't there. It was brought up and moved on. I kind of feel like there could have been more with this aspect of it just because I feel like it is a really big one."</i></p> <p><i>"We actually spent a really long time talking about biases, so that was good."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't feel like mine has changed as much as just maybe being more cognizant of it, to realize it's out there and to realize that it comes in many different forms than I was actually thinking of before."</i></p>

QUESTION #4 HOW DID THE WORKGROUP EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE CONFIDENCE IN EDUCATORS' ABILITY TO INTEGRATE THE SIX ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCES INTO THE INSTRUCTIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Confidence to Integrate Essential Experiences into Early Childhood Practice

Cohort members were asked to rank their confidence to integrate essential experiences into early childhood practice on a scale of 1 to 7 (1, low, 7, high) at two time points (**before the program via focus group** and **after the program via survey**). Levels of confidence for integration were similar before and after workgroup implementation. In general, respondents felt confident in their ability to integrate each essential experience, with an average score of 6 out of 7.0 identified in the **pre-program focus groups** and 5.9 out of 7.0 in the **post-program survey**. In the post-program survey respondents were also asked to identify confidence in their ability to integrate all six essential experiences into the learning environment simultaneously. Respondents reported a mean confidence level of 5.8 out of 7.



QUESTION #5 HOW DID WORKGROUP LEARNING TAKE PLACE?

Workgroup members (n=13) completed the Experiencing Scale in June 2023 (Stock & Kolb 2021). Items that represent **Novelty** are highlighted in blue, items representing **Presence** are highlighted in red and items representing **Embodiment** are highlighted in dark green. Mean scores on a reverse order scale of 1-7 (1, low, 7, high) are reported. The mean score for novelty items was 6.46; the mean score for presence items was 6.29 and the mean score for items reflecting embodiment was 5.67.



Figure 1. The Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 2015)

Mean			
6.38	I saw things in new ways	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	My views did not change
6.38	It was fresh and new	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	It was pretty much as I expected
6.62	I learned something new	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I didn't learn anything new
6.31	I was deeply involved	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I was uninvolved
6.31	I was alert and aware	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I was easily distracted
6.54	I actively participated	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I did not participate
6.38	My senses were engaged	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	My senses were not engaged
6.46	I was fully present	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I was somewhere else
6.38	I was "in the flow"	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I felt resistant
6.54	My attention was focused	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I felt connected and whole
6.39	I felt connected and whole	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I felt scattered
6.25	I was in the here and now	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I was in the there and then
6.38	I responded to what was happening	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I was on "automatic pilot"
5.54	I was not self-conscious	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I was self-absorbed
6.00	I didn't notice the passage of time	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I was aware of time passing
5.46	I felt a sense of oneness with the natural world	○ ○ ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I did not feel a connection with the natural world
5.67	I felt the experience in my body	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I had no bodily sensation
5.67	The experience was emotional	● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	I had no emotional reactions

QUESTION #6: WHAT IS THE FEASIBILITY OF TOOL IMPLEMENTATION?

Specific to the tools developed within the workgroup, the majority of participants felt confident they could implement these tools in their own early childhood practice and typically cited numbers between 4-5 when presented with a 1-5 confidence scale. The developed tools were described as unique, innovative and interesting.

I do a lot of trainings with teachers and I definitely feel like I could use them [developed tools] in some of my trainings.

Participants were also asked to share any anticipated barriers they thought might occur when asking an individual not currently engaged in the workgroup to implement the tools. The main thematic finding was related to resistance to change. This was discussed specific to administrators and parents. Specifically, there was concern that administrators would not be interested in supporting new strategies and not all parents would agree with a tool and it would keep an educator from trying it. Additional barriers cited included time constraints, technological literacy and budget limitations.

I think sometimes the principals or administration or the districts have just fallen into a rule of doing what they've been doing so having these tools that are different...if we bring those up, it's just going to be like o we don't need that or we don't need to do that.

The time constraints and work with the curriculum guide, the schedule, you have to have your class on, we don't have time for that.

QUESTION #7 IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICES AND BARRIERS TO WORKGROUP PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

WHAT WERE THE WORKGROUP SUCCESSES?

APPRECIATION FOR GROUP DYNAMIC

The majority of participants appreciated the diversity of the cohort primarily related to educator type. Individuals enjoyed getting to learn from an educator that worked in a setting that differed from their own. Cohort members described one another as validating, trustworthy and supportive. In addition, cohort members appreciated the opportunities to collaborate with other cohort members and learn from their experiences and backgrounds.

"I thought it was really interesting because I haven't really networked with many people in a daycare center...so it is really interesting to hear those points of view."

"I think everybody, all of that worked together, I think we collaborated really well and we were very respectful and everybody was willing to ask questions, answer questions and share."

INSTITUTE COLLABORATION AND WORKGROUP STRUCTURE

Participants enjoyed in-person interactions and felt that they were productive during meeting times. Participants also appreciated the reminder emails and follow up that Institute staff members provided. Institute staff members were described as organized, helpful, open to hearing new ideas and adjusting their strategies accordingly.

"They are very open to new ideas, as you're creating the tools, we're each kind of going our own way. They were able to take a minute to understand where we are coming from with our ideas, like kind of take it in and then give feedback based on that."

"I felt like I could reach out to them [Institute staff] at any time. They obviously know because an educator, we don't have a lot of time. So they would accommodate around our schedule which I thought was very, very nice and helpful".

WHAT WERE THE WORKGROUP CHALLENGES?

UNCLEAR PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Participants desired increased clarity upfront related to program expectations and outcomes. Some participants felt confused about the overall program objectives. Other individuals reported confusion due to the jargon utilized at the beginning of the program and desired further wording clarification.

"It was really difficult for me to understand if the objective was for it to be teacher facing or child facing. I think we lost a lot of time in just not understanding what the objective was for what were doing at a given time."

"A hardship I faced was that I didn't always feel like I knew what I was supposed to be doing or if I was doing it correctly. Also, I came into this knowing I was building a toolkit but at some point I felt it was a professional development I was trying to learn from instead of trying to help build it [toolkit]."

"The challenging part for me was, I felt like the beginning paced well but towards the end, the last few sessions, we jumped ahead and were assigned things we weren't quite sure about..it would have been nice to have examples and a better understanding of what the expectation was."

LACK OF TIME /TIME COMMITMENT

Individuals felt there was too much to accomplish during the workgroup period and too large of a time commitment was required outside of meetings. Some individuals desired more in-person work time to get tasks done however others felt the time commitment overall was too much. Several individuals did not feel they had enough time to complete their tools and desired more time to review tools at the end of the workgroup experience.

"I do think that at points there were times, having our day-to-day professions as well as tasks that they were giving us outside of the meetings, I felt sometimes that was kind of a lot to handle."

"It was like if you can commit to this time and date then please be a part of this. But it didn't say you're going to have to take this many hours outside of this time to do things and that was really a struggle for me."

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT?

IDENTIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were given when asked how to improve the cohort experience for future workgroups:

- Make all meetings in-person
- Enhance clarity on requirements of tool development
- Reduce utilization of academic jargon
- Focus on one tool rather than multiple tools
- Provide time to look at tools at the end of the workgroup experience
- Increase session duration

From the beginning of the cohort, explain the process and like the bigger picture, what we're trying to do, what it is going to be, our end goal. I think would help us visualize where we're going with it because it was like we're going through each meeting but we weren't sure how it was going to all end.

We could have used more time to look at everybody's tools, it's nice to be able to see it in-person and ask questions.

Some of the terms they used, where they knew what they meant but I was like, what does that mean?

Maybe a little more time on those last 3 sessions...when we got to those hour and a half sessions it was like warp speed.

CONCLUSION

Overall, engagement in the Instructional Toolkit workgroup increased cohort members' awareness, intentionality, comfort and empathy within their instructional practice. Specifically, cohort members reported an increased awareness of the need to acknowledge a child's cultural relevance and the value of peer-to-peer verbal interactions. There were reports of increased intentionality related to providing opportunities for cognitive challenge and peer-to-peer interactions. Related to comfort level, cohort members reported increased comfort in their ability to relinquish some control and allow children to support lesson and activity planning. Finally, cohort members reported increased empathy related to the child experience and a reinforced desire to utilize the "lens of the child".

Cohort members were split when asked to consider how their individual biases were influenced by the workgroup experience with some individuals reporting increased awareness while others identified limited change.

Related to cohort member confidence to integrate essential experiences into early childhood practice, responses did not vary greatly from pre to post program however confidence levels were high prior to program onset. When reflecting on the learning experience, the Experiencing Scale identified cohort members had high incidence of presence, novelty and embodiment. These findings indicate cohort members were very engaged in the learning process.

When considering workgroup experience facilitators and barriers, the workgroup dynamic was considered a programmatic success. Workgroup members greatly appreciated the variety of provider types involved in the workgroup. In addition, the BECI staff were applauded for their responsiveness, support and flexibility. Challenges discussed included: unclear program expectations and a lack of time to achieve the set objectives.

Cohort members gave several suggestions for programmatic improvement. These largely focused on logistical enhancements such as making all meetings in-person, increasing the duration of meeting times, decreasing the utilization of academic jargon, enhancing objective clarity at program onset and allowing more opportunities for in-person tool review at the end of the workgroup experience.

2023-2024

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

Evaluation Report



Acknowledgements

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP) is an initiative of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute in collaboration with the 11 School District Superintendents and the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The annual evaluation of the SECP is conducted by the Munroe Meyer Institute (MMI) within the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) under contract with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. The following report represents MMI's full and comprehensive evaluation of programmatic activities that took place during the 2023-2024 academic year.

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References and Acronyms

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP) was introduced in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the fall of 2015. It offers an innovative, comprehensive approach to reducing achievement gaps for young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. The 2023-2024 school year marks the 9th program year of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. There are School as Hub sites in ten elementary schools across six school districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The evaluation is grounded in a value-engaged approach with primary outcomes of focus on program improvement and program quality assessment. A combination of assessments and methodologies were used to evaluate the collaborative relationship between BECI and school districts as well as district-level and school-level changes. Specific focus included components of School as Hub, home visiting, school supports for PreK to Grade 3 families, educator professional development, and change in educator and principal self-efficacy for teaching and leadership.

Birth through Grade 3 Approach



EVALUATION OVERVIEW

→ Child-Level Outcomes

- How does engagement in the SECP influence students' feelings of belonging in School as Hub sites?
 - Measure: Student Sense of Belonging Survey
- How does engagement in the SECP influence students' academic growth within School as Hub sites?
 - Measure: Academic Achievement Reflections
- How does engagement in the SECP influence students' social-emotional development within School as Hub sites?
 - Measure: District-Specific Assessments (e.g., GOLD, SAEBRs)

→ Family-Level Outcomes

- What is the degree of family engagement within School as Hub sites?
 - Measure: ChildPlus Data
- What is the influence of family engagement programming on perceptions of support?
 - Measure: Family Interviews and Family Engagement Staff Focus Groups
- What is the level of collaboration among families, communities and schools within School as Hub sites?
 - Measure: Family Engagement Survey

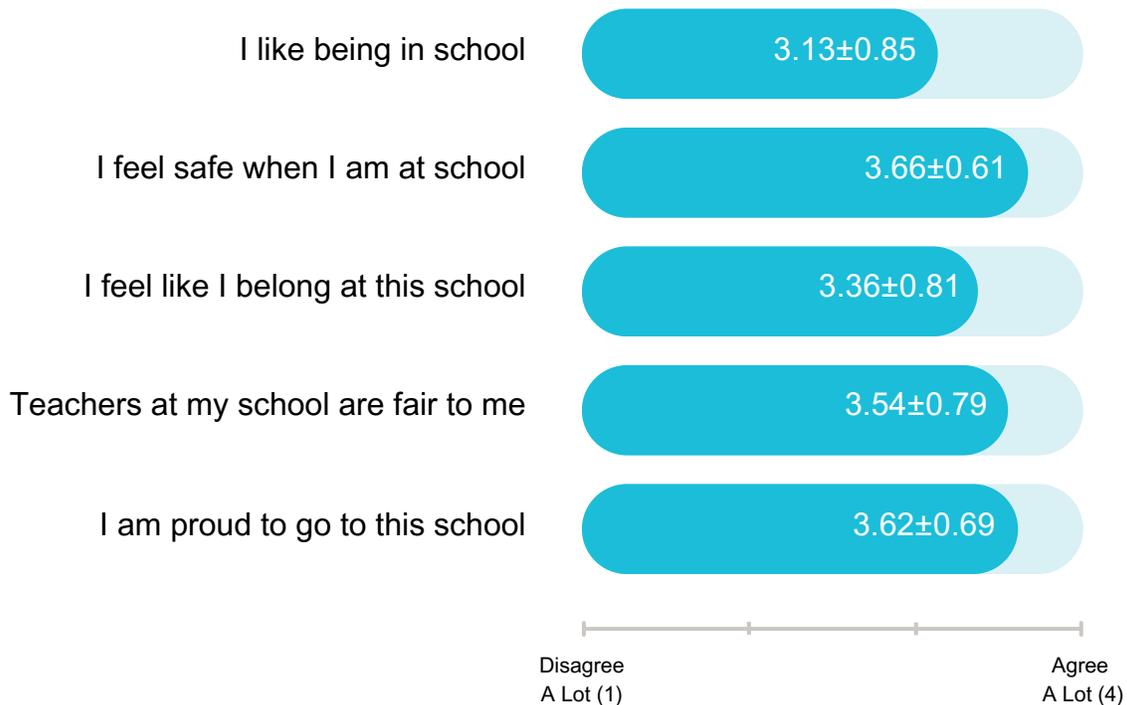
→ Systems-Level Outcomes

- What are the barriers and facilitators to collaboration between district stakeholders and Institute staff members?
 - Measure: Collaboration Survey
- How much progress was made towards district-level action plan goals?
 - Action Plan Focus Groups
- What was the depth of learning from participants engaged in professional learning opportunities?
 - Professional Learning Survey
 - PD for All Evaluation Survey
- How did engagement in SECP communities of practice influence teacher and principal perceptions of self-efficacy for teaching and leadership?
 - Self-Efficacy Surveys
- To what degree are principals able to develop and foster partnerships with families and communities and ensure equitable opportunities?
 - NAESP Survey

CHILD-LEVEL OUTCOMES

Student Sense of Belonging

In 2024, 126 students currently enrolled in 3rd grade at Bellaire Elementary and DC West Elementary schools* were asked to complete the 5-item Student Sense of Belonging Survey (Mullis et al., 2017). Students were asked to rate their feelings from a scale of (1) disagree a lot to (4) agree a lot. Overall, student responses had a mean of 3.46 indicating that student responses typically ranged between “agree a little” and “agree a lot”.



*These schools self-selected to complete this assessment measure based on actions plan goals related to student sense of belonging.

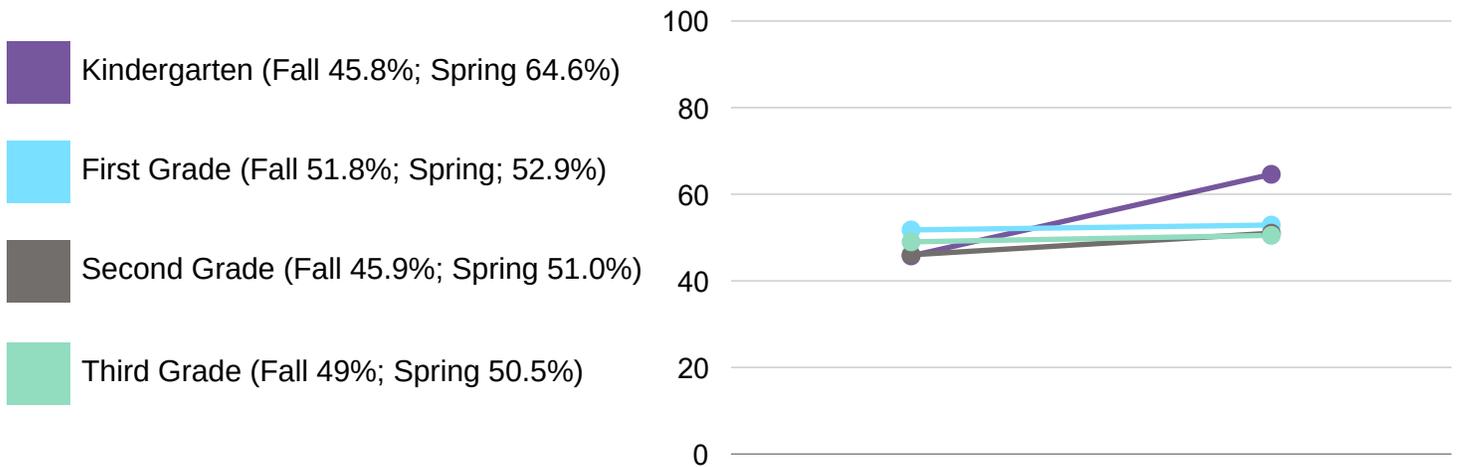
CHILD-LEVEL OUTCOMES

Academic Achievement Reflections

Principals at each School as Hub site and 1 district leader* were asked to report the percentage of students that were on track for reading and math in Fall and Spring based on the District's chosen assessment tool (e.g., FastBridge, MAP). Principals were then asked to reflect on whether growth was achieved at each grade level as well as how engagement in the SECP supported academic achievement at their school. Finally, principals were asked what is needed from the SECP to achieve academic goals for the 2024-2025 school year.

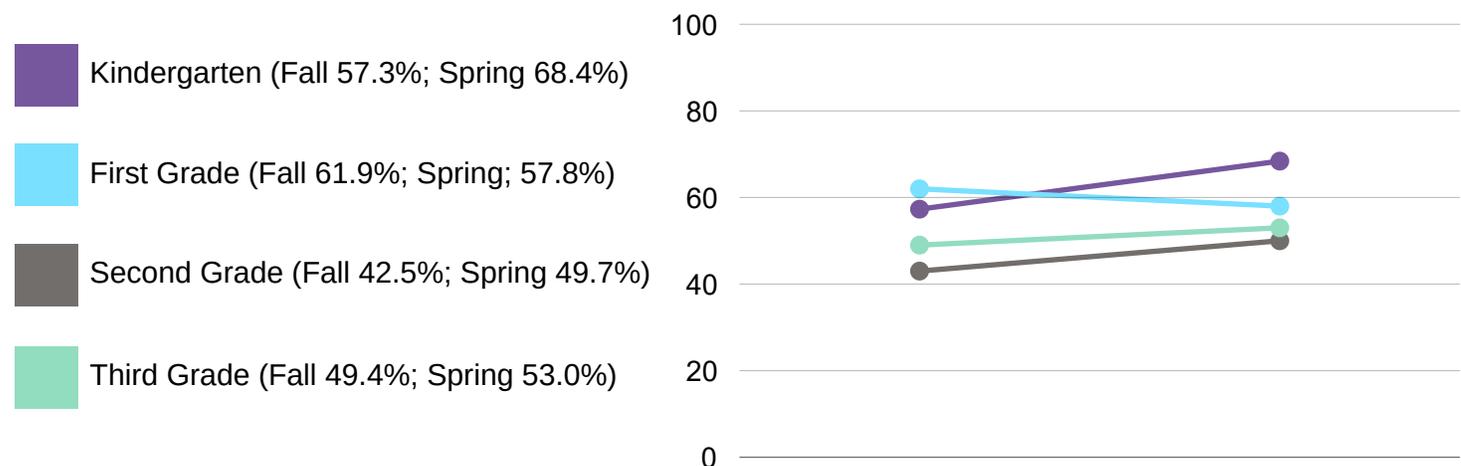
Percentage of Students On Track for Reading by Grade Level

Fall and Spring mean scores for reading are reported below by grade level. Overall, growth was seen from Fall to Spring for all grade levels with Kindergarten representing the largest increase of on track students from Fall to Spring.



Percentage of Students On Track for Math by Grade Level

Fall and Spring means for math achievement scores are reported below by grade level. Overall, growth was seen from Fall to Spring for all grade levels except first grade with Kindergarten representing the largest increase from Fall to Spring.

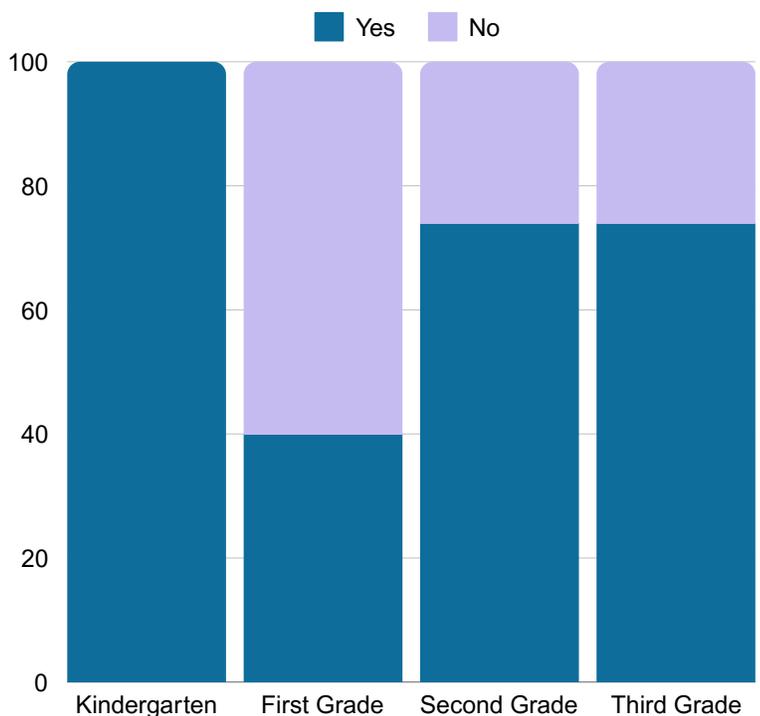


*One district leader was interviewed due a principal moving to a new position during the time the reflections were being completed.

CHILD-LEVEL OUTCOMES

Academic Achievement Discussion of Growth

Individuals were asked to reflect on whether their schools met academic growth goals in math and reading over the past year, broken down by grade level. All Kindergarten classrooms at School as Hub sites met their growth goals in both subjects. For first grade, 40% of classrooms achieved their growth targets, while 74% of second and third grade classrooms met their goals in reading and math. Principals were then asked to describe the growth that was or was not achieved related to academic achievement over the past year. Thematic findings demonstrated reading and math specific findings as well as overall themes of environmental barriers and strategies for improvement.



Reading and Writing

Principals reported growth in reading fluency over the past 3-4 years, which they attributed to the implementation of specific curricula and targeted professional development opportunities. However, reading comprehension was highlighted as an area needing improvement. Writing proficiency also remains a challenge, as indicated by the low progress on the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA). Principals expressed a need for enhanced instructional support in this area.

Math

Many principals noted significant growth in Kindergarten math assessment scores but expressed a desire to see similar growth across other grade levels. They emphasized the importance of curriculum alignment and the use of intentional instructional strategies.

Environmental Challenges

Principals identified staffing shortages, large class sizes, and leadership changes as factors that detract from academic achievement growth strategies, such as classroom coaching and instructional leadership.

Strategies for Improvement

Principals stressed the need for sustained support in professional development focused on data-driven instruction and early literacy skills. They identified consistency in teaching methodologies and ongoing collaboration through communities of practice as crucial. Integrating social and emotional learning and MTSS frameworks was also seen as beneficial for supporting academic achievement.

CHILD-LEVEL OUTCOMES

How the SECP Supports Academic Achievement

When asked how the SECP supports academic achievement, thematic findings focused on opportunities for professional development for teachers and administrators, increased family engagement through the utilization of family engagement staff, opportunities for networking and collaboration, and strategic planning support.

Opportunities for Professional Development

Engagement in the SECP has allowed for ongoing professional development opportunities through coaching, networking, and attending professional learning events. Principals report that the support provided by specialists and monthly meetings has strengthened the capacity of teachers and Principals.

“Our specialist from BECI has really helped fill some gaps in coaching”-Principal

Increased Family Engagement through Family Engagement Staff

Principals report that the SECP’s family engagement programming has been pivotal in building stronger connections between families and their school. They perceive an increase in family involvement and anticipate that this will influence student attendance in future years.

“Having a family facilitator has helped with family engagement nights. We don’t have the data yet but we can feel families connecting to the building.”-Principal

Opportunities for Networking and Collaboration

The SECP has fostered a culture of collaboration and networking among principals and educators, enabling the exchange of ideas and best practices. Principals believe this collaborative approach has been central to implementing effective strategies and aligning school practices with broader educational goals.

“From the principal COP [Community of Practice] and family engagement COP, we have the opportunities for idea sharing.”-Principal

Strategic Planning Support

Principals felt the SECP supported opportunities for planning and execution of academic strategies and was valuable for supporting data-driven decision-making and goal-setting processes.

“School as Hub is the fabric of what we do, not two separate things.”-District Leader

CHILD-LEVEL OUTCOMES

What is Needed for the 2024-2025 Academic Year

When asked what is needed from the SECP to support 2024-2025 academic goals the following themes were identified: support for family engagement staff, continued opportunities for professional development, resource allocation and networking.

Support for Staff

Principals highlighted the importance of supporting staff, particularly family facilitators and home visitors. They felt the SECP could help these staff members build capacity quickly and effectively integrate into the school environment. Additionally, principals noted a desire for coaching and consulting for specific teacher groups (e.g., ELL, Special Education) to ensure instructional practices are aligned with students' diverse needs.

“The biggest need is having supports for the new family facilitator.”-Principal

Continued Opportunities for Professional Development

Continuous professional development was identified as crucial for maintaining and enhancing instructional quality. There was a desire for the SECP to focus particularly on data-driven instructional strategies and early literacy skills. Principals also wanted to expand professional development opportunities to include more staff, such as paraprofessionals.

“Community of Practice, super meaningful chunks of time, so many good things, continue them to be meaningful”-Principal

Resource Allocation and Networking

The SECP's ability to provide and share resources is viewed as vital. Ensuring schools have access to necessary materials, particularly those related to literacy and early childhood, will support the consistent implementation of evidence-based practices. Additionally, fostering a network where schools can exchange successful strategies is believed to enhance academic outcomes.

“Bring resources to the team, share and learn what is working at other schools and learn from them.”-Principal

Aligning Academic Achievement and Early Childhood

The alignment of early childhood best practices and foundational academic skills was identified as crucial. Principals reported that the SECP could support academic achievement by providing coaching and resources to preschool teachers, ensuring that early learners develop the necessary skills for academic success. They emphasized the importance of foundational skills in early literacy and numeracy.

“The help from School as Hub can be around continuing to help preschool [teachers] with coaching and support them with a continued goal of aligning play and skills and adding the layer of foundational skills such as rhyming words, beginning sounds.”-Principal

FAMILY-LEVEL OUTCOMES

Family Engagement Survey

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 ranked items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Surveys were distributed to families in the six districts with School as Hub sites in an online format. Families that had been enrolled or were currently enrolled in home visiting or family facilitation also received the surveys (n=190). The survey was available in 19 languages to accommodate the language needs of all the families at the participating schools.

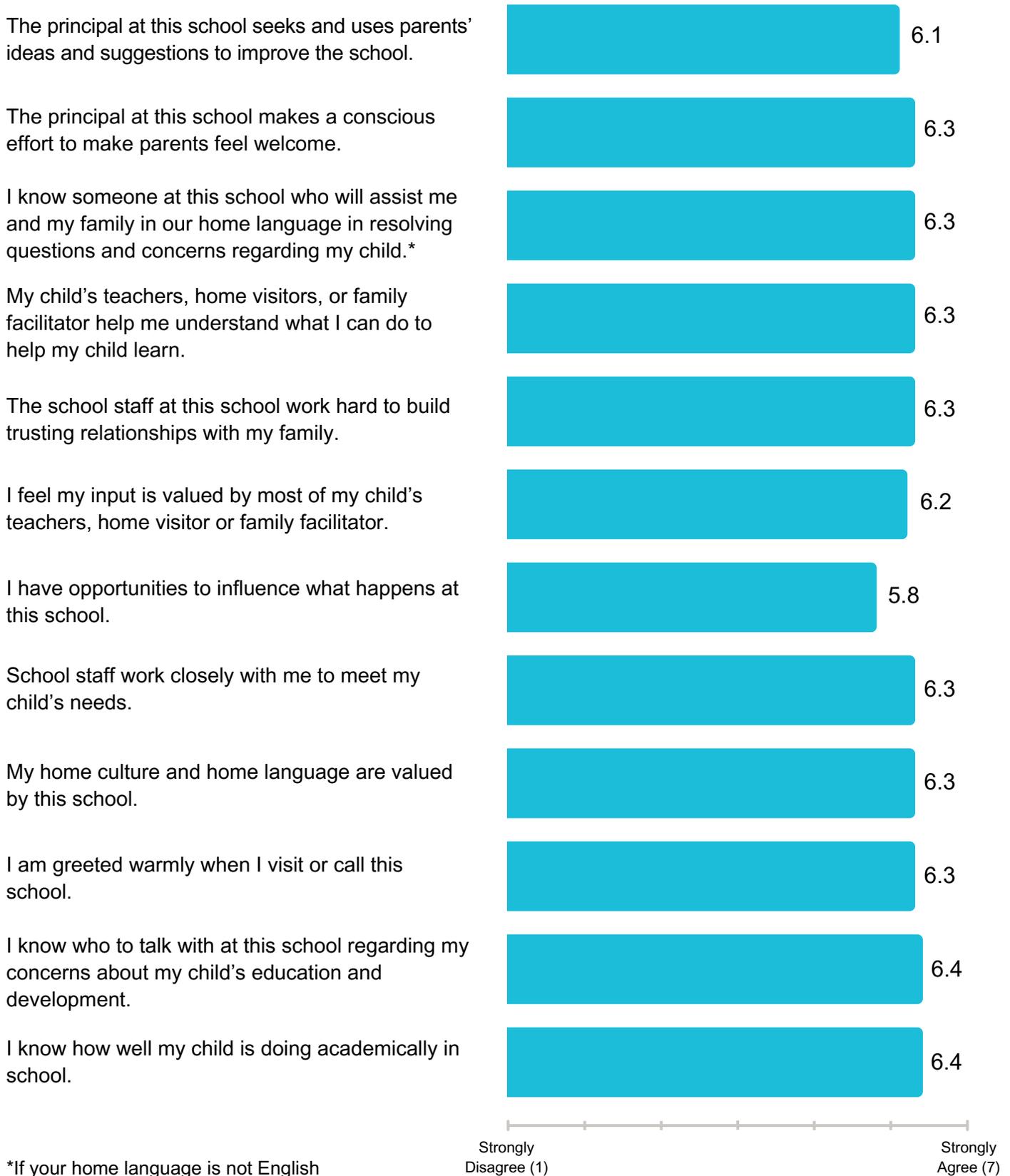
A total of 690 families with at least one child aged birth to grade 3 responded to the survey across 10 schools, with 155 (22.3%) of these families reporting that they speak a language other than English in the home. The majority of the families reported their race as White (n=481; 72.7%). The next largest race category reported was Black (n=76; 11.5%), followed by Two or More Races (n=63; 9.5%), Asian (n=24; 3.6%) and American Indian or Alaska Native (n=16; 2.4%). Almost a third of the families (n=203; 29.6%) reported their ethnicity as Latinx. Half of the families (n=347; 50.5%) reported that they qualify for the Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program, with 52 families (7.8%) preferring not to answer this question. Across the schools, the number of families responding to the survey ranged from 30 to 97 per school.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high), families rated schools very positively, with item averages ranging from 5.8 to 6.4 out of 7. The highest-rated items across the schools were "I know who to talk with at school regarding my concerns about my child's education and development" (6.4/7.0) and "I know how well my child is doing academically in school (6.4/7.0)." The lowest-rated item, while still very positive, was "I have opportunities to influence what happens at this school" (5.8).

Comparison of the survey scales from the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years revealed no significant differences from year to year. Among families engaged in home visiting/family facilitation, families that have been engaged in home visiting or family facilitation services for 0-1 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.4; those who have been engaged for 1-2 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.2; those who have been engaged for 3-5 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.0 and those engaged for greater than 5 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.1.

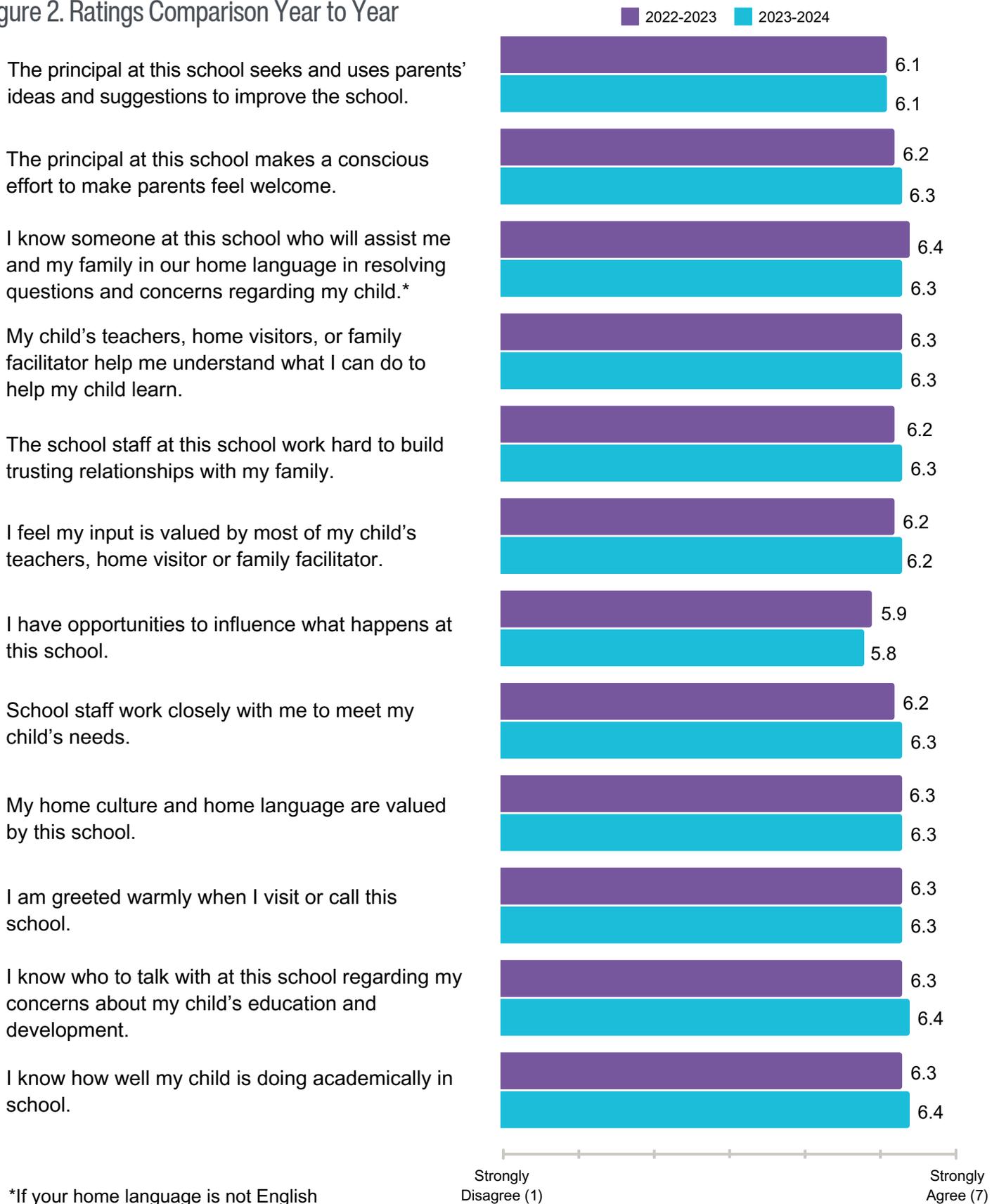
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Figure 1. Ratings of Family-School Partnerships



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Figure 2. Ratings Comparison Year to Year

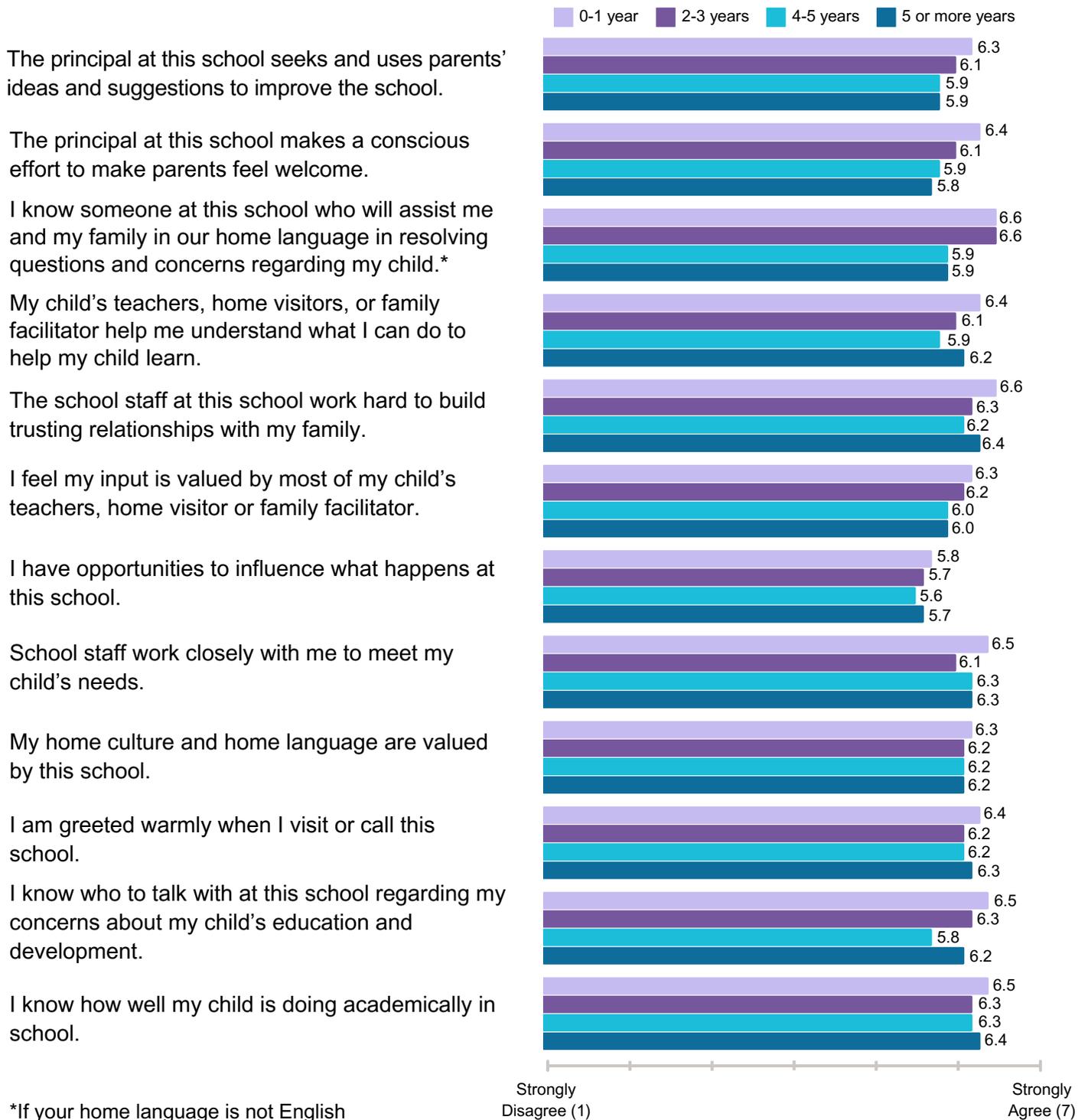


*If your home language is not English

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Figure 3. Families Engaged in Home Visiting/Family Facilitation

A total of 190 individuals who completed the survey reported that their family was engaged in home visiting and/or family facilitation at their school. A majority of these individuals reported being engaged for 0-1 year (45.8%) followed by those with 2-3 years of participation (32.1%), 4-5 years of participation (12.63%), and those who had been engaged for more than 5 years (9.5%).



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INTERVIEWS

Family and Family Engagement Staff Perceptions

In the Spring of 2024, Evaluators within the Munroe-Meyer Institute conducted interviews and focus groups with family engagement staff and families within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP). A total of 27 family interviews took place with family representatives (e.g., parents, legal guardians) that had at least one child enrolled in an SECP home visiting and/or family facilitation program at a School as Hub site. When possible, interviews took place in the family's primary language with the assistance of an interpreter. Interviewees identified their primary language as one of the following: English, Spanish, Karenni, Pashto, Farsi or Vietnamese. Family engagement staff (i.e., family facilitators and/or home visitors) perceptions were also captured via three phone interviews and two focus groups (n=11).

Interview and focus group questions were designed to answer two primary evaluation questions: (1) How does engagement in family engagement programming influence how a family receives social support? (2) What are the primary support types engaged families are currently receiving? Questions were guided by Social Support Theory, and definition constructs can be seen below. Qualitative data was analyzed via a process of immersion/crystallization using deductive content analysis. Primary findings from families and family engagement staff are identified in this report.

Social Support Theoretical Constructs

Instrumental Support	Informational Support	Appraisal Support	Emotional Support
Tangible aid and service	Advice, suggestions, and information	Information that is useful for self-evaluation	Expressions of empathy, love, trust and care
Examples: food, diapers, activity materials and children's books	Examples: pamphlets, step-by-step instructions, teaching about new topics	Examples: asking questions about a person's values, identifying strengths	Examples: listening without judgement, comforting words, validating emotions

INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

When considering the perspectives of family engagement staff, there were two primary themes related to provision of instrumental support and one primary theme related to instrumental support barriers. These themes included: (1) helping families access services, (2) providing direct resources, and (3) a perception of inadequate support being provided.

(1) Helping Families Access Services

Family engagement staff reported sharing information regarding community and healthcare related services. Staff reported sharing mental health resources such as counselor recommendations, as well as helping families to find resources such as food pantries or medical clinics.

"It depends on the issue but I try to connect them with the agency that provides the service."

(2) Providing Direct Resources

Staff discussed sharing resources with families to aid in child development and well-being. These may include things like clothing closets, diapers, monthly book programs, backpacks or developmentally appropriate activities. Staff also reported sharing tools and books with families to support addressing challenging behaviors.

"We have a preschool readiness group, so families who don't have items or materials at home, we're able to purchase those for them. Things like scissors, crayons, basic school supplies."

"We have a partnership with Nebraska Diaper Bank so we provide diapers. I think also providing families information about pantries, community services, that would be helpful. We also give out backpacks."

(3) A Perception of Inadequate Support

Several staff members reported a desire to enhance their ability to provide instrumental support to families. Many reported they didn't feel like they were doing as much as they would like to. Examples of support that families need and currently aren't receiving included financial aid options, such as rental assistance, transportation services and car repair services. Staff specifically desired more family engagement staff and increased time to spend with families.

"I guess the only support that I would love to provide and can't would be more tangible financial aid. If we had a fund for rental assistance even through the District or through Buffett to help these families in need."

"Sometimes I am stretched really thin. So, as we add more families that is something we have to look at, can one person do both roles [family facilitator and home visitor]?"

INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT

Family Perspective

When considering the perspective of families, there were three primary themes related to the provision of instrumental supports. These themes included: (1) appreciation for skill-building opportunities, (2) availability of direct resources, and (3) connection to outside supports and services.

(1) Skill-Building Opportunities

Many interviewees discussed the socialization groups and one-on-one skills work that their children participated in through the SECP home visiting programs. Respondents appreciated the opportunities for their children to interact with peers and to engage in group activities. They also valued the opportunities to observe and learn from family engagement staff's interactions with their children. Several interviewees gave examples of lessons and activities home visitors brought that were personalized to their children's strengths, areas for growth, or interests.

"So she [home visitor] always brings books to encourage my kid to read a book. And so based on the book that she brings, my kids know more about like the things around him. He knows more about the word so he can do the ABCs when he is very young."

"But, you know, we're going to the zoo in June. There are so many families that can't afford to go to the zoo. I just think it's wonderful that the opportunities they are giving to families. And it's, you know, all these socializations, they're so important for the development of these young kids."

(2) Availability of Direct Resources

Interviewees identified direct resources they received through their participation in home visiting and/or family facilitation. Examples included books and activities for their children, food, clothes, diapers, and holiday gifts. Several respondents noted that they did not need certain resources but appreciated knowing they were available and that family engagement staff offered them to all participants without judgement.

"She [family engagement staff member] did enroll our kids in the diaper bank programs. My kids are getting diapers and usually she brings them home. And also, she got one of my child a car seat. So, whenever we need something, we ask her."

(3) Connection to Outside Supports and Services

Several interviewees described staff's efforts to connect them with resources beyond what was available through their home visiting or family facilitation program. Examples included providing flyers or registration links for local food pantries or charity organizations and low or no-cost activities in the community.

"Well, she [family engagement staff member] actually helps me sign up for things like she'll sit with me at a computer and go through the steps and help me sign up for, like, the Christmas charities that we signed up for. She actually sat with me and helped me fill the forms out."

Few interviewees noted challenges related to instrumental support. Suggestions for changes focused on scheduling, with interviewees noting difficulty attending appointments scheduled during their work hours or wanting more frequent home visits or social groups.

INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

The primary theme related to facilitation of informational support was the utilization of adaptive communication styles. Two primary barriers that emerged included: (1) an inability to ensure effective and accessible community resources and (2) a desire to ensure resources were culturally appropriate.

(1) Adaptive Communication Styles

Several respondents reported sharing information and advice with families and prided themselves on adapting their communication style to meet the needs and preferences of the families. Staff reported using various communication channels such as digital platforms (e.g., apps), texts, phone calls, home visits and in-person meetings.

“Just taking a look at what families are feeling, what way is best for them to receive information, not everybody receives the information in the same way, so taking it individually.”

“With documentation of things, whether it is photo or video documentation we will explain to families why we are collecting this information, where it goes once it is collected.”

(2) Ensuring Effective and Accessible Community Resources

When sharing information about community resources respondents did report concerns about parents being able to navigate state and federal resources due to education, technological literacy and transportation barriers.

“Sometimes I think it is a lot of information coming at families. It is breaking things down a little bit more in bite sized pieces and then re-emphasizing certain things. When we do small groups or have socializations it is just kind of checking back in with families.”

(3) Ensuring Information is Culturally Appropriate

A primary barrier related to informational support was language barriers between the staff and families. Staff were concerned that some information such as handouts may be overwhelming or unclear at times and wanted to ensure that resources they shared were culturally and linguistically appropriate.

“I have a lot of families that are Karen or Karenni. Spanish handouts are much easier to find, but Karen and Karenni are a lot more difficult..so it’s like where do we find this?”

“I have a family that speaks Pashtu and one that speaks Farsi. It’s the same thing where I feel like, while do we have a district liaison, we can’t give him everything. Then I have a family that speaks French, and that’s a lot easier to find materials.”

INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT

Family Perspective

When considering the perspective of families, there were three primary themes related to provision of informational supports. These themes included: (1) family engagement staff's knowledge and expertise, (2) tailoring information to meet families' needs, and (3) multiple strategies for communication.

(1) Staff's Knowledge and Expertise

Several interviewees discussed family engagement staff's knowledge about education and child development. They appreciated opportunities to learn about child development and why specific activities were beneficial for their children. Interviewees described how staff demonstrated expertise in areas like reading, social-emotional learning, boundary setting, and fine motor skills.

"Generally she'll [family engagement staff member] tell me like, 'Oh, this is why we do this,' right? I'll just give like a simple example. But like Play-Doh, you know, we do this before we grip or here are some like cool scissors that are for before scissors. So some different things like that that like I don't have access to at home or I'm not really familiar with. I'm not an educator.

"I mean, I believe she's [family engagement staff member] very informative. She knows... I trust her judgment. I trust that she has a lot of knowledge in that area. And I look up to her."

(2) Tailoring Information to Families' Needs

Some interviewees shared examples of family engagement staff providing information about their specific concerns (e.g., autism or resolving an issue with the school district). Other respondents shared that they felt comfortable asking questions because staff had previously listened to them without judgment and came back with useful resources. Respondents reported that if staff didn't have immediate answers they would take the time to find out and then share the information.

"It's mostly about, you know, making sure that I ask questions and then they answer back and yeah. They're good usually and if they don't know the answer so they say like, you know, they will go look for an answer and then get back to me."

(3) Multiple Methods of Communication

Respondents praised family engagement staff's strategies for sharing information. Several interviewees noted that it was easy to receive information because family engagement staff were willing to share information in-person through conversations or physical handouts and through text messages or emails if opportunities arose between sessions. Some individuals specifically appreciated the quick turnaround for answers to their questions.

"She brings information via the computer. She sends me text messages, emails, She'll do a phone call. And then she'll also reach out to the school directly to have them reach out to me if it needs to go that far."

It was rare for respondents to discuss barriers to informational support. Those who had suggestions for changes wanted more information on topics such as school resources, health topics and education as well as more frequent communication from the family engagement staff.

APPRAISAL SUPPORT

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

There were two themes found related to how family engagement staff provide appraisal support. These included: (1) effective goal-setting when working with families and (2) utilizing a strength-based approach when having conversations with families. One barrier that family engagement staff identified to providing appraisal support included parents being overly critical or hard on themselves when discussing their child's development.

(1) Goal-Setting is an Effective Strategy

Several respondents reported setting goals with their families and felt this helped them to encourage specific items for families and provide resources in an intentional manner. Respondents also felt that by having families set goals it enhanced their investment in the home visiting or family facilitation program.

"We set the goals using that goal planning guide that Buffet gives us that we do twice a year with families. So my families each set an individual goal with me within a month of starting the program."

(2) A Strengths-Based Approach to Conversations

Staff report employing a strength-based approach when having conversations with families. Staff have found this especially helpful when talking about children's developmental milestones. Several individuals reported using strategies to help families engage in self-reflection and evaluation. It was reported that self-reflection often led to families feeling a sense of ownership over their child's development and well-being.

"Really trying to point out to parents like, 'Wow do you remember where she was 3-4 months ago, she wasn't even crawling and now look at her.' They sometimes need that perspective like wow she is doing great, like I am doing the right things, look at all these things you are doing, it is making such a difference."

"You're accentuating the positives and making sure that parents are able to pause and acknowledge it and not just shrug it off. [Parent says] 'But like, ohh, they always do that.' And I always just kind of deep, I dig. Keep on what the child is doing like, why is this important."

(3) Parents Tend to be Hypercritical of Themselves

Family engagement staff report that parents tend to focus on the negatives such as milestones or skills that their child is not achieving. Staff report trying to continue to reinforce all the positives and successes that families are having but sometimes parents are just overly negative.

"I have one Mom, I'll say everything. She's been wonderful, but she'll always only focus on the negative thing. [She will say] 'I'll just see what I can do better.' And I remind her, 'But you're doing more than enough. You're doing great.' Um, some parents, it's just hard for them to accept this positive feedback."

APPRAISAL SUPPORT

Family Perspective

The primary themes related to facilitation of appraisal support were family engagement staff's use of strengths-based feedback and developmental milestones. An identified barrier for appraisal support was the process for completing questionnaires to assess children's progress.

(1) Strengths-Based Feedback

Respondents shared times that family engagement staff encouraged them or their children by highlighting their strengths or focusing on their caregiving efforts. Interviewees discussed how they and their children appreciated hearing their good qualities and wanted to be around staff more because of how they feel during and after meetings.

"She always tells my kids they are doing a good job, you know, pointing out their good qualities. She's very encouraging to me, telling me what I'm doing right. And I always feel a lot better after seeing her."

"[My child's developmental delay] was very worrying but she reassured me. And even like now, say in a lesson, she usually guides in the beginning. And once I start doing it with my child, she'll like say, 'See, I like how you encourage her to do that,' or 'I like how you put that praise,' you know. Anyway, it's like I'm a veteran mom, and like, hearing that sometimes makes you feel like you're doing things right."

(2) Developmental Milestones

Many interviewees received appraisal support when they voiced concerns about their children's development or compared their children to peers. Family engagement staff offered encouragement related to typical development and possible areas of concern by talking directly with interviewees or by providing them with handouts or digital resources.

"That's one of the huge things that she's so wonderful about is to like, I'm not afraid to tell her, well, my daughter's doing this right now and we're struggling with this. And she'll be like, that's totally normal, that is right on par with that age."

(3) Changes in the Process for Measuring Progress

Some participants that had been engaged in a family engagement program for multiple years noted that they rarely completed child progress questionnaires or videos and wanted their home visitors to bring them back. These respondents often had experience with two or more home visitors and noted that their current home visitors either used the assessment tools less frequently or did not offer them at all. Some interviewees also missed the incentives they received for completing the progress measures.

"The one [home visitor] that I had before would always bring and complete questionnaires with me about my children's progress or we would do a video and I would get an incentive like a gift card for doing so. The current home visitor that took her position has never done so. It would be good if she would do the same as the home visitor did before. I always liked that because we would get a reward and it helps us."

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

There were two primary themes related to effective emotional support. These included: (1) celebrating children's successes with enrolled families and (2) building trust with families. An identified barrier was the limitations placed on the type and amount of emotional support family engagement staff were able to provide.

(1) Celebration of Enrolled Children

Several respondents reported that they provide emotional support to families by praising their child/children and providing positive praise and support for the children. Staff described themselves as cheerleaders for the family and a source of genuine support.

"I celebrate their child. I provide positive, encouraging, supportive words. I use a strength-based approach for the child and the parents, so I feel they know how special they are."

(2) Building Trust with Families

Respondents reported they had effective strategies in place for building trust with families and noted that this was paramount prior to connecting families to school and community resources. Some respondents reported this happened by being available in various ways such as via phone, text, in-person or over email.

"I'm available. So they have my personal cell phone number. They have my personal office number so they can call straight to me. They don't have to go through anyone else to talk to me, which has never happened in our district before."

(3) Limitations to Scope of Emotional Support

Staff reported that there are limits to the amount of emotional support that they can give to families. Several individuals noted that many families have a history of trauma that warrants support from a mental health professional and the staff do not feel equipped to provide the type of support that is needed. Some staff reported this takes a toll on their personal mental health as well.

"We've had families that maybe they've gone through some trauma and perhaps they need more, like professional mental health support."

"Definitely not having the ability to provide that therapeutic level, as was already stated, is a barrier just because we then have to extend services to another agency or somebody else within the district."

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Family Perspective

There were three primary themes found related to how family engagement staff provide emotional support. These included: (1) establishing personal connections with families, (2) demonstrations of respect, and (3) creating safe spaces for interviewees to share concerns or ask questions.

(1) Establishing Personal Connections with Families

Respondents discussed the ways family engagement staff developed relationships with them and built trust. Many shared examples of staff members remembering details about them and their children, complimenting their children's strengths, and offering encouragement with their words and body language. Several individuals said that they viewed family engagement staff as friends and shared examples of conversations that made them feel personally seen and understood.

“When she first came, I think how she got me to really trust her, before she talked about meeting, she showed me a picture of her children. And she said, ‘This is my family. These are my children.’ So to me, she's willing to show me her family, it made me feel a little more comfortable sharing things about my family to her. So I guess from the get-go like we had that rapport because she wasn't afraid to show me her family. And then I'm like, okay, well, as I see your family. You see my family.”

“Oh, she is such an affirmer. From the moment you walk in a room and there's encouragement all over her room and bulletin boards and then just her greeting, her praise for very small, small things, whether it's picking up toys or sitting down nicely.”

(2) Demonstrations of Respect

Respondents described how their family engagement staff member built trust through consistency, dependability, and respect for their values and time. Many interviewees said they knew they could count on their home visitors to show up when they said they would, bring promised information or resources, and communicate any changes so they could be prepared. They also gave examples of home visitors accommodating their needs when emergencies, religious or cultural events, or illnesses occurred.

“But my way she expressed to me, like, by the way she talks, she cares about us and she keeps her promises. Like if we need something, she says, okay, she will bring it to us on that day. If something change, she lets me know ahead of time.”

(3) Creating Safe Spaces to Share

Many respondents expressed that they felt comfortable sharing any worries or emotions about parenting with their family engagement staff member. They shared examples of staff members listening without judgement, validating their feelings, offering reassurance, and following up with them.

“Initially when I started the program I was in a lot of grief. And it was it's hard to compartmentalize that. And especially when someone's like, how are you doing? And you're like in this room and your kids playing and they're just having a good time. And you actually can answer the question. And I trusted her because she just said, I'm so sorry and did not try to fix it, but just listened.”

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

There were two primary themes found when staff members were asked to identify the greatest family engagement programmatic accomplishment. These included: expansion of family engagement services and meaningful connections with families.

(1) Expansion of Services

Family engagement staff reported the expansion of services and the number of children able to be reached through home visiting and/or family facilitation to be the greatest programmatic accomplishment.

(2) Meaningful Connections with Families

There was an agreement among family engagement staff that the connections made with families were meaningful and impactful. Staff felt proud of the relationships that they had been able to make with families and felt that led to families having greater access to school and community resources.

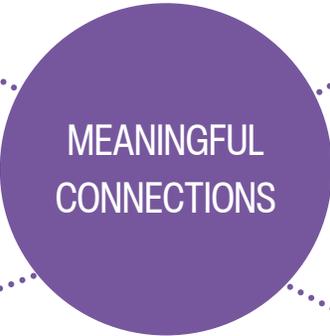
“When I took over this program two years ago, there were zero families enrolled and zero children involved. The program had basically been dormant. Now, we are at 25 children that we work with on a regular basis and I have 8 to 10 community children that drop in here.”



EXPANSION OF SERVICES

“When I first started, this program did not exist like there were not families enrolled and if they were enrolled they didn’t have longevity. So my accomplishment is implementing it and having a full capacity.”

“I would say just building relationships with families is my biggest accomplishment.”



MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

“As a home visitor, I think the greatest accomplishment I feel is just having a great reciprocal relationship with the families.”

“For me, it has been seeing how these parents are changing their mentality. Before they did not see how important it was, early childhood development. For them, it was just taking care of their child, getting their basic needs, but now they see how important it is.”

“I just feel like the greatest accomplishment is always connecting with the family. Like always finding a way to meaningfully connect.”

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Family Perspective

Two prominent themes emerged when interviewees were asked to share their child's greatest accomplishment related to participation in the home visiting program.

(1) Comfort in Social Situations

Many respondents identified an accomplishment related to their child's relationships with peers and adults. Children who had been very shy or withdrawn at the start of program participation were joining in at socialization groups, talking with teachers, and introducing themselves to new participants.

(2) Communication Skills

Many interviewees saw improvements in the amount their children talked, the quality of their speech, and their confidence when expressing themselves.

"She has gotten a lot more comfortable being around a group. And she is just very she's now. She would hide behind us before and now she is actually going and talking to other other kids, you know?"

"And I think for us, it has been getting him to the point where he can verbally express himself. When he first started, he would get frustrated because he couldn't and a lot of, like, screaming would come out and he would just get frustrated. And we worked a lot on that with his vocabulary. And he has absolutely flourished, especially, I would say, in the last six months."

COMFORT IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS

"He had a lot of stranger danger when we started and he has really blossomed into and now he's kind of like the peer model almost because we're one of the older ones, you know, now."

"Because when they first started my daughter very shy. She didn't say anything was just very shy. And now she's—that's the biggest thing—she's so bubbly."

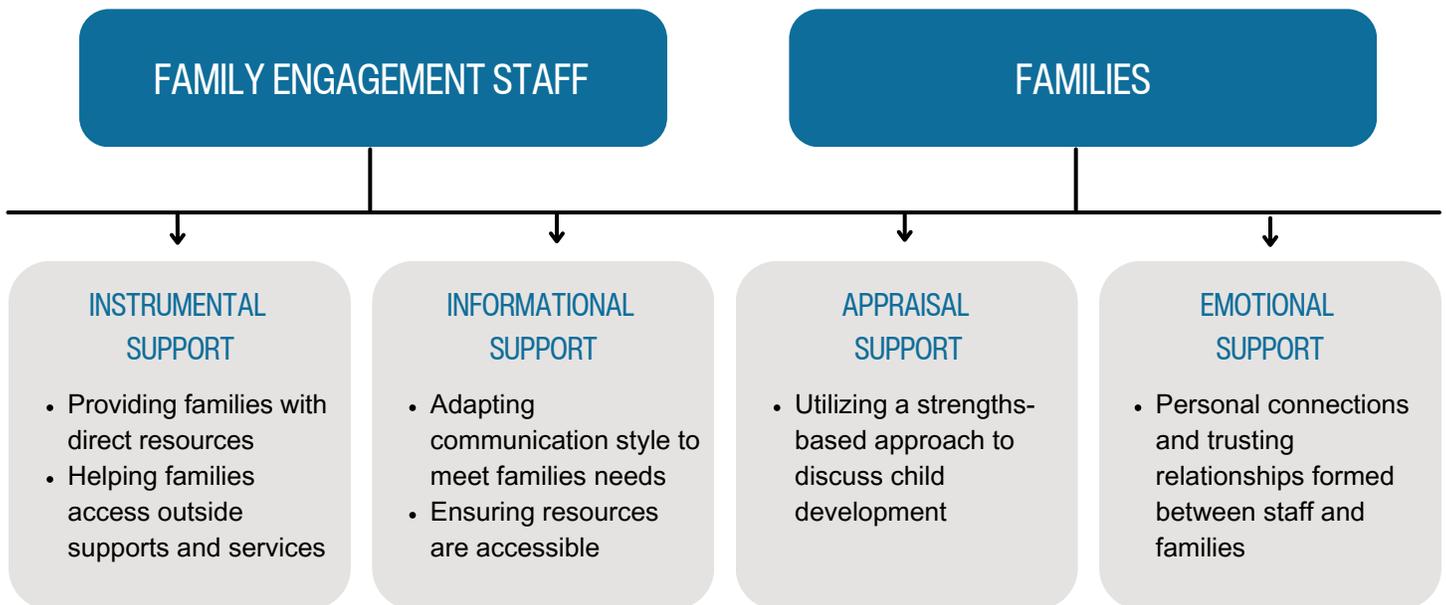
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

"In the future when she goes to school first, she will know a lot of these things, a lot of words and English. And also, she will not have any issues going to school and speaking to her teachers."

"He didn't talk much and now I see how has improved in communicating and I am able to understand him better."

TRIANGULATION OF FINDINGS

There were several similarities regarding perceptions of support among family engagement staff and families. Both groups felt that family engagement programs within School as Hub sites were effective at providing direct resources to families and helping connect families to resources and services outside of school. Both groups also felt family engagement staff were effective at adapting communication styles to meet families' needs and making resources accessible based on technological or language-related limitations. Family engagement staff and families felt that staff were effective at using strengths-based approaches when discussing child development, and all parties felt that trusting bonds had been formed. Qualitative findings suggest that areas for improvement include providing greater access to cost-effective mental health resources for families, enhancing utilization of assessment tools to track child development, and ensuring information and resources shared are culturally relevant and appropriate.



Areas for Improvement:



SYSTEMS-LEVEL OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute hosted 43 learning opportunities throughout the 2023-2024 academic year. At the end of the event attendees were presented with a QR code and asked to complete a post-evaluation survey. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale of 1-5 (1, low; 5, high) regarding how the information they learned would help them in their current role and the extent to which the format of the professional development was an effective way to receive helpful information. Respondents were asked to identify specific strategies or pieces of information they found most helpful and asked what additional support they would need to apply what they had learned. In addition, an experiencing scale was included to evaluate how engaging in professional learning opportunities influenced experiential learning based on the Kolb cycle of learning. The experiencing scale is a 20-item instrument that asks the individual to rate their experience across several constructs (Stock & Kolb, 2021). The scale assesses learning through a process of experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting. The scale is meant to assess the learner's novelty, presence and embodiment.

500

Educators engaged in professional learning opportunities

118

Post-program surveys completed by attendees

93%

of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the information learned during the professional learning opportunity could help them in their current role.

94%

of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the format of the professional learning opportunity was an effective way to receive helpful information.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

What specific strategies or pieces of information did you find most helpful from this professional learning opportunity?

- Information on Guided Play: Importance, implementation, tools, and teacher reflections. *"The discussion of what guided play is. I also liked the Guided Play checklist. This is a great tool for reflection."*
- The Value of Early Childhood Development: Impact of early experiences, brain development, and foundational support. *"Learning about how important the foundation is and how we can support children even if genetics and life circumstances are not ideal."*
- Teacher Collaboration and Engagement: Benefits of collaborative learning, personal reflections, and active engagement. *"I loved the opportunity to learn content but then directly connect it and plan for implementation with other teachers."*
- Practical Applications and Activities: Hands-on activities, strategies implemented, and real-life examples. *"Building a brain from straws and pipe cleaners and seeing how important a stronger base can be."*
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Importance, strategies, and specific examples like Pyramid Model. *"I loved collaborating with my coworkers and learning about the different strategies in the pyramid to implement in our classroom."*

What additional support do you need to apply what you learned today?

- Time for planning and collaboration *"Time as a classroom teacher, it's hard to find time to talk/listen and learn and input regarding the Hub program in my building."*
- Resources and materials *"Parent handouts on the importance of play and how to play."*
- Support and guidance *"Any type of checking back in to see how i am incorporating the learning would be helpful."*
- Collaboration and engagement *"Continued connections with colleagues working on the greater goal in this project."*

KOLB CYCLE OF LEARNING

Survey respondents (n=118) completed the Experiencing Scale in June 2024 (Stock & Kolb 2021). Items that represent Novelty are highlighted in **purple**, items representing Presence are highlighted in **dark blue** and items representing Embodiment are highlighted in **light blue**. Mean scores on a reverse order scale of 1-7 (1, low, 7, high) are reported. The mean score for novelty items was 6.41; the mean score for presence items was 6.42 and the mean score for items reflecting embodiment was 6.18.

MEAN

6.45	My views did not change	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I saw things in new ways
6.35	It was pretty much as I expected	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	It was fresh and new
6.44	I didn't learn anything new	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I learned something new
6.48	I was uninvolved	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was deeply involved
6.63	I was easily distracted	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was alert and aware
6.60	I did not participate	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I actively participated
6.53	My senses were not engaged	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	My senses were engaged
6.57	I was somewhere else	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was fully present
6.55	I felt resistant	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was "in the flow"
6.54	I felt connected and whole	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	My attention was focused
6.38	I felt scattered	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I felt connected and whole
6.44	I was in the there and then	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was in the here and now
6.58	I was on "automatic pilot"	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I responded to what was happening
6.24	I was self-absorbed	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was not self-conscious
6.28	I was aware of time passing	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I didn't notice the passage of time
6.15	I did not feel a connection with the natural world	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I felt a sense of oneness with the natural world
6.21	I had no bodily sensation	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I felt the experience in my body
6.18	I had no emotional reactions	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	The experience was emotional

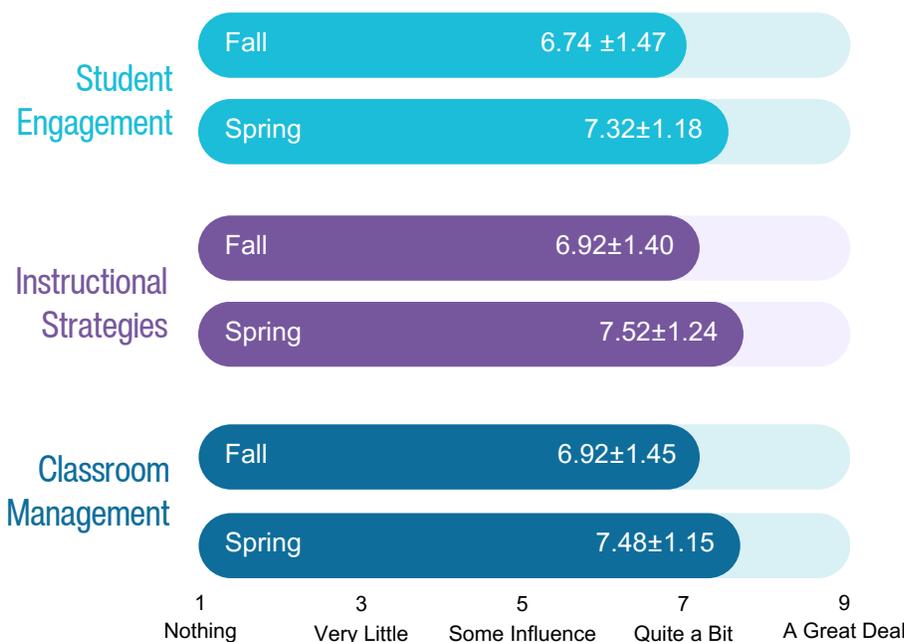
TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY

In the Fall of 2023 (n=26) and Spring of 2024 (n=21), teachers who were engaged in coaching and/or consultation within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan completed the short form of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). The survey items utilized can be seen below. Items related to each domain are highlighted as follows: (**Student Engagement**; **Instructional Strategies**; **Classroom Strategies**).

How much can you do?

1 Nothing 3 Very Little 5 Some Influence 7 Quite A Bit 9 A Great Deal

1. **How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?**
2. **How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?**
3. **How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?**
4. **How much can you do to help your students value learning?**
5. **To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?**
6. **How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?**
7. **How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?**
8. **How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?**
9. **How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?**
10. **To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?**
11. **How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?**
12. **How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?**



There were increases in self-efficacy in all domains from Fall to Spring. The largest areas of growth occurred in **using a variety of assessment strategies** (6.52; 7.71) and **getting students to believe they can do well in school work** (6.88; 7.48.).

SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Teachers across four districts completed the survey. Teacher demographics can be seen below.

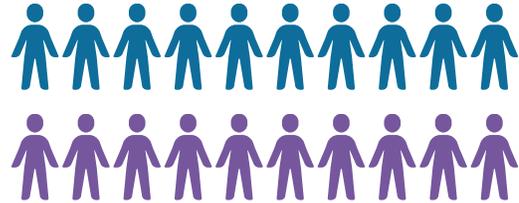
School District

Fall n=26 Spring n=21

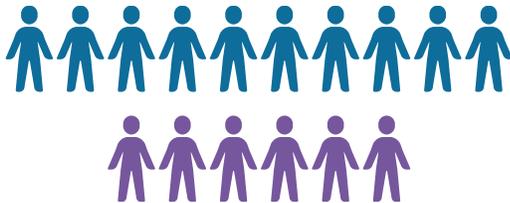
Bellevue Public Schools



DC West Community Schools



Omaha Public Schools

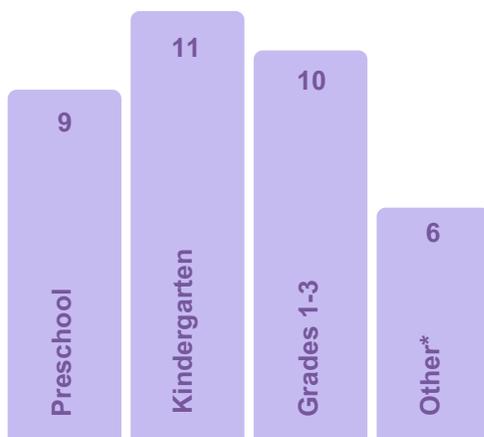


Ralston Public Schools

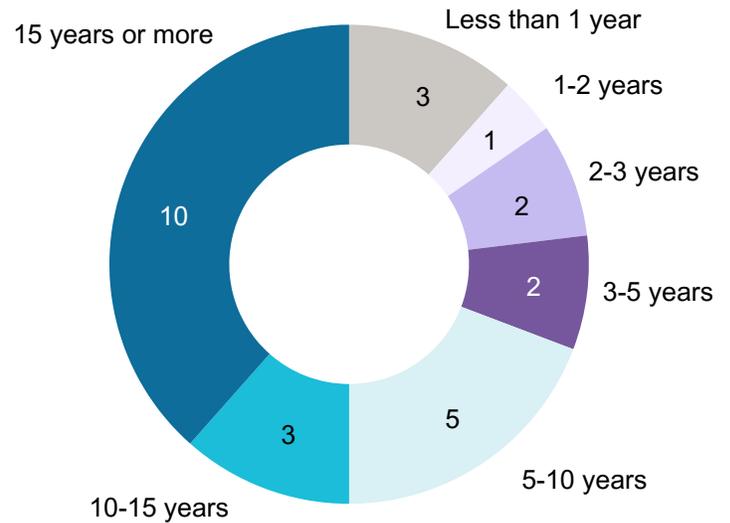


Grade Levels Supported

Multiple responses allowed



Years in Birth to Grade 3

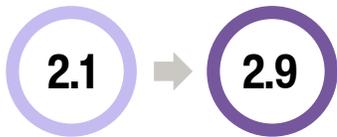


LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Principal Leadership

Principals (n=10) engaged in the SECP community of practice completed a self-reflective assessment (NAESP) regarding their ability to develop and foster partnerships with families and communities and ensure equitable opportunities in the Fall of 2023 and again in the Spring of 2024. Scores were on a 1-4 scale from highly inaccurate to highly accurate. Competencies with the greatest mean growth and least mean growth between timepoints are reported below.

Greatest Growth

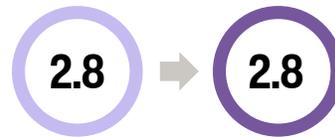


As a school, we have conducted an equity audit with a team of stakeholders that mirrors the demographics of the school. We have examined a wide range of data and used this information to identify areas of disproportionality and disparities.

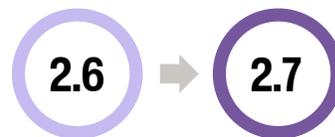


Our students are provided with opportunities to participate in a variety of enrichment learning activities outside of the school day and during the summer.

Least Growth



I am aware of inequities that exist in my school and can identify how these disparities show up in programming, student achievement, resource allocation, and family engagement.



As a school, we have established clear ways for traditionally marginalized Birth through 3rd grade families to share their perspectives, ideas, and concerns, thereby informing the adjustment of school practices and policies.

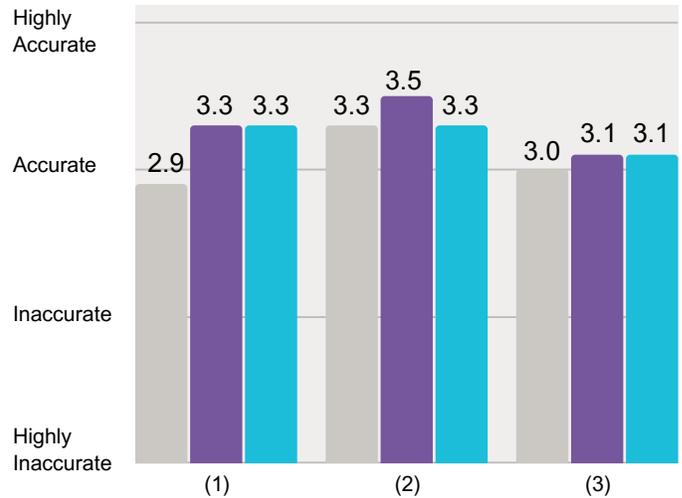
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Aggregated scores are reported below at each time point: (1) Winter 2023=Grey; (2) Spring 2023=Purple; (3) Spring 2024=Blue.

Competency 2: Develop and Foster Partnerships with Families and Communities

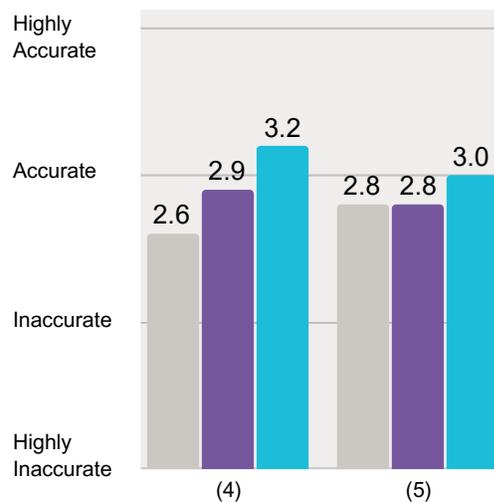
→ **Strategy 2.1:** Engage intentionally with families, especially those who have been traditionally marginalized.

- (1) As a principal, I have full awareness and understanding of the varied needs that exist for my students Birth through 3rd grade and their families.
- (2) There are dedicated spaces in our school to encourage families to visit and collaborate with others.
- (3) Our school enacts a communication plan that includes multiple strategies to partner with families and provides services and supports to families depending on their individual needs (e.g., home language, disability status).



→ **Strategy 2.2:** Establish relationships and support collaboration with early care and education, including home visitors. Birth to entering school (ECE) programs in the community.

- (4) I am familiar with and have established relationships with ECE programs in my community.
- (5) Our school provides opportunities and supports to kindergarten teachers to meet with ECE teachers staff (both those on-site and in community-based programs and including home visitors).



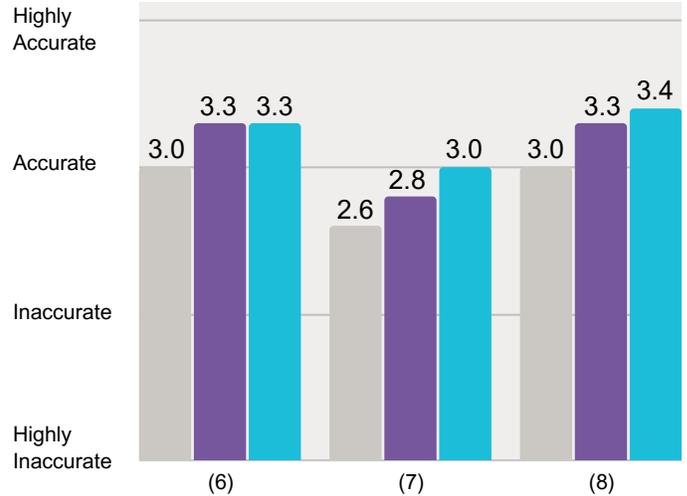
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Aggregated scores are reported below at each time point: (1) Winter 2023=Grey; (2) Spring 2023=Purple; (3) Spring 2024=Blue.

Competency 2: Develop and Foster Partnerships with Families and Communities

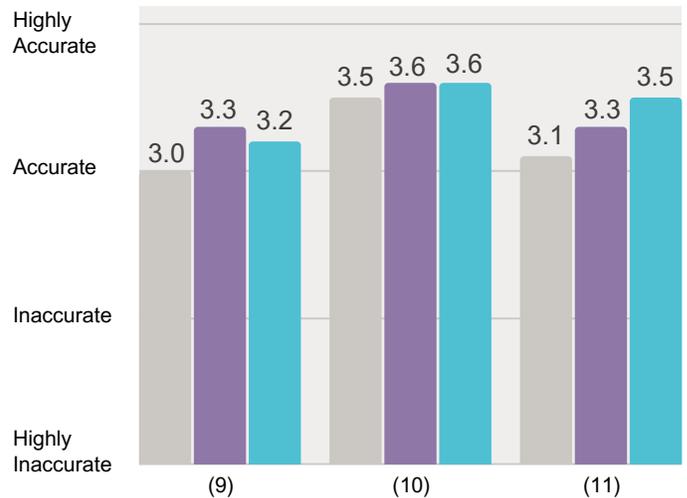
→ **Strategy 2.3:** Ensure smooth transitions for students and families not only between the variety of ECE programs and kindergarten, but also across the birth through 3rd grade continuum.

- (6) Our school has a transition plan in place to welcome and embrace students and families new to our school.
- (7) We reach out to and partner with ECE programs and community organizations to support the transitions of students and families.
- (8) We have a well-defined, manageable, and shared process to help parents register at our school. (i.e., supportive of languages other than English)



→ **Strategy 2.4:** Facilitate linkages with community supports and services to meet the needs of Birth-3rd grade students and families.

- (9) I am aware of or know where to find community supports that will meet the needs of all students and their families.
- (10) As a school, we have defined a process and identified dedicated personnel to serve as family liaisons to inform/coordinate external support for families with Birth through 3rd grade students.
- (11) Our students are provided with opportunities to participate in a variety of enrichment learning activities outside of the school day and during the summer.



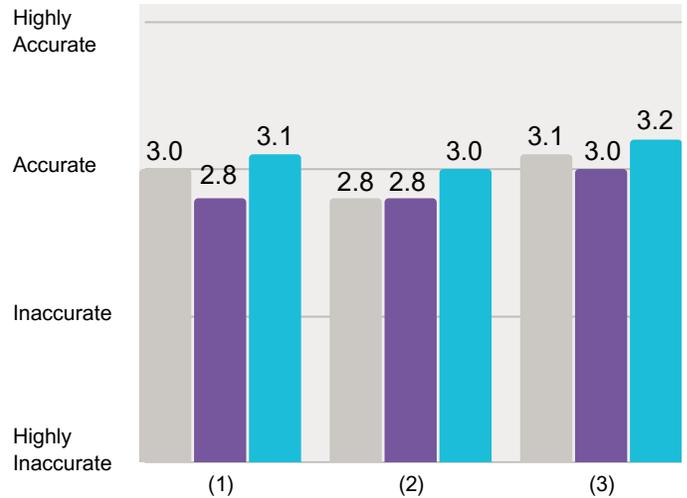
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Aggregated scores are reported below at each time point: (1) Winter 2023=Grey; (2) Spring 2023=Purple; (3) Spring 2024=Blue.

Competency 4: Ensure Equitable Opportunities

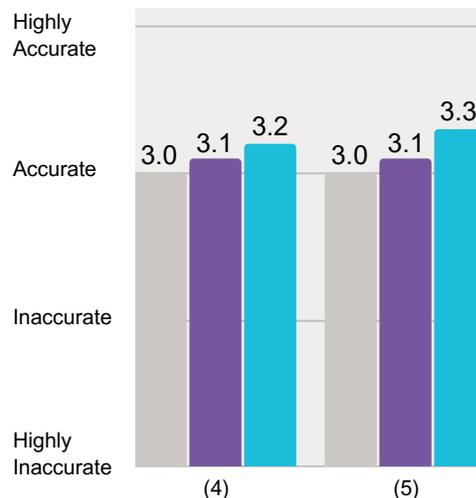
→ **Strategy 4.1:** Develop critical self-awareness and knowledge of oppression, privilege, and cultural competence.

- (1) As a leader, I engage in professional learning to examine how race and privilege impact my own values, beliefs, perceptions, leadership, and decision-making.
- (2) I have developed, and regularly revisit, my own personal action plan to develop my capacity to be an equity-minded leader.
- (3) I engage in conversations with students, families, and staff to better understand their perspectives and experiences pertaining to race, culture, socio-economic status, and gender identity.



→ **Strategy 4.2:** Establish a school climate that is open, inclusive, and affirming of differences (for staff, students, and their families).

- (4) I have established trusting, respectful relationships with all stakeholder groups to create a climate that is open, equity focused, and affirming of difference.
- (5) As a school, we engage in professional learning that improves our culturally responsive and sustaining practices to help staff create learning environments that are inclusive and identity affirming for students Birth through 3rd grade.



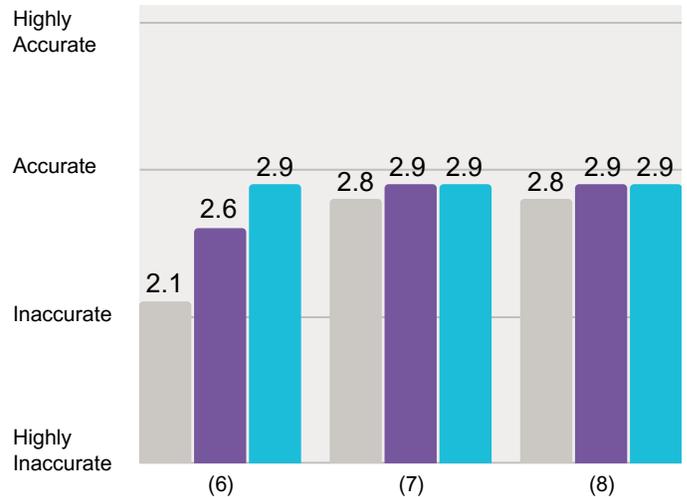
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Aggregated scores are reported below at each time point: (1) Winter 2023=Grey; (2) Spring 2023=Purple; (3) Spring 2024=Blue.

Competency 4: Ensure Equitable Opportunities

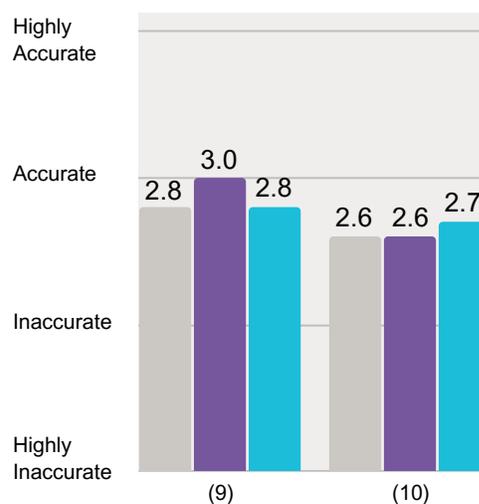
→ **Strategy 4.3:** Facilitate linkages with community supports and services to meet the needs of Birth-3rd grade students and families.

- (6) As a school, we have conducted an equity audit with a team of stakeholders that mirrors the demographics of the school. We have examined a wide range of data and used this information to identify areas of disproportionality and disparities.
- (7) To focus on equity in Birth through 3rd grade, we intentionally examine data related to enrollment in home visiting, suspension/expulsion, attendance, inclusion of children with disabilities, access for dual language and English learners, and engagement of diverse family voices.
- (8) As a school, we have developed an on-going process to monitor the implementation of equity measures, examine new data, and evaluate progress with an equity lens to inform our continuous improvement process.



→ **Strategy 4.4:** Differentiate resources and strategies to ensure students, teachers, staff, and families have equitable opportunity to succeed.

- (9) I am aware of inequities that exist in my school and can identify how these disparities show up in programming, student achievement, resource allocation, and family engagement.
- (10) As a school, we have established clear ways for traditionally marginalized Birth through 3rd grade families to share their perspectives, ideas, and concerns, thereby informing the adjustment of school practices and policies.



LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Principal Self-Efficacy

Principals (n=10) engaged in the SECP community of practice were asked to rate their leadership self-efficacy across 5 domains. Enhanced feelings of self-efficacy were seen across each domain from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024.

Develop Goals

1. Develop clear goals and expectations for teaching utilizing the school as hub approach
2. Develop a strategic plan for achieving goals within the school as hub approach
3. Develop clear and achievable goals using the school as hub approach

Guide Teachers

1. Guide teachers about educational matters using the school as hub approach
2. Observe teaching and provide helpful feedback using the school as hub approach
3. Using school-based self-assessment to improve teaching and learning using the school as hub approach

Create a Positive and Safe Learning Environment

1. Promote a safe school environment for students which is free from bullying using a school as hub approach
2. Ensure a learning environment in which students feel safe using the school as hub approach
3. Promote a good teacher-student relationship using the school as hub approach

Motivate Teachers

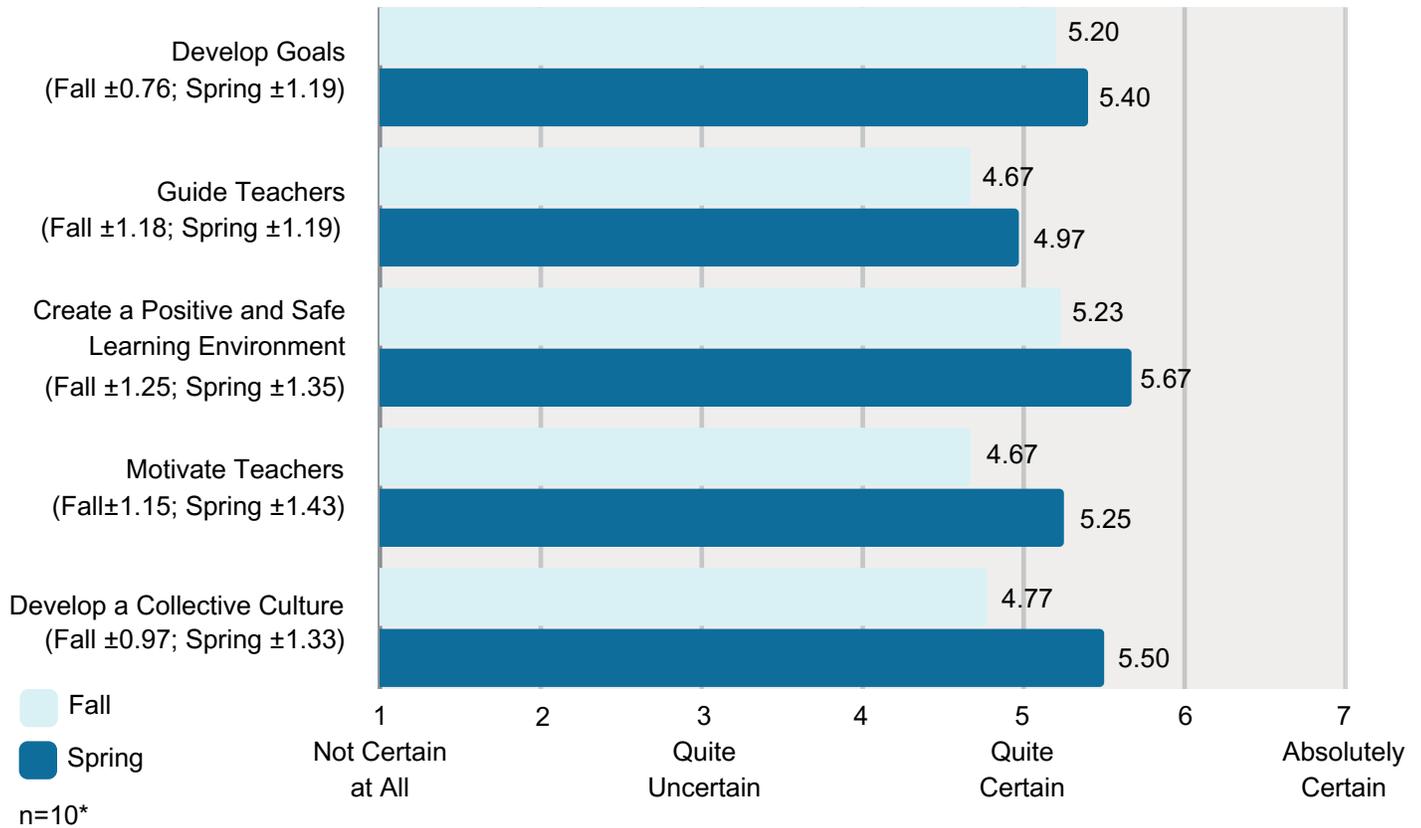
1. Create enthusiasm and engagement among teachers using the school as hub approach
2. Motivate teachers for teaching and instruction using the school as hub approach
3. Motivate teachers to commit to goals using the school as hub approach

Develop a Collective Culture

1. Develop a collective culture in which everyone works to achieve shared goals using the school as hub approach
2. Develop a culture in which teachers support one another using the school as hub approach
3. Promote a shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching using a school as hub approach

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

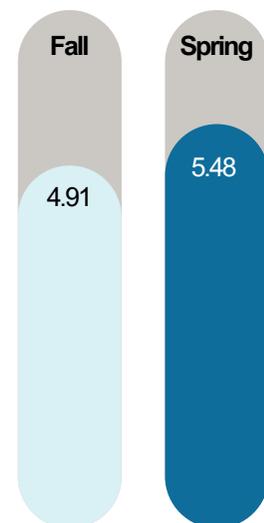
Domain mean scores on a scale of 1-7 can be seen below. Growth was seen in all domains.



Greatest Growth

- Using school-based self-assessment to improve teaching and learning using the school-as-hub approach (Fall: 4.3; Spring: 5.2)
- Creating enthusiasm and engagement among teachers using the school-as-hub approach (Fall: 4.6; Spring: 5.5)
- Developing a collective culture in which everyone works to achieve shared goals using the school-as-hub approach (Fall: 4.8; Spring: 5.7)
- Developing a culture in which teachers support each other using the school-as-hub approach (Fall: 4.7; Spring: 5.4)

Overall Scale Mean Scores



*Some respondents chose not to answer all of the questions

ACTION PLANNING PROGRESS

During the annual Action Planning Retreats within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, focus groups were held with members of each District team. District team members (n=44) were asked to reflect on their engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan over the past year. A 5-question semi-structured interview guide was utilized to evaluate progress, challenges and future directions within the three primary program domains of Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence and Family & Community Partnerships Engagement. Scores below represent the mean level of progress districts felt they made across domain areas from a scale of 1 to 100.



Leadership Effectiveness



Instructional Excellence



Family & Community Partnerships Engagement

AREAS OF PROGRESS

- Building administrators felt increased competency in areas of focus
- Teachers and administrators felt more comfortable delivering and supporting new curriculums
- Increased clarity of district-BECI partnerships and overall goals of the SECP
- Action plan-related curriculums were delivered with higher fidelity, and respondents reported that teachers were more comfortable teaching and applying new curriculums
- Improved collection and analysis of student achievement data at the school and district level
- Growth in family engagement as seen by program participation, volunteering, and caregiver attendance at events
- Positive relationships between family engagement staff and caregivers
- New partnerships with childcare centers and social support agencies

CHALLENGES

- Limited time for staff to attend trainings and meetings due to staffing shortages and other job responsibilities
- Lack of guidance for family engagement staff
- Communication barriers within districts or with the Institute
- Competing with other district initiatives to secure training time for professional learning
- Managing teacher frustration and/or resistance when rolling out new academic or social-emotional curriculums
- Mastering complex data systems
- Communication barriers with families whose primary languages are not English or Spanish
- Lack of transportation for families
- Identifying and meeting the needs of families that are not already connected with the schools

FUTURE PLANS

- Leverage Institute partnership to identify and deliver new professional development topics related to the action plan.
- Include additional opportunities for staff's collaborative learning
- Provide more opportunities for teacher feedback on action plan goals
- Provide new training on data systems, existing curriculums, and new curriculums planned for the 2024-2025 school year
- Increase collaboration between school staff and local childcare centers to better support students transitioning to preschool and kindergarten
- Provide staff training on socialization curriculums and strategies for strengthening relationships with families
- Increase opportunities for parents to volunteer at school
- Establish more partnerships with childcare centers and local agencies (e.g., public libraries)

*One district's score was significantly lower than those reported by other districts. The mean score with that district excluded was 86.

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

In the Spring of 2024, Evaluators within the Munroe Meyer Institute conducted an external collaboration evaluation between the Buffett Early Childhood Institute and its key partners within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. The two primary objectives of the evaluation were (1) to determine the level of collaboration between the Institute and plan stakeholders within school districts and (2) to determine the barriers and facilitators for collaboration between the Institute and plan stakeholders. A total of 69 surveys were completed by plan stakeholders across 9 school districts (6 full-implementation districts, 3 customized assistance) and the Buffet Early Childhood Institute. Survey respondents included 3-to-5-year-old classroom educators/paraprofessionals (n=16), home visitors/family facilitators (n=14), school-based leaders (n=13), district-based administrators (n=18), and Institute staff (n=8).



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Survey Findings

A survey was developed in collaboration between a Munroe Meyer Institute Education and Child Development Faculty member and Buffett Early Childhood Institute Research and Evaluation Staff. The District survey was comprised of closed/open-ended questions and included an adapted version of a previously validated "Level of Collaboration" scale.* Questions were developed based on the Action Plan program domains of focus noted below. Respondents were asked to identify the level of collaboration they believe they have had with Institute Staff and with other Districts within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan in each of the following areas. Institute staff members were given a similar survey and asked to identify the level of collaboration with districts as a whole. Descriptive findings are shared in the following report.

Program Domains of Focus

Leadership Effectiveness	Instructional Excellence	Family and Community Partnership Engagement
District Organization and Capacity	Foundations for Early Learning	Family Focus
School Leadership	Essential Child Experiences	Community-School Connections

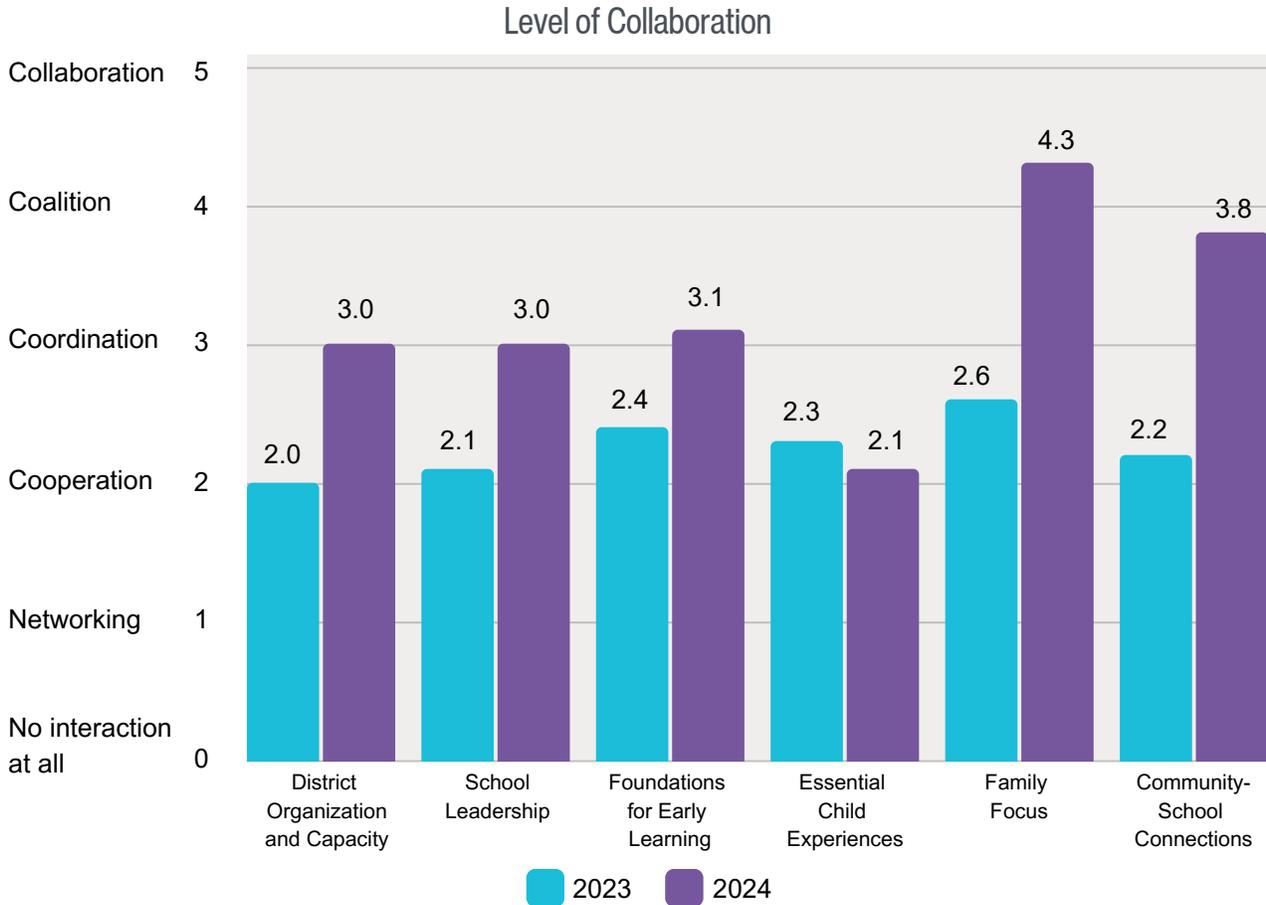
Level of Collaboration

Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loosely defined roles Little communication All decisions are made independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to each other Somewhat defined roles Formal communication All decisions are made independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share information and resources Defined roles Regular communication Some shared decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share ideas, information, and resources Regular and focused communication Frequent shared decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent and strategic communication Mutual trust Shared decision-making in all decisions Consensus reached in all decisions

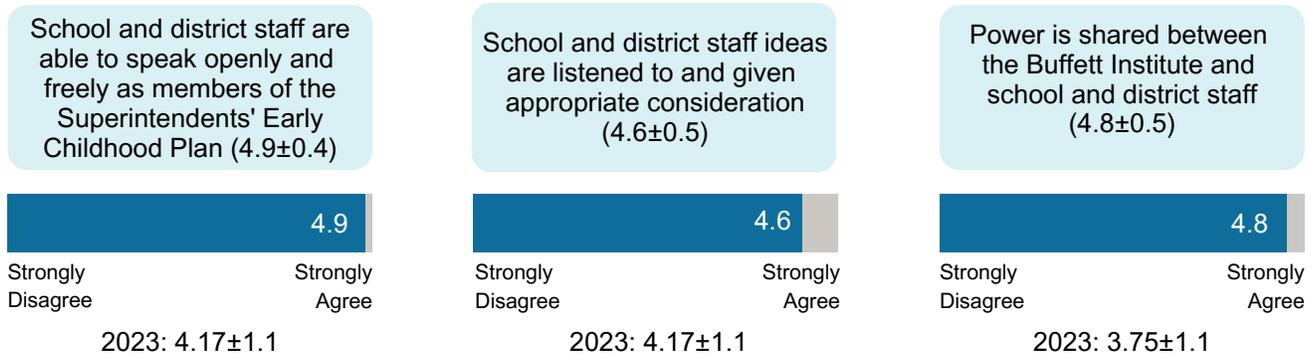
DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Institute Staff Survey Findings

Institute Staff members (n=8) were asked to identify the level of collaboration they have with all district/school stakeholders on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Institute collaboration perceptions had a mean of 3.7 in 2024 compared to a mean of 2.2 in 2023, indicating a level of coalition (i.e., share ideas, information, and resources; regular and focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making) was most common.



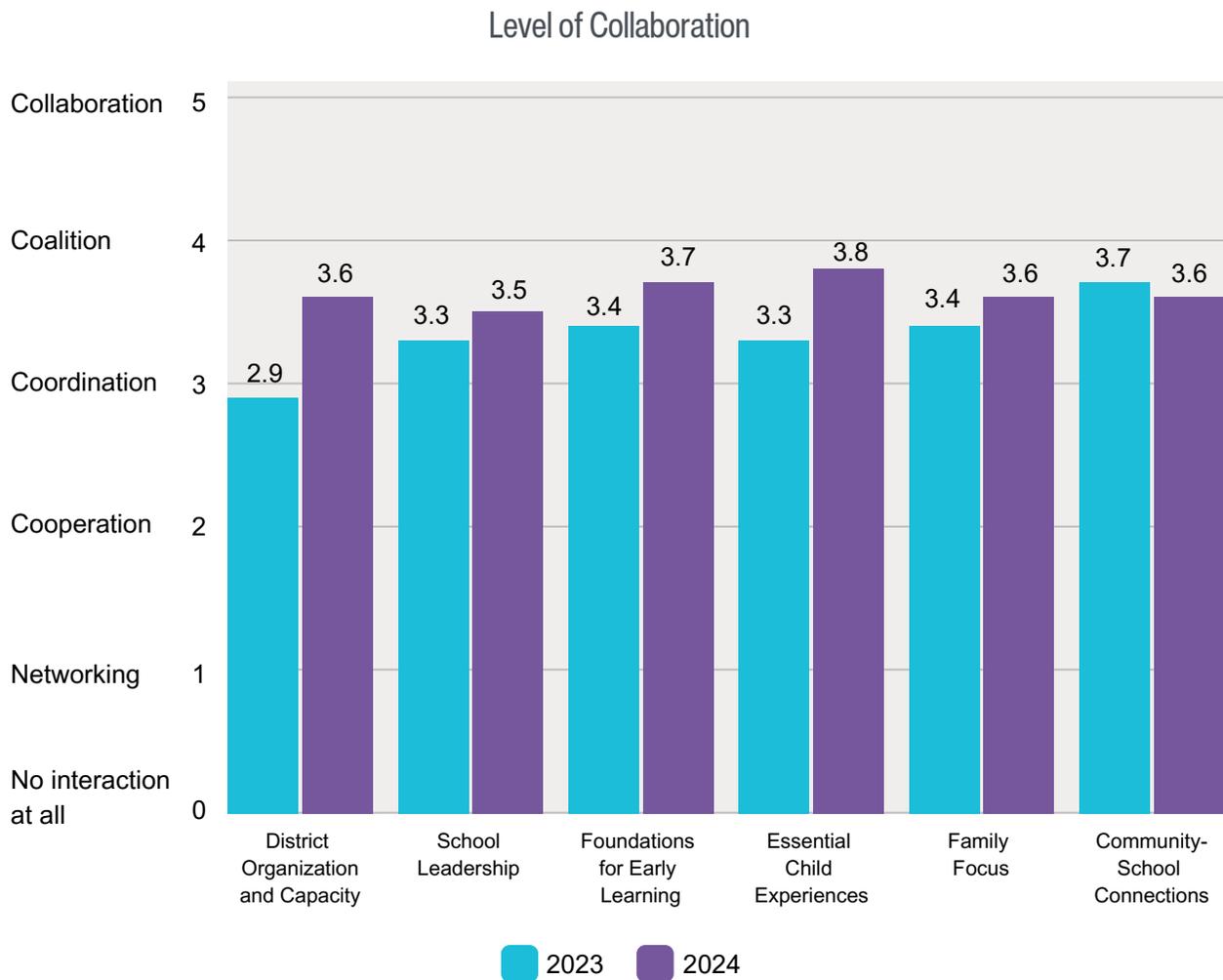
Institute staff (n=8) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Full Implementation Districts Survey Findings

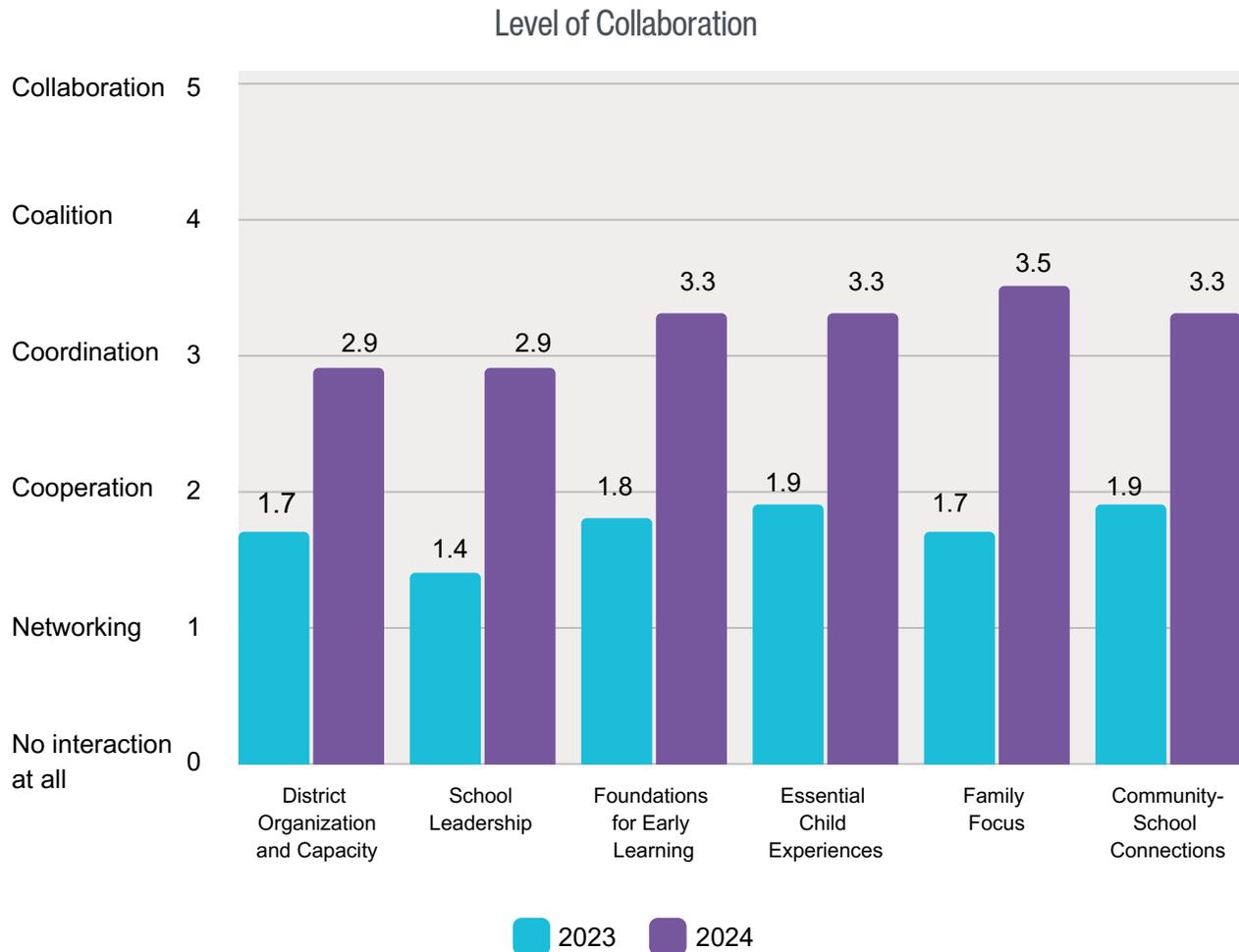
School/district program stakeholders from full-implementation districts were asked to reflect on the level of collaboration they have with the Institute on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Findings for district stakeholders (n=55) can be seen below in purple, compared to findings from the 2022-2023 school year (n=33) in blue. Respondents came from the following districts: Bellevue, DC West, Millard, Omaha Public Schools, Ralston, and Westside. District stakeholders identified a mean of 3.6 for 2024. This is compared to a mean of 3.3 identified in 2023. Responses for 2024 typically fell closer to the coalition level (i.e., share ideas, information, and resources; regular and focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making).



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Full Implementation District to District Survey Findings

The following figures describe the level of collaboration full implementation district respondents (n=40) believed they have with other districts in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (0=no interaction at all, 1=networking, 2=cooperation, 3=coordination, 4=coalition, and 5=collaboration). Only individuals who self-identified as involved in the action planning process answered the following questions. Overall, the average response mean was 3.2. This indicates that districts typically identified at the level of "coordination" with other districts.

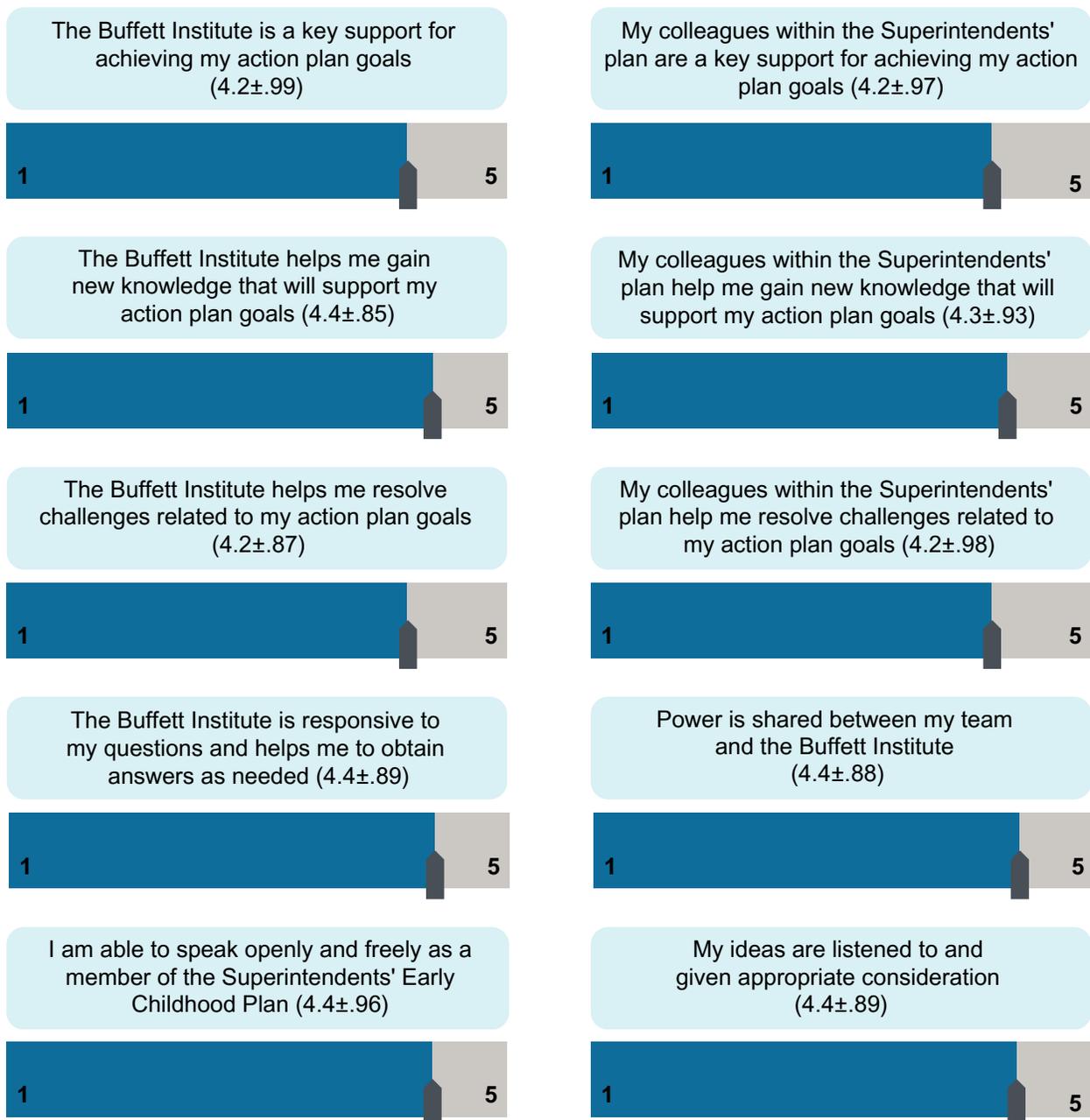


* 2024 Respondents only completed these survey items if they self-identified as a workgroup member or a participant in an Institute led Community of Practice (COP)

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Full Implementation Districts Survey Findings

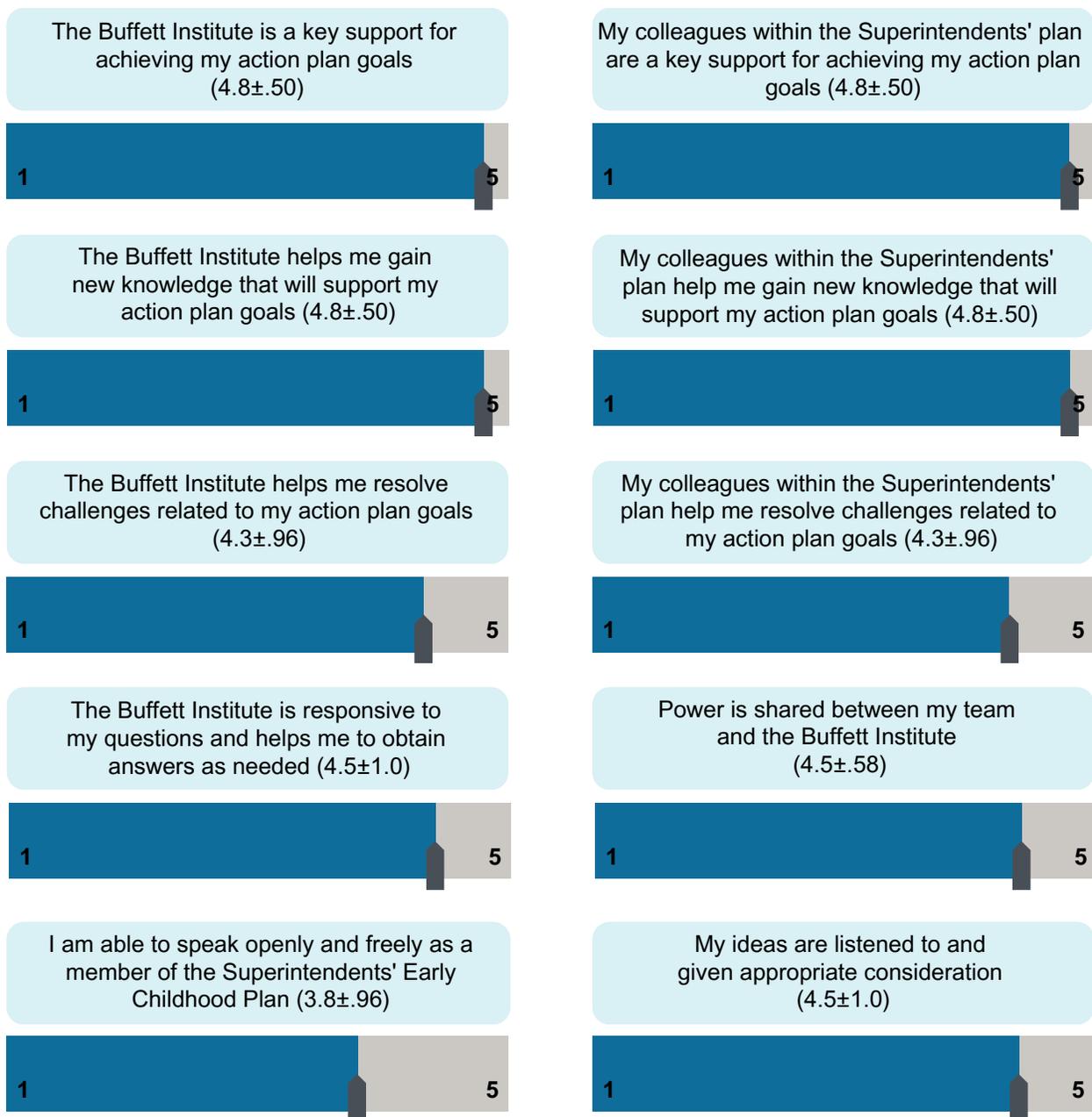
Plan stakeholders from full implementation districts (n=57) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest level of agreement was related to shared power between school teams and the Buffett Institute ($m=4.4\pm.88$). The lowest levels of agreement were noted in the following statements: Colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help to resolve challenges related to action plan goals ($4.2\pm.98$), and colleagues are a key support for achieving action plan goals ($4.2\pm.97$), although responses were still at the level of "somewhat agree." Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Customized Assistance District Survey Findings

Plan stakeholders from customized assistance districts (n=4) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the Institute ($4.8 \pm .50$) and colleagues ($4.8 \pm .50$) being key supports for achieving action plan goals, and the Institute ($4.8 \pm .50$) and colleagues ($4.8 \pm .50$) helping to gain new knowledge that supports action plan goals. The lowest level of agreement was noted in the following statement: I am able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan ($3.8 \pm .96$). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

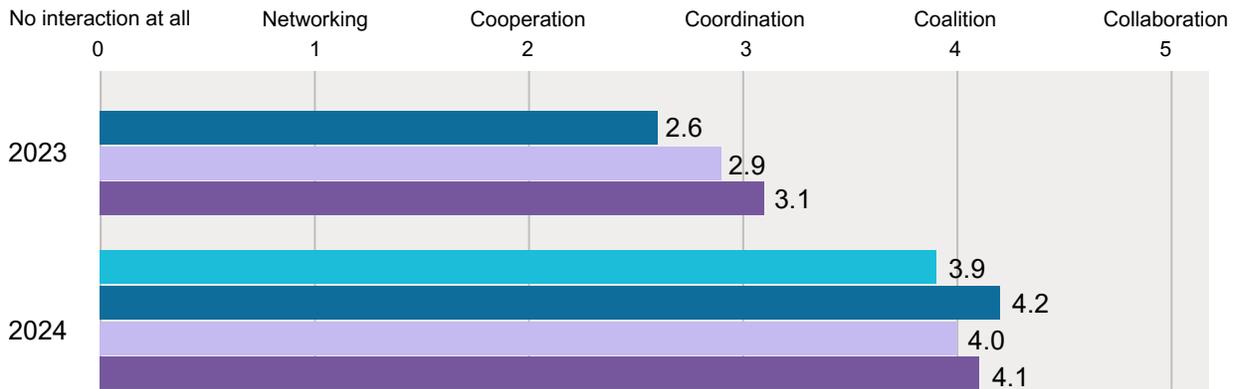


DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

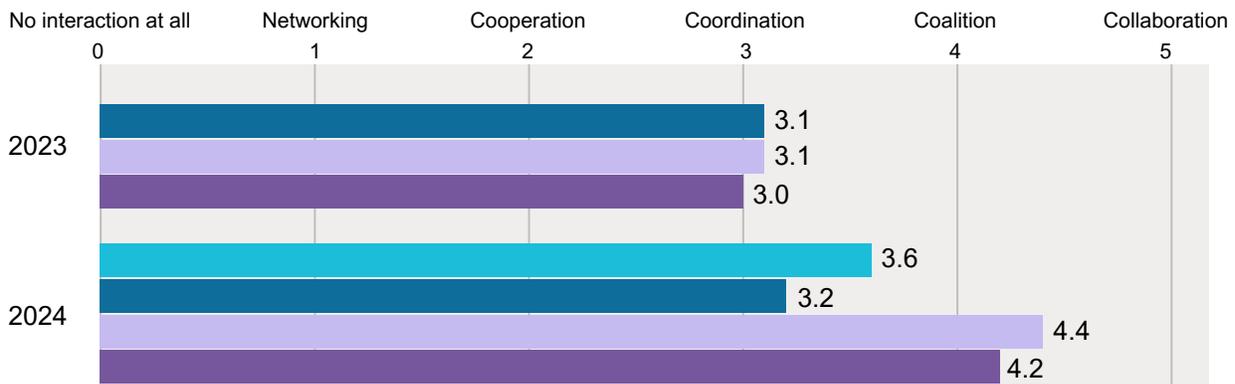
Comparison of Findings by Stakeholder Type

A comparison analysis for the level of collaboration between the Institute and all districts (full implementation and customized assistance) across action plan domains was completed across district stakeholder type. Responses were split into 4 groups: (1) **paraprofessional/educator (n=7)**, (2) **family facilitator/home visitor (n=5)**, (3) **school-based leader (n=5)**, and (4) **district-based leader (n=10)**. Only individuals who self-identified as engaged in the action planning process answered the collaboration scale questions. Mean findings were based on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all, 5=collaboration).

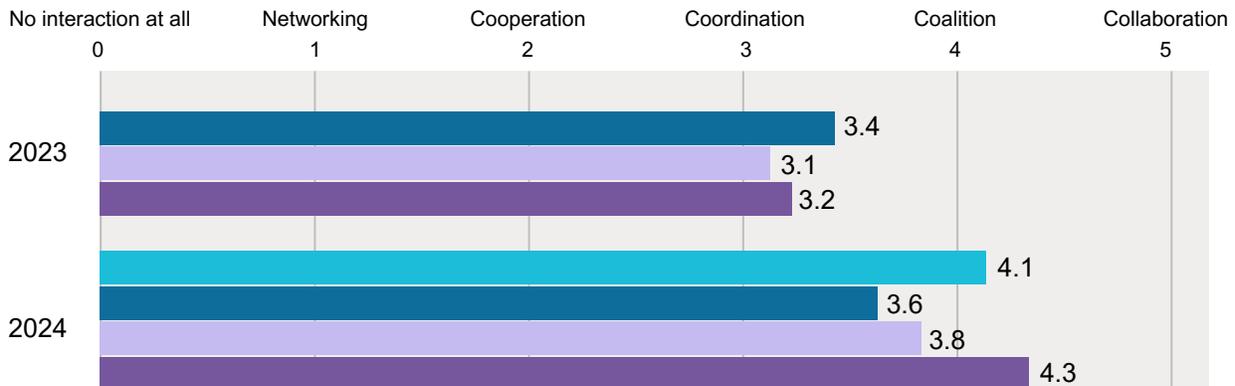
District Organization and Capacity



School Leadership

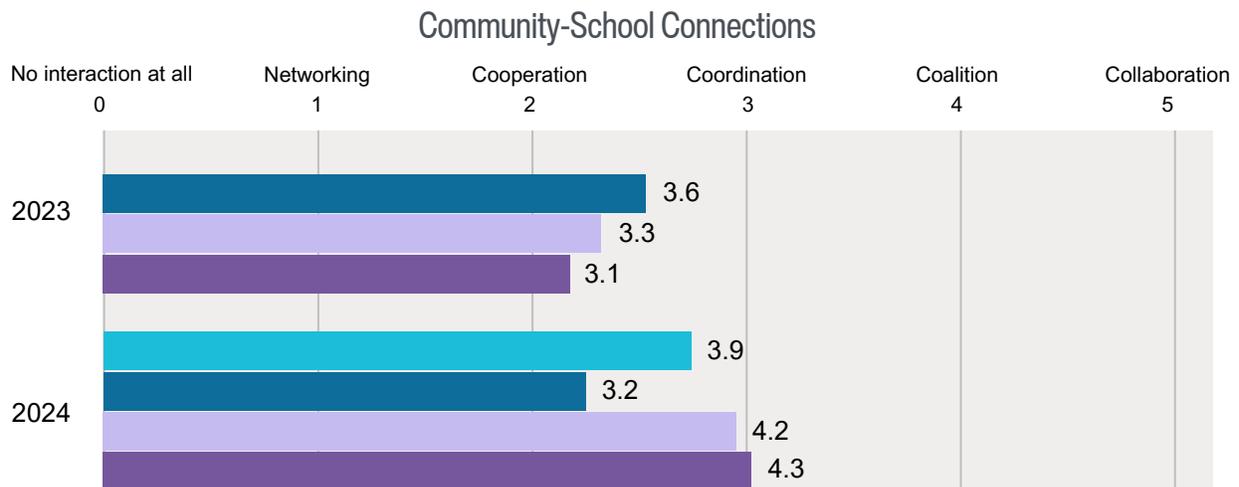
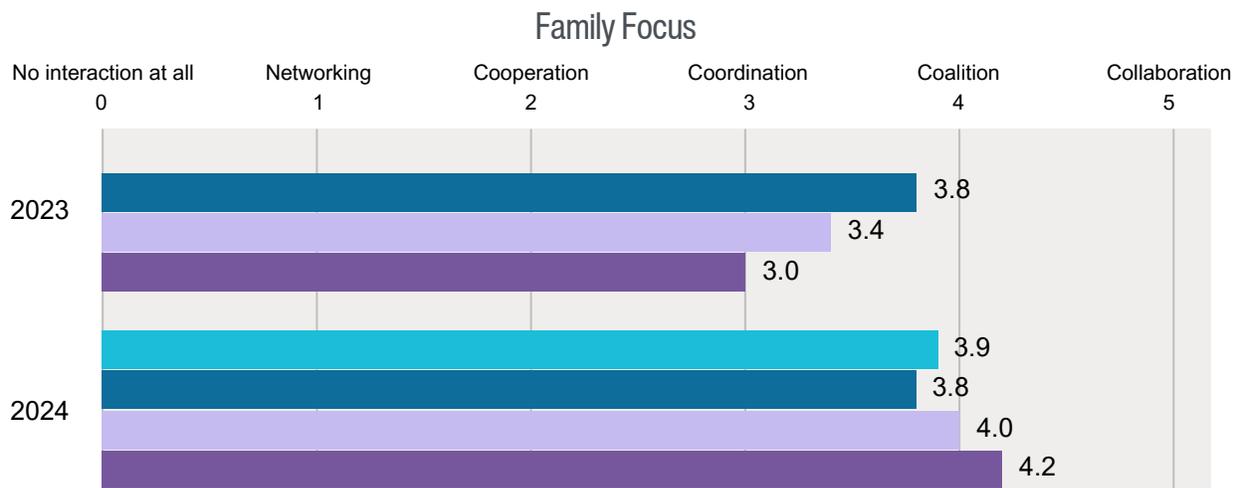
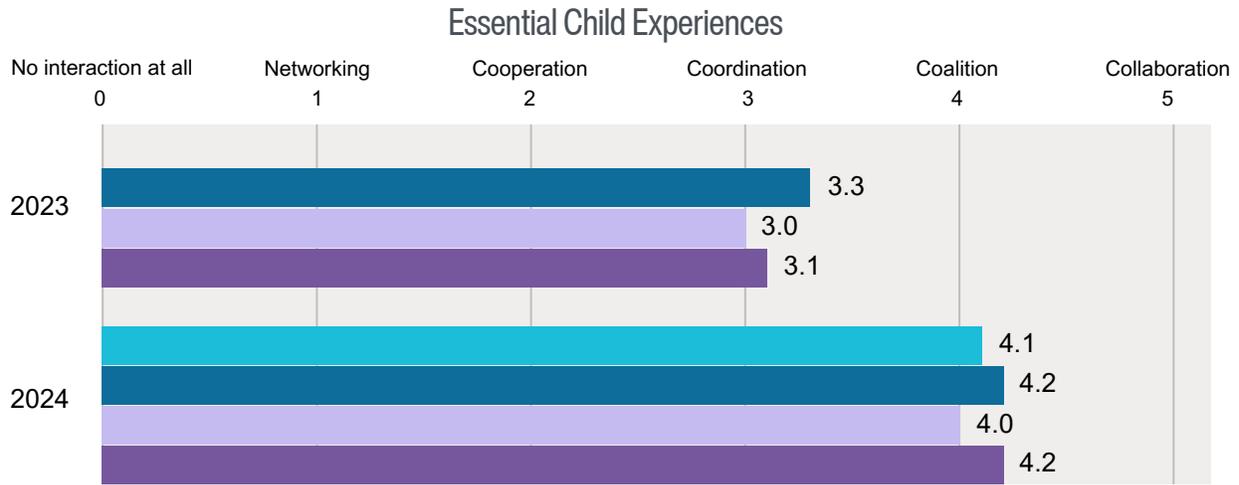


Foundations for Early Learning



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Comparison of Findings by Stakeholder Type



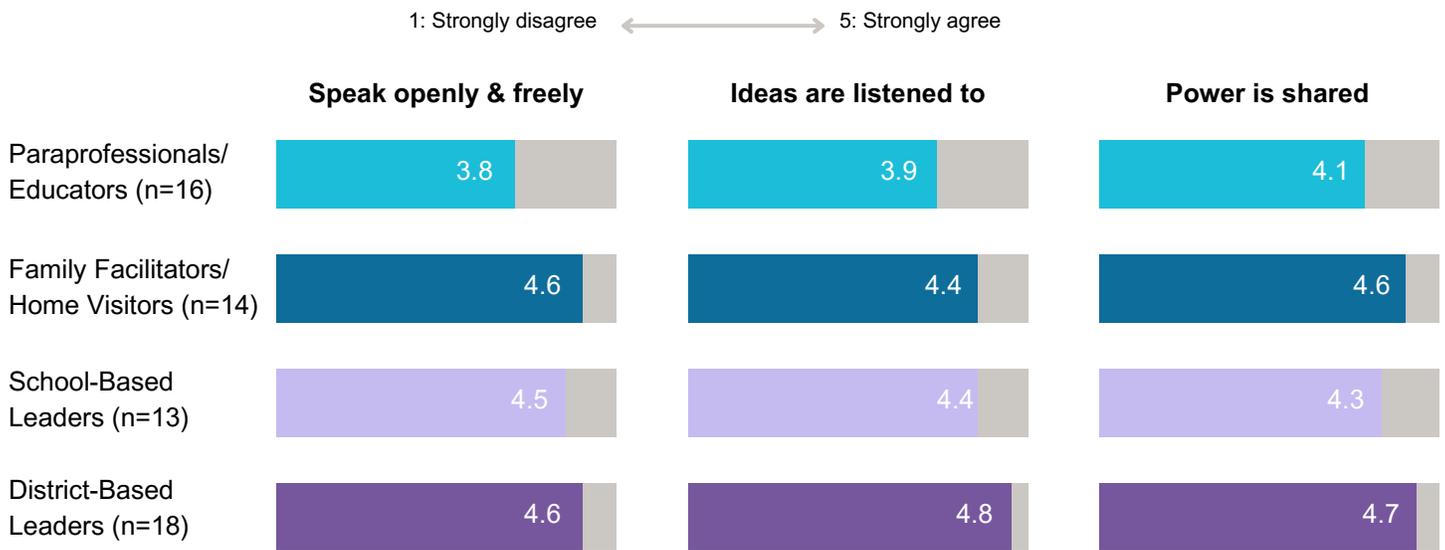
Paraprofessionals/Educators Family Facilitators/Home Visitors School-Based Leaders District-Based Leaders

Please note: Educators were not asked to complete this scale in 2023, and therefore there are no comparisons for educators from 2023 to 2024

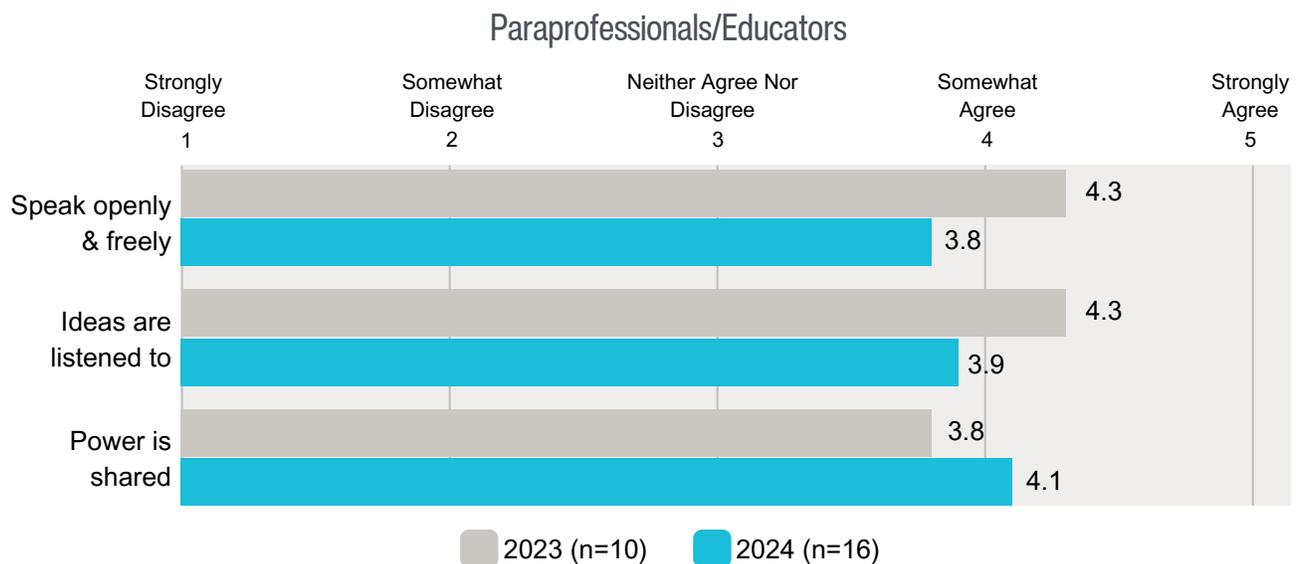
DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Comparison of Findings by Stakeholder Type

Findings are separated by district stakeholder type for the following: (1) School and District staff are able to speak openly and freely as members of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, (2) School and District staff ideas are listened to, and their ideas are given appropriate consideration, and (3) Power is shared between the Buffett Institute and School and District staff. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).



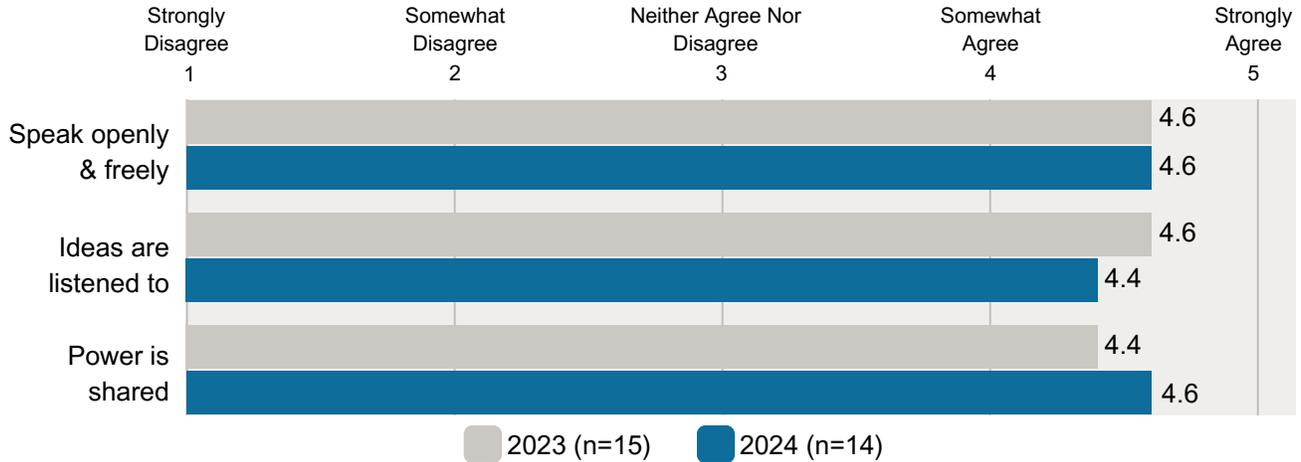
Level of Collaboration Findings by Stakeholder Type: 2023 & 2024



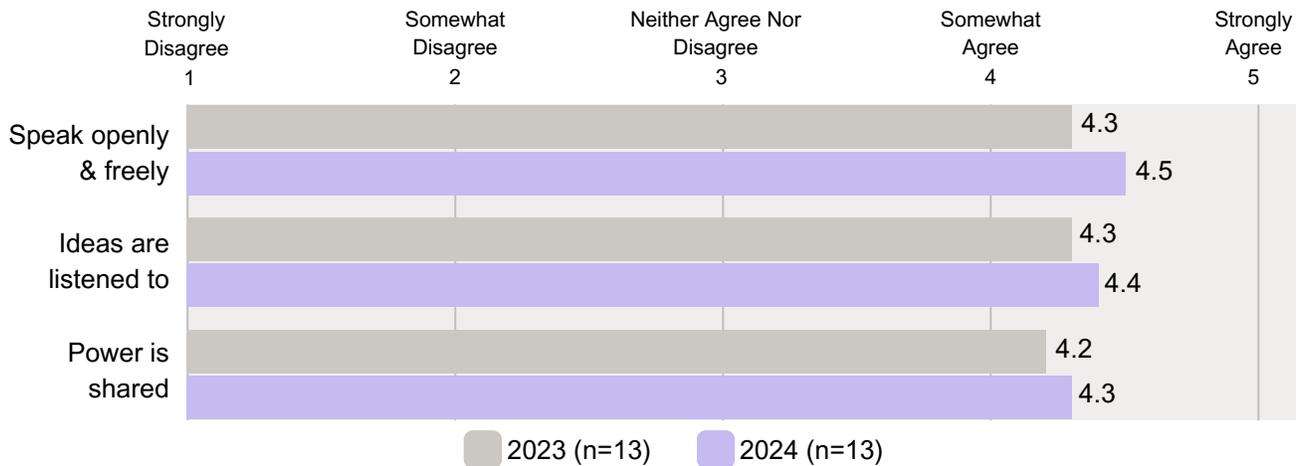
DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Level of Collaboration Findings by Stakeholder Type: 2023 & 2024

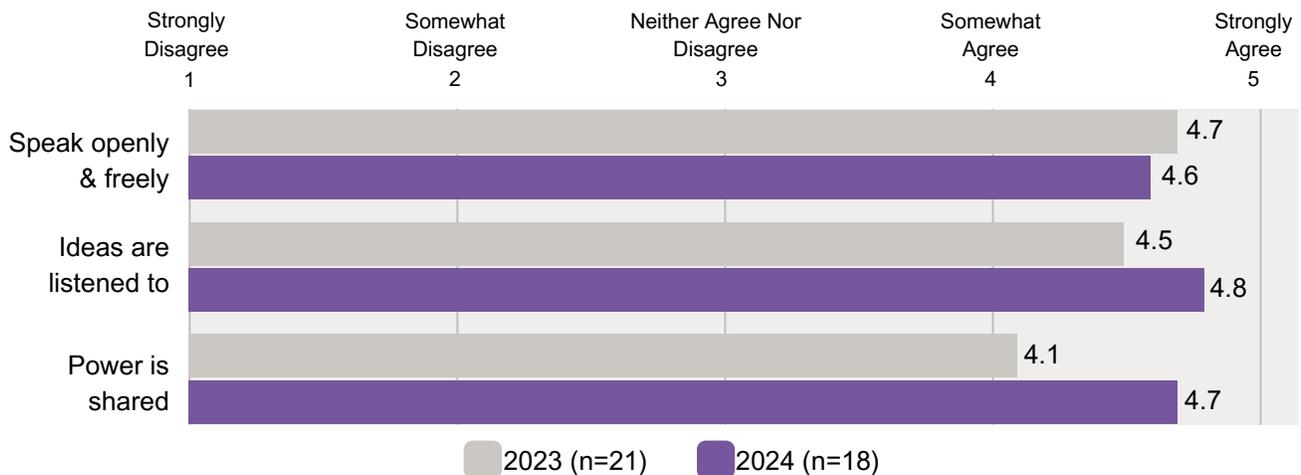
Family Facilitators/Home Visitors



School-Based Leaders



District-Based Leaders



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Institute staff members typically identified collaboration with districts involved in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan to fall within a level of "coalition" (i.e., share ideas, information, and resources; regular and focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making). Full implementation districts also typically perceived collaboration with Institute staff to fall within the "coalition" level.

When considering an agreement scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4= somewhat agree, and 5=strongly agree), Institute respondents "strongly agreed" that school and district staff are able to speak freely as members of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (mean=4.9), the Institute and districts effectively share power (mean=4.8), and that district staff ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration (mean=4.6). Full implementation districts typically agreed and identified a mean of 4.4 related to school and district staff being able to speak freely, a mean of 4.4 related to power being shared between the Institute and districts, and a mean of 4.4 related to district staff's ideas receiving appropriate consideration. Customized assistance districts "strongly agreed" that the Institute and districts share power (mean=4.5) and their ideas receive appropriate consideration (mean=4.5). Additionally, they "somewhat agreed" that district staff are able to speak freely (mean=3.8). Customized assistance districts "strongly agreed" that the Institute and districts share power (mean=4.5) and their ideas receive appropriate consideration (mean=4.5).



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Full implementation district staff and customized assistance staff typically “somewhat agreed” that Institute staff and colleagues are effective at resolving action plan goal-related challenges. Furthermore, respondents typically “somewhat agreed” or “strongly agreed” with all questions about receiving support and gaining new knowledge from Institute staff and their colleagues in the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan.

Specific to Action Plan domain constructs, Institute respondents identified Family Focus (mean=4.3) as allowing for the greatest level of collaboration between districts and the Buffett Institute. Full implementation districts identified Essential Child Experiences (mean=3.8) as the domain allowing for the greatest level of collaboration. Conversely, full Institute respondents reported the construct of Essential Child Experiences (mean=2.1) as the area with the lowest level of collaboration. Full implementation respondents tended to rate individual domains higher than Institute respondents (e.g., mean=3.6 vs. 3.0 for District Organization and Capacity). However, the overall collaboration rating given by Institute respondents was slightly higher than the rating by Full implementation district respondents (mean=3.7 vs. 3.6).

When considering findings by all district stakeholder types, paraprofessionals/educators reported collaborating with the Institute at the level of coordination (mean=3.1), family facilitators/home visitors reported a level of coordination-coalition (mean=3.5), and school- and district-based leaders reported a level of coalition (mean=3.8 vs. 4.0). When considering whether district staff’s ideas are listened to and considered, district-based leaders reported the highest level of agreement on the 5-point scale with mean responses of 4.8, while paraprofessionals/educators reported the lowest level of agreement (mean=3.9). All stakeholder types somewhat or strongly agreed district and school staff can speak freely, with district-based leaders and family facilitators/home visitors having the highest levels of agreement (means=4.6). Finally, all stakeholder types agreed power was shared between the Buffett Institute and school and district staff, with paraprofessionals and educators reporting the lowest level of agreement (mean=4.1) and district-based leaders reporting the highest (mean=4.7).



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative information was gathered from the open-ended survey questions within the District and Institute surveys. Open-ended survey questions focused on benefits, strengths, accomplishments, and challenges of engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. Qualitative data were analyzed via a process of immersion and crystallization using a deductive content analytic approach by a trained qualitative expert.

Greatest Benefits of Engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: [District Perspective](#)

There were three primary themes found related to benefits of engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan from the perspectives of district stakeholders. These included:

(1) Value of Collaboration and Networking

Several respondents emphasized the value of being able to connect and collaborate with professionals both in and outside of their district. Individuals reported appreciating sharing ideas and resources and attending collaborative meetings.

"I really enjoy being a part of this team. Buffett does a great job challenging us to think 'bigger.' It is also great to be able to network and see what other districts are focusing on." -District Leader

(2) Effective Professional Development and Support

Respondents identified an appreciation for the support and resources provided by BECI related to professional development. Examples included access to training, consultation/coaching, and expertise related to family engagement.

"Having someone to bounce ideas off of, someone who challenges our thinking to take us to a deeper level of knowledge helps to keep our thinking from being mundane and archaic." -3-5 year old educator

(3) Positive Impact on Students and Families

There was a sentiment among many respondents that a positive impact had been made related to closing the gap between home and school. Respondents felt their districts were doing a better job fostering trust between families and the school district and taking steps to address race- and income-based achievement gaps.

"I feel as if I and the program are making a difference in the community, providing opportunities to all children." -Community Facilitator

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Greatest Accomplishments of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: **District Perspective**

There were two primary themes found when participants were asked to identify the greatest accomplishment to date within the SECP.

(1) **Enhanced Support for Families**

Many respondents identified an accomplishment related to the domain of family and community partnerships. The expansion of home visiting services, more parent involvement, improved connections between school and home, and increased tangible resources to families were commonly described.

(2) **Increased Value of Early Childhood**

There was an agreement that the work of the SECP had led to an increased value placed on early childhood, especially in the years before a child enters Kindergarten. Respondents agreed that outreach opportunities to children 0-5 and professional development opportunities had increased as a result.

"Bringing to light the incredible importance of family engagement in education."

-Home Visitor

"The changes in culture within our district and pledge to be supportive to all children and families. The evening of the playing field for children coming from more financially disadvantaged homes."

-Family Facilitator

"The focus is on the students!"

-Principal

"The [SECP] has enhanced the work of each district and advocated for the importance of quality early childhood education throughout the metro area."

-District Leader

"Our renewed and continued focus on parent and family engagement."

-School-Based Leader

"The attempt to close the educational gap which exists within marginalized communities by reaching out to the community. The home visits create a school connection, which should make for an easier transition."

-Family Facilitator

"Responsive schools training and implementation to support social emotional learning."

-K-3 Educator

"Being able to see the child grow at school and continue the relationships that was started prior to even starting school."

-Family Facilitator

ENHANCED
SUPPORT FOR
FAMILIES

VALUE OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Greatest Accomplishments of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: *Institute Perspective*

There were two primary themes found when participants were asked to identify the greatest accomplishment to date within the SECP.

(1) **Value of Deliverables**

Several Institute staff members reported valuable deliverables arising from the SECP work. These included tangible documents, such as action plans and milestone documents, and professional development opportunities, such as Responsive Classroom and home visitation offerings.

(2) **Strategies for Progress are in Place**

Respondents noted that several effective strategies were in place to allow for progress toward the SECP mission. Examples provided included using more continuous improvement data to refine efforts as well as schools executing evidence-based practices.

Value of Deliverables

"I would consider the greatest accomplishment to date within the SECP is the structure of creating action plans. This allows us to create solutions with our districts and not for them. They are able to align their strategic plans' goals and create milestones based upon those goals to see the work through and measure its success."

-Institute Staff Member

Strategies for Progress are in Place

"Seeing schools adopt the Responsive Classroom practices and seeing a decrease in behaviors and office referrals."

-Institute Staff Member



INSTITUTE
PERSPECTIVE

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Greatest Strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: [District Perspective](#)

There were three primary themes found related to strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan.

(1) Collaboration and Partnerships

Respondents highlighted the ability to collaborate with Institute staff and other district colleagues as the primary strength of the SECP. The ability to build positive relationships within and outside of their school was frequently noted.

(2) Professional Development and Expertise

The Institute was commonly cited as an expert resource and was highly valued by district and school stakeholders. The Institute was also cited as a mechanism for receiving additional needed resources by providing funding and logistical support to obtain professional development opportunities.

(3) Shared Vision and Goals

Respondents emphasized the importance of a shared vision between the Institute and districts. Several reported improvements since the 2022-2023 academic year related to the alignment of Institute efforts and district frameworks. Respondents also reported the Institute and districts shared a common commitment to student readiness and family engagement.



DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Greatest Strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: *Institute Perspective*

Two primary themes related to the strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan from the Institute staff members' perspective were found.

(1) **Reciprocal Relationships**

Institute staff members identified the relationships between the Institute and district partners as productive and complementary. Several respondents noted positive relationships grounded in trust.

(2) **Shared Goals**

Respondents identified a mutual understanding of the areas of focus within the SECP between Institute and district stakeholders. Respondents also reported that these goals were grounded in the action plans, and the action plans were driving decision-making.

Reciprocal Relationships

"I feel part of their school, I am not just a guest. I am part of their school family."

-Institute Staff Member

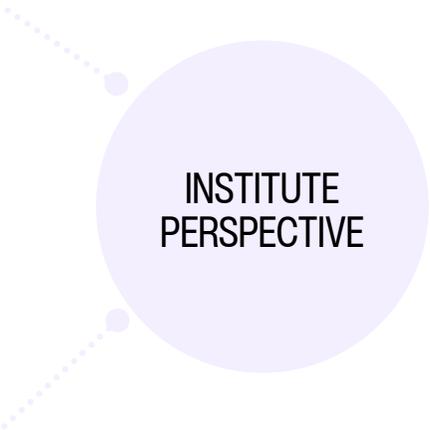
"The trust the Institute has established with members of the SECP—combined with our continued approach of shared leadership—are the strengths in our relationships."

-Institute Staff Member

Shared Goals

"Our group has begun to listen more to the people in the school communities and realizes that they know what is best for them in the work. We [are] supporting and allowing them to do the work. Also, the action plans and milestones drive the work!"

-Institute Staff Member



INSTITUTE
PERSPECTIVE

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Greatest Challenges of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: [District Perspective](#)

Respondents were asked to identify challenges to working with Institute staff, as well as any general challenges related to the work of the SECP. Specific to working with Institute staff, a majority of respondents reported no challenges and often cited the Institute staff as “a joy” or reported a sense of gratitude for staff members. Those few individuals who did report challenges in working with Institute staff cited issues such as follow-through on topics brought up in meetings or a lack of clarity regarding who serves in what role. When asked to describe general challenges of the work of the SECP, the following themes emerged:

(1) Time Constraints

A consistent issue that was identified was the lack of time to commit to the SECP. Frequency of formal meetings or just a general lack of time to accomplish set objectives was noted.

“The most challenging part is finding the time to incorporate and do everything we want.”

-District Leader

TIME CONSTRAINTS

“The time, but this has gotten much better and BECI has been very responsive to this need.”

-District Leader

“Time away from the building at COP [community of practice].”

-School-Based Leader

“The amount of meetings and schedule (leaving school is always hard).”

-School-Based Leader

(2) Clarity of Expectations

Individuals reported progress had been made related to clear expectations within the SECP. However, they still desired a better understanding of what is expected of their districts from an evidence-gathering and programmatic standpoint.

“The model has changed a few times. Feeling like data is the focus when changing systems and behaviors needs to happen first...I feel like we need to regroup around our monthly meeting structures and tasks.”

-District Leader

CLARITY OF EXPECTATIONS

“Not having been provided with proper training of curriculum to ensure my effectiveness.”

-Family Facilitator

“Trying to understand the different entities of the program.”

-Home Visitor

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Greatest Challenges of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: *Institute perspective*

Respondents were asked to identify challenges to working with schools within the SECP. Two primary themes emerged within this area.

(1) Time Constraints

Like district stakeholders, Institute team members identified that a lack of time hinders their ability to support schools and districts to the degree they would like.

“Teachers and staff are so overwhelmed with their current work—trying to find the balance of the work being ‘our’ work.”

-Institute Staff Member



TIME CONSTRAINTS

“I am not able to get out to all of my schools to support them with consistent coaching.”

-Institute Staff Member

“Finding time for district/school staff to be able to meet is a massive challenge.”

-Institute Staff Member

(2) Clarity of Expectations related to Roles and Evidence Gathering

Institute staff members noted a need for enhanced clarity of expectations related to their roles, the integration of work across the 3 action plan domains of focus, and evaluation needs.

“I believe the biggest challenge has been the evaluation piece of the work. All the districts are focusing in on different areas so it creates difficulty measuring effectiveness of the work.”

-Institute Staff Member



CLARITY OF EXPECTATIONS

“Learning and understanding my role within the work and it remaining consistent.”

-Institute Staff Member

“Common understanding internally and externally about how we tell our story through data.”

-Institute Staff Member

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

What Improvements Can Be Made to the SECP?: [District Perspective](#)

Several respondents did not have specific suggestions for ways to improve the SECP. However, those that did provide suggestions focused on two primary areas: (1) enhanced support to home visiting and family facilitation programs through strategies such as direct staff support, curriculum improvements, and district improvements, and (2) a continued need to find effective and efficient strategies to communicate goals and expectations of the SECP.

Enhanced Support for Home Visiting and Family Facilitation Programs

“More guidance to our family facilitator on how to better fulfill her role.”-Principal

“I would like to see improvement to the curriculum. Home visiting is often an art as opposed to a prescriptive science, so more freedom and latitude within Growing Great Kids or perhaps a shift in curriculum would be appreciated in this area.” -Home Visitor

“Strongly encourage district HR and admin to restructure home visitor position to better reflect the actual work being done.” -Home Visitor

“Being clear about what BECI staff expectations are and how that relates to what is needed and expected in the school. Define the line between the tasks for BECI and staffing at the school. Present the staff to the school, outline BECI staff role, and outline how they can and cannot be utilized within the school.” -Family Facilitator

Effective and Efficient Communication of Goals and Expectations

“Accountability, collaboration between what the plan is and how to effectively carry such a plan with such a shortage in staff at the school.” -Family Facilitator

“Opportunities to check in between the work group meetings with Buffett Staff, especially if meetings are missed.” - District Leader

“Share more reports about progress and meeting goals.”- Home Visitor

“We streamlined the number of meetings for the work group. We need to do the same for the principals. They are in a lot of meetings.” -District Leader

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

What Improvements Can Be Made to the SECP?: [Institute Perspective](#)

Many respondents did not have specific suggestions for ways to improve the SECP. Those who did focused on two areas: enhanced engagement with teachers and schools and clear expectations both internally and externally.

Enhanced Engagement with Teachers and Schools

“Continued movement towards increasing teacher’s voice and engagement in the SECP.”

- Institute Staff Member

“I would like to see the Institute staff at the schools for more than just team meetings. I feel they would get a better idea of the culture of the school if they periodically visit to see socialization groups, drop in and plays, classroom events, etc. I feel that the administrator’s presence needs to be felt in the schools along with the program specialists.”- Institute Staff Member

Clear Expectations Internally and Externally

“The program team is undergoing many internal transitions at this time. We need to work more effectively as a unit so that our work with the districts will improve.” - Institute Staff Member

“I think being consistent and clear with our communication. I think set meeting dates for the year over the summer would be helpful to staff in the schools.”- Institute Staff Member

Is There Anything Else You Would Like to Share?: [Institute Perspective](#)

When asked if respondents had anything else to add regarding their experience with the SECP, several individuals provided positive praise regarding the program itself.

“It has been great working with the program team to support the work of the Superintendents’ plan.”-Institute Staff Member

“I think this plan is a great one and many children and families are going to benefit for years to come from this work.” -Institute Staff Member

PD FOR ALL FINDINGS

In the Spring of 2024, Evaluators within the Munroe Meyer Institute conducted an external evaluation of the 2023-2024 PD for All series. The primary objective of the evaluation was to determine the series' effectiveness in providing early childhood professionals with new knowledge and practical strategies to implement in their classrooms. A total of 89 participant surveys were completed across three events. Survey respondents included educators/providers (n=42), child care directors (n=12), assistant teachers/paraprofessionals (n=7), district-based administrators (n=7), home visitors (n=5), family facilitators/community facilitators (n=4), instructional facilitators (n=3), community members (n=2), university faculty/staff (n=1). Six participants did not disclose their employment type (n=6).

The 2023-2024 PD for All theme was "Nurturing Positive Adult-Child Interactions when Behaviors Challenge Us." Three sessions were offered to early childhood professionals on topics related to the theme, with the goal that participants would develop a greater understanding of external factors that impact children's behavior and acquire new strategies for assessing age-appropriate child development and offering developmentally appropriate support.

Events were structured as town hall meetings, with opportunities for participants to submit questions for the speakers. Buffett Early Childhood Institute hosted the events, with support from the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. Total attendance for PD for All was 150 participants, not including Institute staff or speakers.

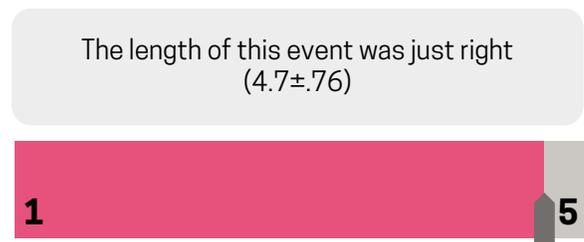
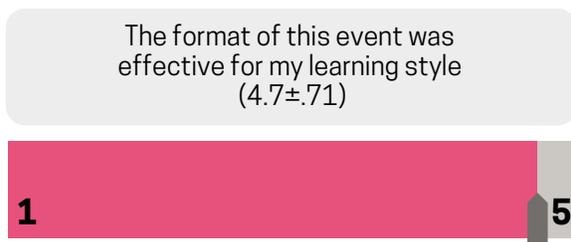
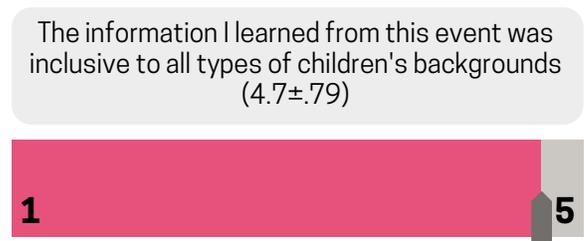
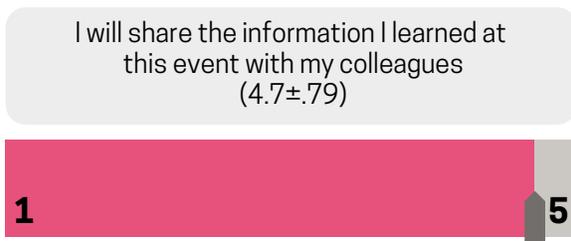
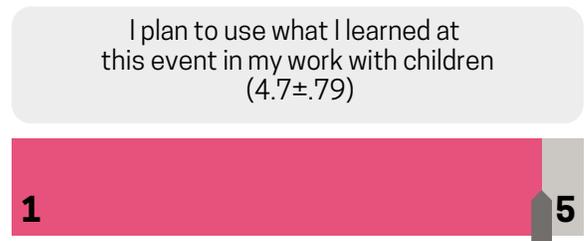
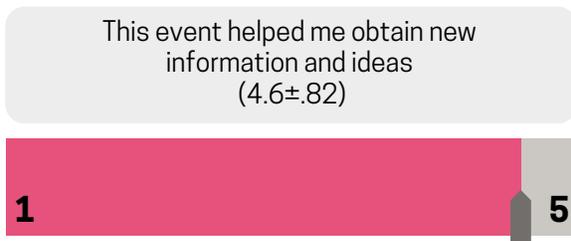
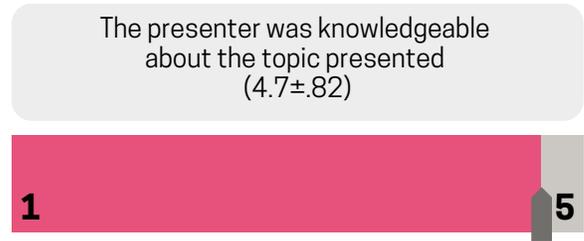
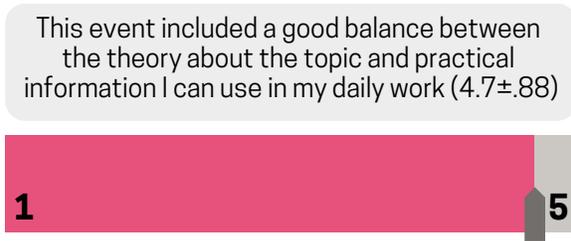
Session 1 February 29, 2024	Session 2 April 2, 2024	Session 3 May 7, 2024
An Evening with Tabatha Rosproy: Nurturing Positive Adult-Child Interactions when Behaviors Challenge Us	Working Together to Support Young Children: An Evening With Community Members	One night with Carolina Cajica: Encouraging Positive Interactions Between Adults and Children when Behaviors Challenge Us
Presented in English	Presented in English, with simultaneous Spanish interpretation	Presented in Spanish
Attendance: 66 early childhood professionals, 11 Institute staff, 1 speaker	Attendance: 51 early childhood professionals, 12 Institute staff, 6 speakers	Attendance: 33 early childhood professionals, 7 Institute staff, 1 speaker

EVALUATION OF THIS YEAR'S PD FOR ALL INCLUDED:

- Post-event surveys were utilized for continuous improvement and to assess program attendee's knowledge changes
- Session attendance data was utilized to assess programmatic reach

PD FOR ALL OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS

Participants at PD for All events (n=89) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements related to the events they attended. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Most statements shared a mean agreement level of 4.7, which indicated that participants strongly agreed. The lowest level of agreement was found in the statement, "This event helped me obtain new information and ideas" (m=4.6±.82). Aggregated mean and standard deviation findings for the PD for All series are reported below.

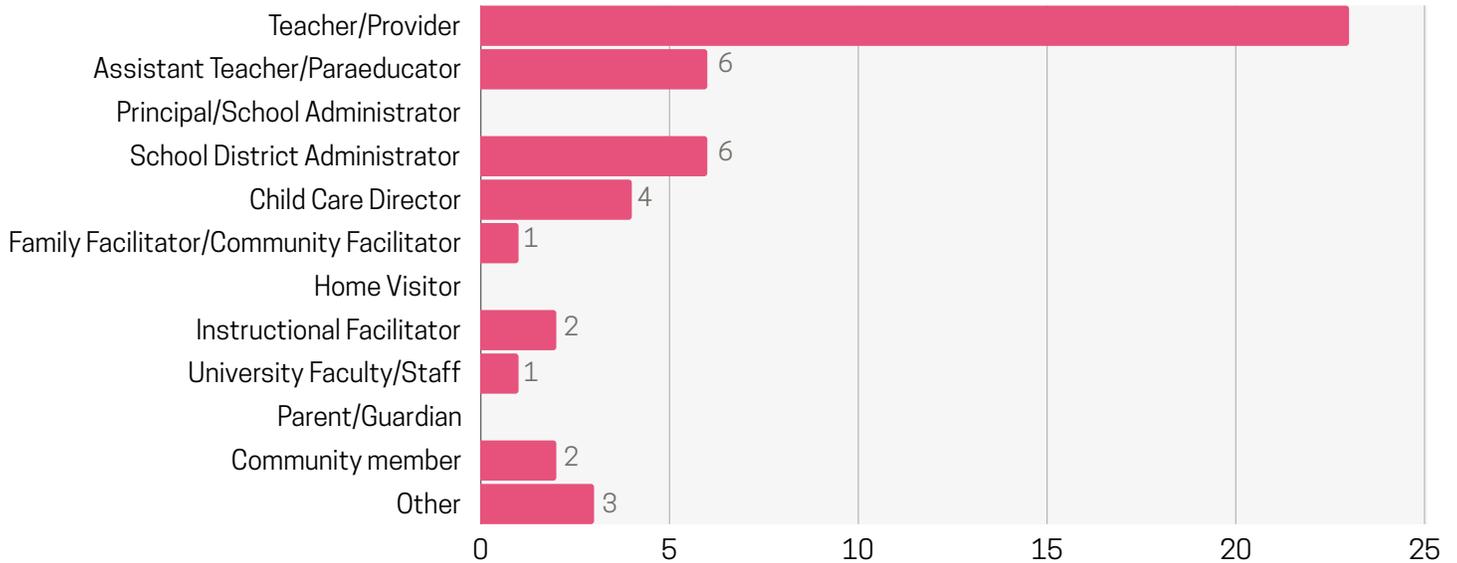


SESSION 1 INFORMATION

“AN EVENING WITH TABATHA ROSPROY,” FEBRUARY 29, 2024

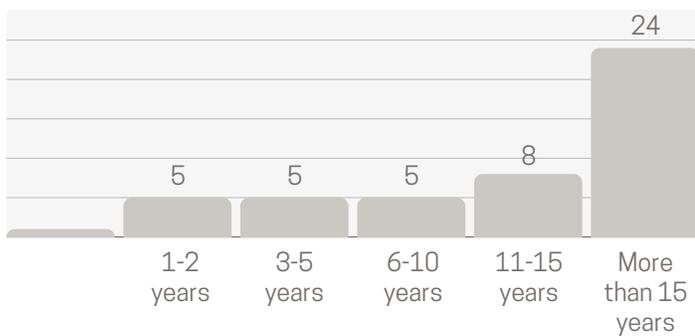
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY ROLE

Participants (n=48) were asked to identify the capacity in which they serve young children. It was most common for survey participants to identify as teachers/providers (47.9%), assistant teachers/paraeducators (12.5%), or school district administrators (12.5%).

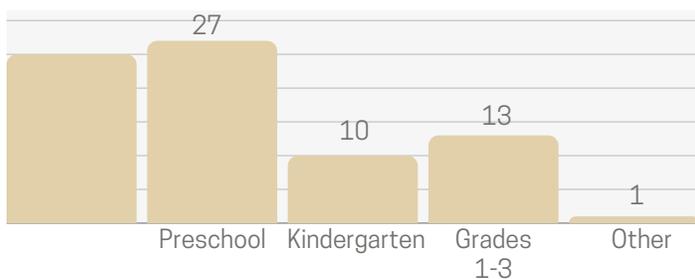


YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

More than half of respondents reported more than 15 years of experience working with early childhood education (57.1%).



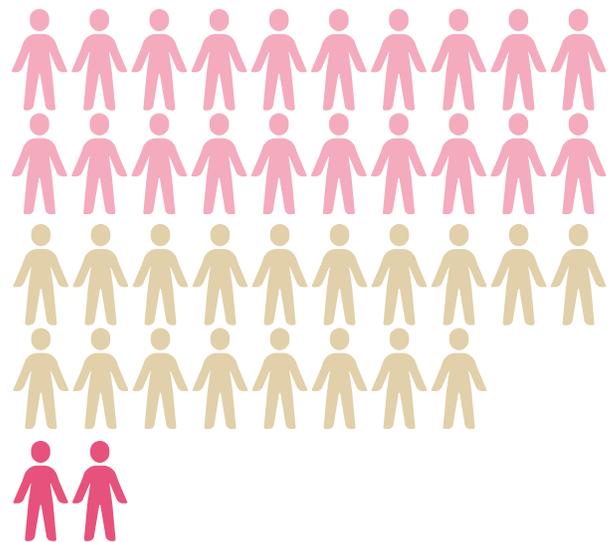
CHILD AGES SUPPORTED*



*Survey participants could select multiple answers.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

Participants (n=42) who worked with young children mostly identified as working for community-based early childhood programs (47.6%) or school-based programs (42.9%).



- Community-based program
- School-based program
- Family child care home

PARTICIPANT SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 1

Participants (n=48) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the presenter's knowledge on the topic ($m=4.8\pm.73$) and participants' plans to share what they learned with colleagues ($m=4.8\pm.67$). The lowest levels of agreement were noted in the statements regarding the provision of new information and ideas ($4.6\pm.71$), and inclusivity of information for all types of children's backgrounds ($4.6\pm.84$). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.



EDUCATOR/PARAEDUCATOR SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 1

Educators and paraprofessionals (n=29) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the presenter's knowledge on the topic (m=4.9±.26) and participants' plans to use what they learned in their work with children (m=4.9±.36). The lowest levels of agreement were noted in the statements regarding the presentation's balance of theory and practical information (4.7±.80), the provision of new information and ideas (4.7±.46), and the fit between program format and participant learning styles (4.7±.46). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

This event included a good balance between the theory about the topic and practical information I can use in my daily work (4.7±.80)



The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.9±.26)



This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.7±.46)



I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.9±.36)



I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.8±.41)



The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.8±.41)



The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.7±.46)

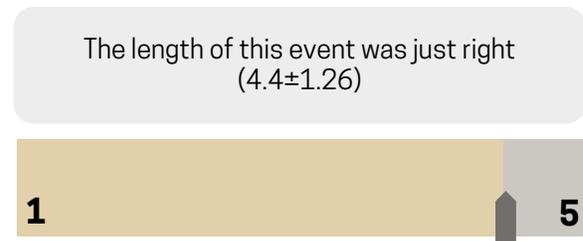
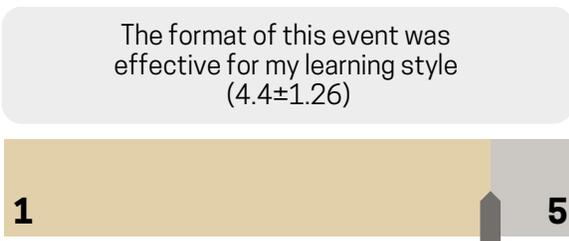
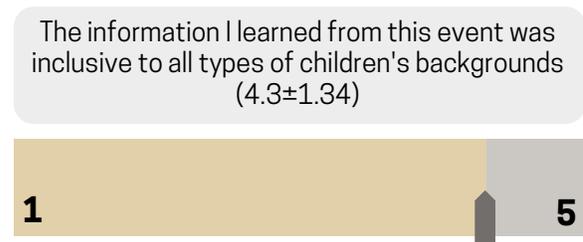
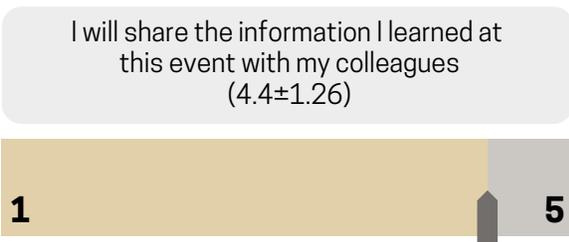
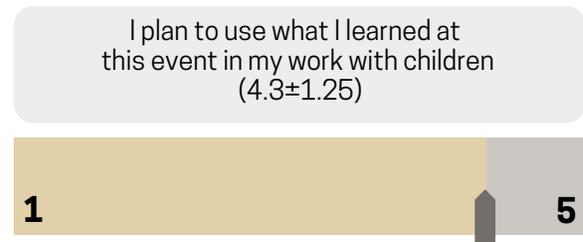
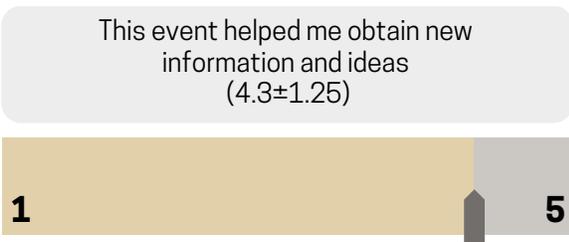
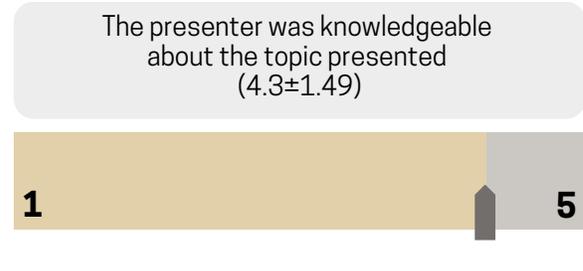
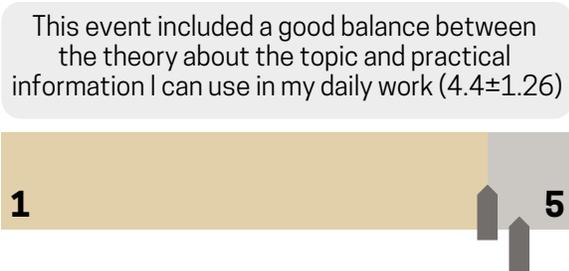


The length of this event was just right (4.8±.44)



ADMINISTRATOR/DIRECTOR SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 1

School administrators and center directors (n=10) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). On average, administrators and directors agreed with all statements, with a range of 0.1 between the highest and lowest levels of agreement. Statements with the highest levels of agreement included “I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (m=4.4±1.26) and “The length of this event was just right” (m= 4.4±1.26). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

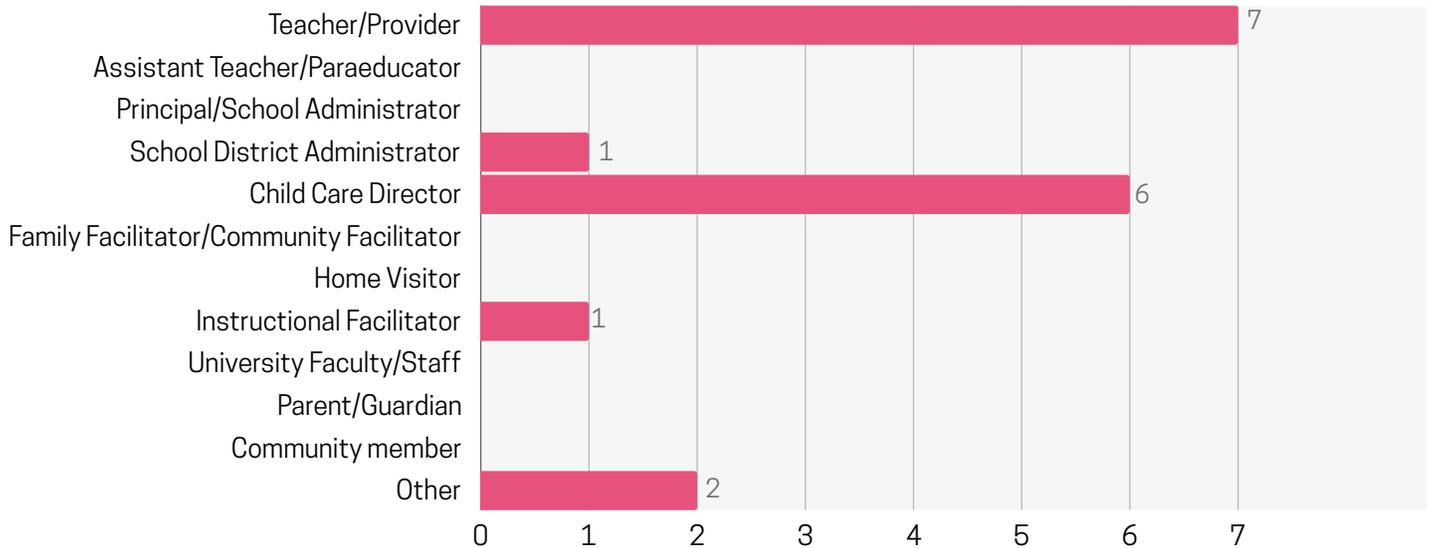


SESSION 2 INFORMATION

“WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN:
AN EVENING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS,” APRIL 2, 2024

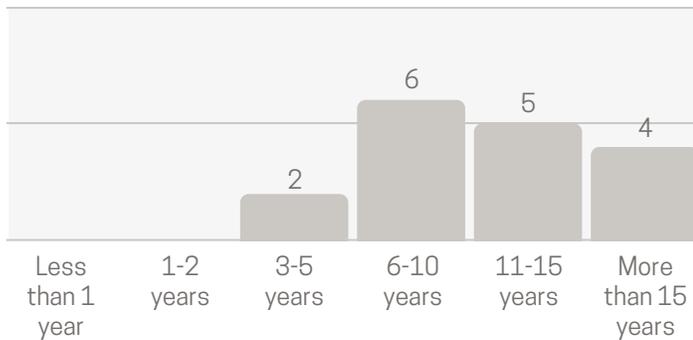
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY ROLE

Participants (n=17) were asked to identify the capacity in which they serve young children. It was most common for survey participants to identify as teachers/providers (41.2%) or child care directors (35.3%).



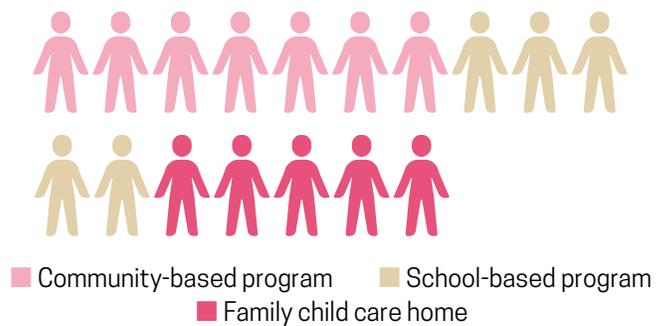
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Most respondents reported 6 or more years of experience working with early childhood education (88.2%).

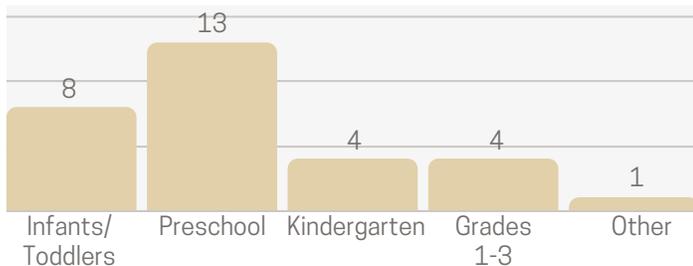


EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

Participants (n=15) represented a mix of community-based early childhood programs (46.7%), school-based programs (33.3%), and family child care homes (33.3%)



CHILD AGES SUPPORTED*



*Survey participants could select multiple answers.

PARTICIPANT SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 2

Participants (n=17) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the event's balance between theory and practical information ($m=4.7\pm.46$) and the panel's knowledge about the topic ($m=4.7\pm.97$). The lowest level of agreement was shared by the remaining statements, including "I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues" ($4.5\pm.98$), and "I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children" ($4.5\pm.98$). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.



EDUCATOR/PARAEDUCATOR SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 2

Educators and paraprofessionals (n=7) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the panel's knowledge on the topic (m=4.9±.35) and the event length being right for attendees (m=4.9±.35). The lowest levels of agreement were noted in the statements regarding the provision of new information and ideas (4.6±.49), and the fit between program format and participant learning styles (4.6±.49). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

This event included a good balance between the theory about the topic and practical information I can use in my daily work (4.7±.45)



The panel was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.9±.35)



This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.6±.49)



I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.7±.45)



I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.7±.45)



The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.7±.45)



The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.6±.49)

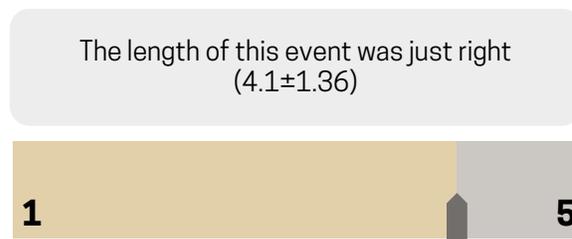
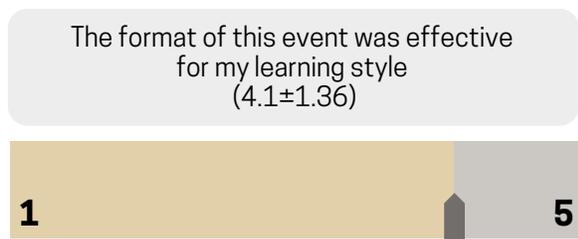
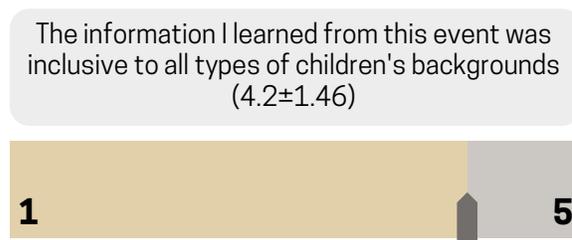
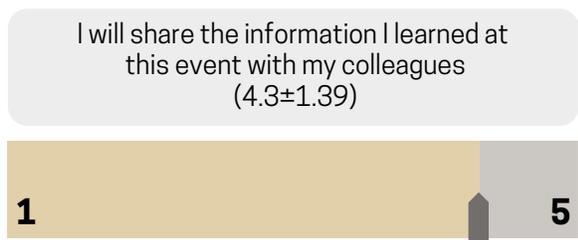
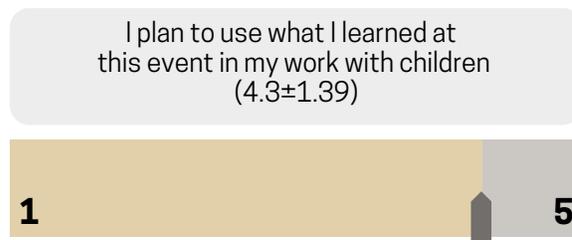
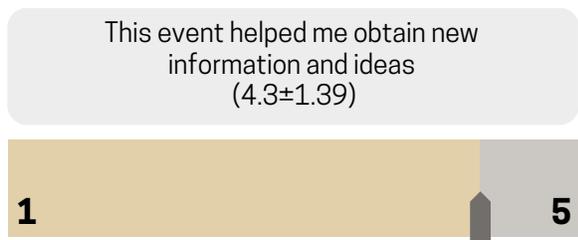
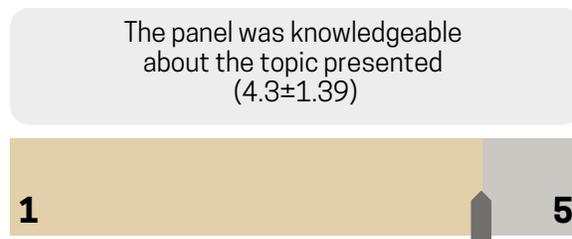
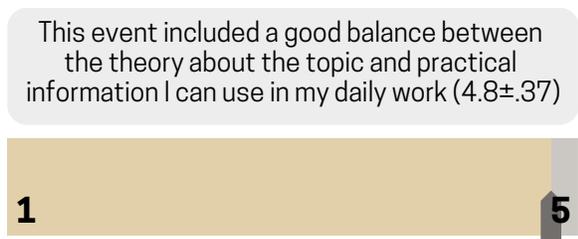


The length of this event was just right (4.9±.35)



ADMINISTRATOR/DIRECTOR SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 2

School administrators and center directors (n=7) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The highest level of agreement was noted for the statement regarding the event's balance between theory and practical information (m=4.8±.37). The lowest levels of agreement regarded the statements "The format of this event was effective for my learning style" (m=4.1±1.46) and "The length of the event is just right" (m=4.1±.37). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

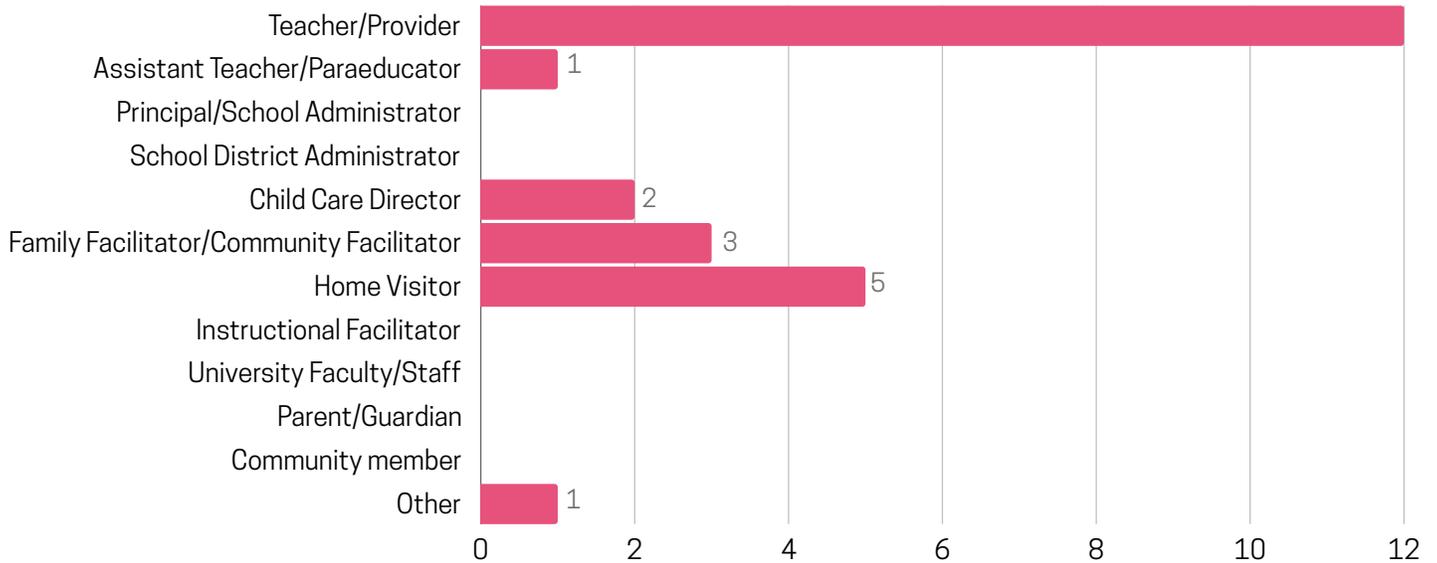


SESSION 3 INFORMATION

“AN EVENING WITH CAROLINA CAJICA,” MAY 7, 2024

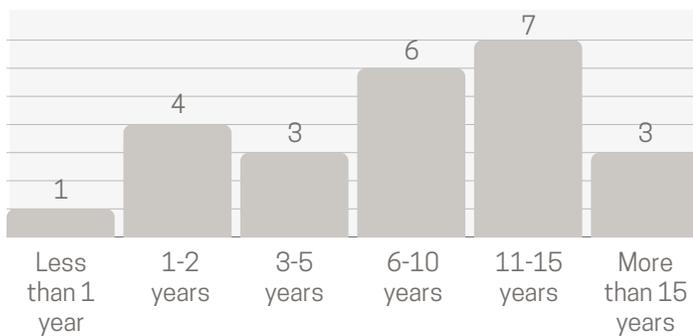
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY ROLE

Participants (n=24) were asked to identify the capacity in which they serve young children. It was most common for survey participants to identify as teachers/providers (50%), home visitors (20.8%), or family facilitators/community facilitators (12.5%).



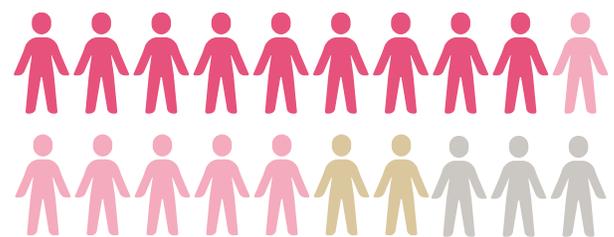
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Participants represented a range of experience, with 33.3% reporting they were in their first five years of early childhood education.

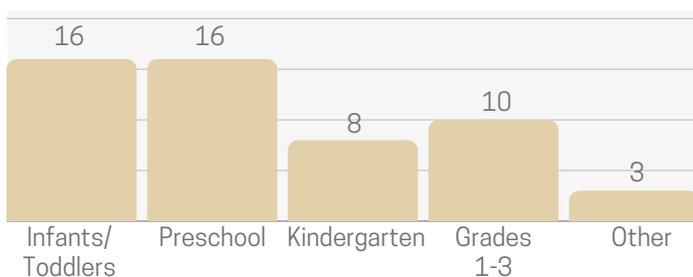


EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

Participants (n=20) who worked with young children mostly identified as working in family child care homes (45%) or community-based programs (30%).



CHILD AGES SUPPORTED*



■ Family child care home ■ School-based program
■ Community-based program ■ Other

*Survey participants could select multiple answers.

PARTICIPANT SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 3

Participants (n=24) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were noted in the statements about the information's inclusivity of children from all backgrounds (m=4.9±.34) and the effectiveness of the presentation format (m=4.8±.37). The lowest levels of agreement were noted in the statements regarding the balance between theory and practical information (4.6±1.14) and the presenter's knowledge about the topic (4.6±.88). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

This event included a good balance between the theory about the topic and practical information I can use in my daily work (4.6±1.14)



The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.6±.88)



This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.7±.92)



I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.7±.86)



I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.7±.86)



The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.9±.34)



The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.8±.37)



The length of this event was just right (4.7±.70)



EDUCATOR/PARAEDUCATOR SURVEY FINDINGS: SESSION 3

Educators and Paraprofessionals (n=13) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Five statements shared the highest agreement level of 4.9, indicating that most educators and paraprofessionals selected “strongly agree.” These included the presenter’s knowledge on the topic (4.9±.28) and respondent’s plans to share the information with colleagues (4.9±.28). The lowest levels of agreement were found in statements regarding appropriate event length (4.6±.87) and participants obtaining new information and ideas from the event (4.8±.28). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

This event included a good balance between the theory about the topic and practical information I can use in my daily work (4.9±.38)

1

5

The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.9±.28)

1

5

This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.8±.28)

1

5

I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.9±.28)

1

5

I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.9±.28)

1

5

The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.9±.38)

1

5

The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.9±.32)

1

5

The length of this event was just right (4.6±.87)

1

5

SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Educators and paraprofessionals comprised more than half of PD for All attendees (n=49, 55.1%), with 42 participants identifying as teachers/providers and 7 identifying as assistant teachers/paraprofessionals. About one-fifth of participants identified as district administrators or center directors (n=19, 21.3%), and 10.1% of participants identified as home visitors or family facilitators (n=9). Participants who worked with young children (n=77) most commonly worked in community-based child care programs (n=33, 42.9%), followed by school-based programs (n=25, 32.5%) and family child care homes (n=15, 19.5%). “An Evening with Carolina Cajica,” which was presented in Spanish, drew more than half of all PD for All survey participants who identified as home-based providers (n=9, 60%). It was most common for participants to report 15 or more years of experience in early childhood education (n=31, 34.8%), followed by those with 11-15 years of experience (n=20, 22.5%), 6-10 years (n=17, 19.1%). Participants with 5 years of experience or less accounted for less than one-fourth of attendees (n=21, 23.6%), with 2 participants (2.2%) reporting less than one year of experience.

When considering an agreement scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=somewhat agree, and 5=strongly agree), participants (n=89) tended to view the PD for All series favorably. Mean agreement levels for the series ranging from 4.6 to 4.7, indicating that participants “strongly agreed” with all statements. Slightly larger ranges were found within the participant responses for individual events, as mean agreement levels ranged from 4.6 to 4.8 for session 1, 4.5 to 4.7 for session 2, and 4.6 to 4.9 for session 3. Mean agreement levels for all statements regarding individual PD for All sessions indicated somewhat to strong agreement or strong agreement by participants. The statement, “The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds”, had the widest range of agreement, with the lowest level of agreement (m=4.5) found in session 2, “Working Together to Support Young Children: An Evening with Community Members,” and the highest level (m=4.9) found in session 3, “An Evening with Carolina Cajica.”

Educator/paraprofessional participants' (n=49) mean agreement levels were the same or higher than those of the full participant group. Their mean levels of agreement ranged from 4.7 to 4.9 and indicated strong agreement for all statements. Educators/paraprofessionals most strongly agreed that the presenter was knowledgeable about the topic (m=4.9) and that they planned to use what they learned in their work with children (m=4.9). The lowest levels of agreement were found in the statements regarding the formats (m=4.7) and lengths (m=4.7) of events.

Administrator/center director participants' (n=19) mean agreement levels were consistently lower than those of the full participant group. Their levels of agreement ranged from 4.2 to 4.4 and indicated that respondents somewhat agreed with all statements. Six statements shared the highest agreement level of 4.4, including statements regarding their plans to use the information in their work with children and plans to share information with colleagues. The lowest levels of agreement were found in the statements regarding presenters' knowledge on the topics presented (m=4.2) and if the presented information was inclusive of children from all types of backgrounds (m=4.7).

SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Qualitative information was gathered from the open-ended survey questions for each session. Open-ended survey questions focused on what participants found most helpful and how future professional development opportunities could better meet their needs. Qualitative data were analyzed via a deductive approach.

There were three primary themes found related to participant's learning and ideas for future professional development opportunities. These included:

(1) Including diverse perspectives and backgrounds

Several respondents complimented the range of voices they heard at the sessions, particularly during session 2's panel discussion. Participants also appreciated that two of the sessions included information in Spanish and asked that the Institute continue offering Spanish-language programming for early childhood professionals.

“Toda la información y sobre todo que está en mi idioma natal así puedo absorber toda la información importante.” “All the information and especially that it is in my native language so I can absorb all the important information.” - Teacher/Provider

“The amazing dialogue that all panel members shared and insights into their perspectives as parents and educators [was most helpful].” -Instructional Facilitator

(2) Usefulness of information and strategies

Respondents appreciated getting information that they could apply in classrooms, including background on Conscious Discipline, and strategies for building relationships with children and communicating with families. Several respondents connected to the message, “There are no bad kids,” and noted the importance of understanding developmental stages and executive state.

“What a breath of fresh air this PD was. Conscious Discipline is great information. I get tired of hearing about Pyramid Model. Would love more CD training.” -Teacher/Provider

“Darme cuenta que no existen niños malos si no están en el proceso de aprendizaje y necesitan nuestra ayuda como educadores de la mano con la comunicación de la familia.” “Realizing that there are no bad children if they are not in the learning process and need our help as educators along with family communication.” -Teacher/Provider

(3) Interest in revisiting topics and engaging more

Many respondents wanted to learn more about the topics from the 2023-2024 PD for All Series, hear from the speakers again, and receive more materials and strategies on behavior and emotional regulation. Some asked for future professional development opportunities to include more time for participants to ask questions and engage with the presenters.

“[Future opportunities should] provide with new ideas and strategies to use within the classroom and how to regulate emotions and calm down behaviors.” - Teacher/Provider

DEFINITIONS & REFERENCES

Definitions

ChildPlus: The database used by the Institute to track participant engagement across programmatic activities.

earlyReading Assessment (TM): A norm-referenced screening test designed to identify reading problems.

FastBridge: An assessment tool designed to identify students' academic and social-emotional behavior needs

MTSS: Multi-tiered systems of support is a framework used by schools to identify immediate intervention for students with academic and behavioral needs.

MAP Assessment: A child assessment tool utilized by districts to measure achievement and growth in K-12 math, reading, language usage and science.

NAESP Survey: The National Association of Elementary School Principals survey is designed to assess various competencies focused on advocacy and support for elementary-level principals.

PD: Professional Development

Responsive Classroom: A student-centered approach to teaching and discipline to create safe and engaging classroom communities.

SAEBRS: The Social, Academic and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener is a norm-referenced tool to identify children at risk for social-emotional behavior problems.

School as Hub: A school identified by its district due to unique risk factors. The school serves as a "hub" for complex learning systems, connecting children and families to resources within and beyond school walls.

SECP: Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

Teaching Strategies GOLD (TM): An assessment tool that measures the knowledge, skills and behavior that are predictive of school success. These include but are not limited to social emotional development, literacy and mathematics.

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The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

EVALUATION REPORT

2024-2025



Acknowledgements

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP) is an initiative of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute in collaboration with the 11 School District Superintendents and the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The annual evaluation of the SECP is conducted by the Munroe Meyer Institute (MMI) within the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) under contract with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. The following report represents MMI's full and comprehensive evaluation of programmatic activities that took place during the 2024-2025 academic year.

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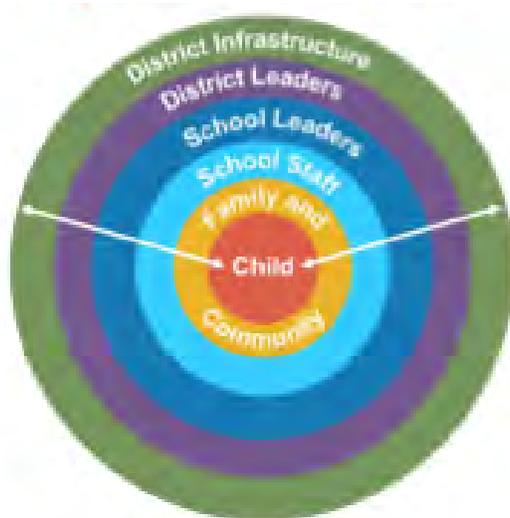
75 Definitions & References

Program Overview

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP) was introduced in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the fall of 2015. It offers an innovative, comprehensive approach to reducing achievement gaps for young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. The 2024-2025 school year marks the 10th program year of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. The program is guided by the School as Hub Birth through Grade 3 approach. This framework serves as flexible resource, allowing districts to tailor their approach based on their unique needs and ongoing process. There are School as Hub sites in ten elementary schools across six school districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The evaluation was grounded in a value-engaged approach with primary outcomes of focus on program improvement and program quality assessment. A combination of assessments and methodologies was used to evaluate the collaborative relationship between BECI and school districts, as well as district-level and school-level changes. Specific focus was given to assessing the various components in the School as Hub framework, see the figure below for additional details.

School as Hub Approach

Systems Focus



Framework



Evaluation Overview

→ Child-Level Outcomes -----

- How does engagement in the SECP influence students' academic growth within School as Hub sites?
 - **Measure: Academic Achievement Reflections**
- How does engagement in the SECP influence students' social-emotional development within School as Hub sites?
 - **Measure: Ages & Stages Questionnaires**

→ Family-Level Outcomes -----

- What is the influence of family engagement programming on perceptions of support?
 - **Measure: Family Interviews and Family Engagement Staff Focus Groups**
- What is the level of collaboration among families, communities, and schools within School as Hub sites?
 - **Measure: Family Engagement Survey**

→ Systems-Level Outcomes -----

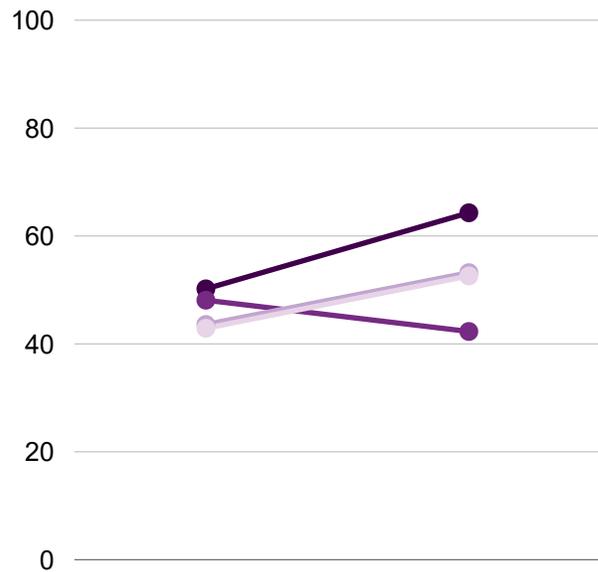
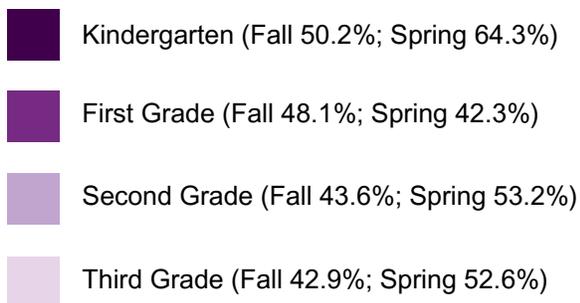
- What are the barriers and facilitators to collaboration between district stakeholders and Institute staff members?
 - **Measure: Collaboration Survey**
- How much progress was made towards district-level action plan goals?
 - **Action Plan Focus Groups**
- What was the depth of learning from participants engaged in professional learning opportunities?
 - **Professional Learning Survey**
- How did engagement in SECP communities of practice influence teacher and principal perceptions of self-efficacy for teaching and leadership?
 - **Self-Efficacy Surveys**
- To what degree are principals able to develop and foster partnerships with families and communities and ensure opportunities for all?
 - **NAESP Survey**

Academic Achievement Reflections

Principals at each School as Hub site and 1 district leader* were asked to report the percentage of students that were on track for reading and math in Fall and Spring based on the District's chosen assessment tool (e.g., FastBridge, MAP). Principals were then asked to reflect on whether growth was achieved at each grade level as well as how engagement in the SECP supported academic achievement at their school. Finally, principals were asked what is needed from the SECP to achieve academic goals for the 2024-2025 school year.

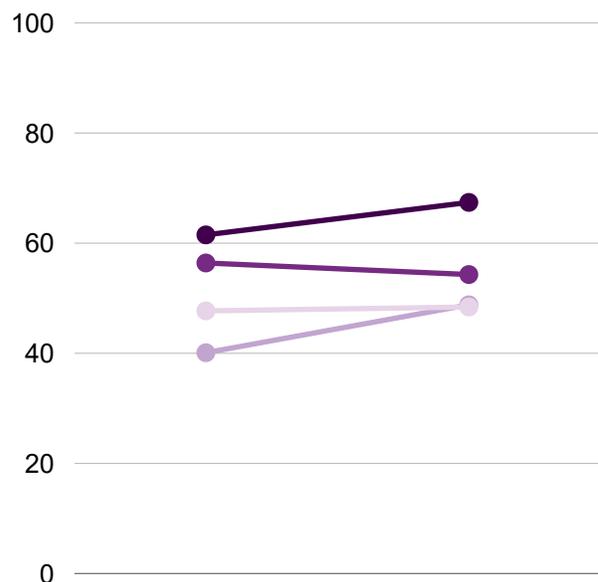
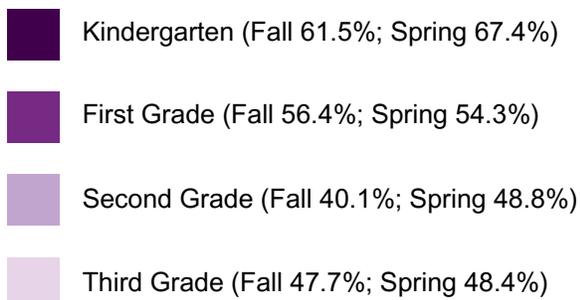
Percentage of Students On Track for Reading by Grade Level

Fall and Spring mean scores for reading are reported below by grade level. Overall, growth was seen from Fall to Spring for all grade levels except first grade. The largest increase of on track students from Fall to Spring was observed in Kindergarten.



Percentage of Students On Track for Math by Grade Level

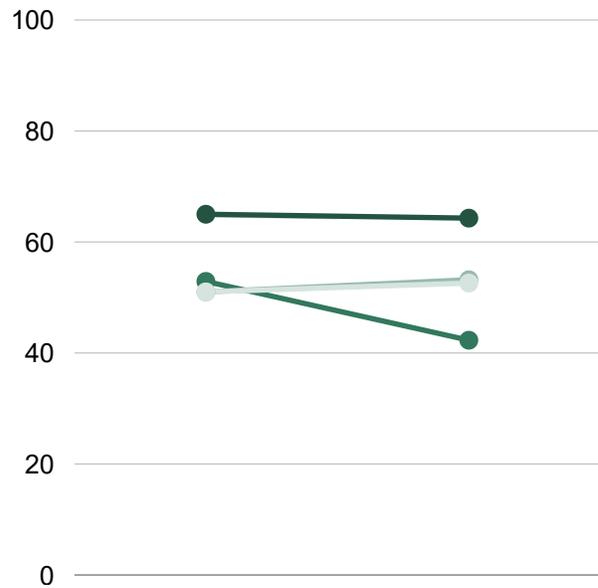
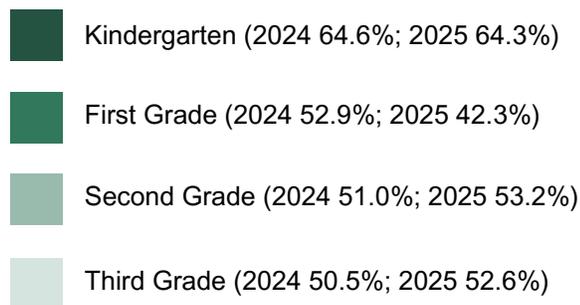
Fall and Spring means for math achievement scores are reported below by grade level. Overall, growth was seen from Fall to Spring for all grade levels except first grade with second grade representing the largest increase from Fall to Spring.



Academic Achievement Reflections Year to Year

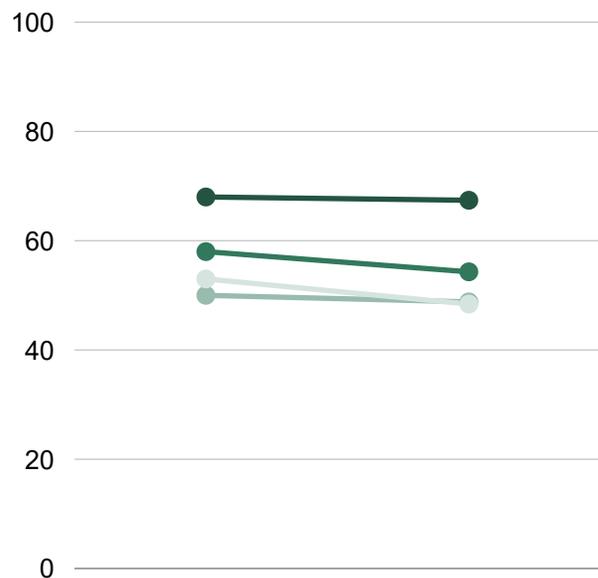
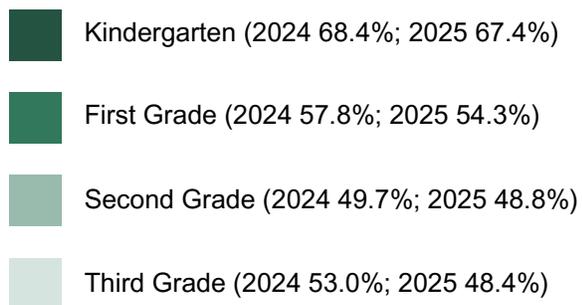
Percentage of Students On Track for Reading by Grade Level, Spring 2024 to Spring 2025

This chart shows the percentage of students on track for reading by grade level, comparing Spring 2024 cohorts to Spring 2025 cohorts. Kindergarten remained essentially unchanged. Second and third grades saw small increases, while first grade showed a notable decrease.



Percentage of Students On Track for Math by Grade Level, Spring 2024 to Spring 2025

When comparing math scores, Kindergarten and second grade percentages stayed nearly the same, while first and third grades each showed small decreases from the prior year.



*Please note: These results compare different cohorts of students in each grade level from Spring 2024 to Spring 2025, rather than tracking the same group of students over time.



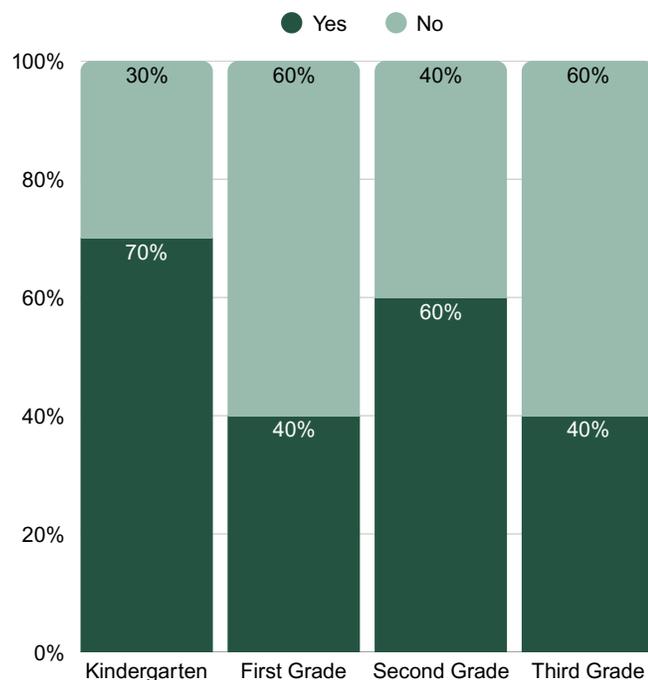
Academic Achievement Reflections

Academic Achievement Discussion of Growth

Individuals were asked to reflect on whether their schools met academic growth goals in math and reading over the past year, broken down by grade level. In kindergarten, 70% of classrooms reached their reading goals and 80% met their math goals. Among first-grade classrooms, 40% achieved reading growth targets and 30% met math targets. In second grade, 60% of classrooms met reading goals and 50% met math goals. Finally, 40% of third-grade classrooms reached reading goals, while only 20% met math goals. Principals were then asked to describe the growth that was or was not achieved related to academic achievement over the past year.

Reading

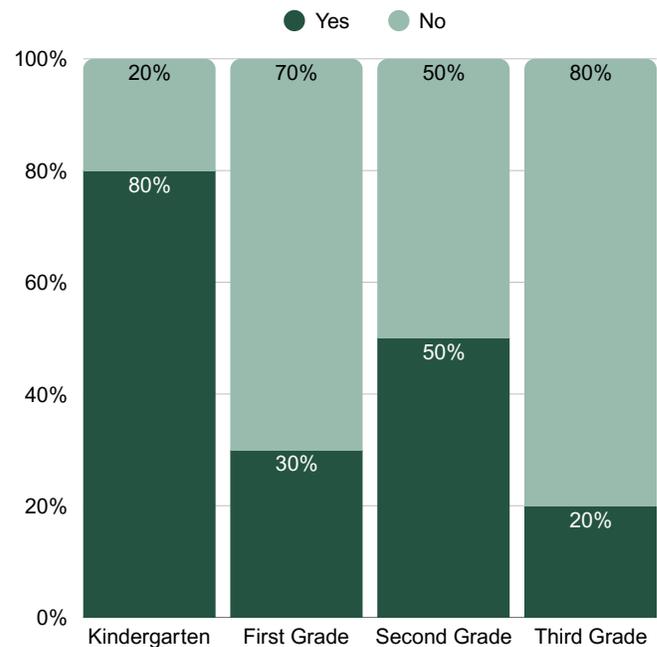
Principals reported there was varied progress among grade levels in relation to reading scores, with some schools reporting growth while others continued to face challenges meeting proficiency. Many schools noted improvements such as increases in the percentage of students reading at or near grade level, reductions in achievement gaps, and gains in math assessment scores. However, concerns were raised about persistent underperformance in certain grades, particularly first grade, and indications that overall reading growth had plateaued in some areas. Principals highlighted the importance of instructional supports, including curriculum enhancements, coaching, and targeted interventions. Schools that implemented new strategies or strengthened teacher support structures often saw positive results, while those lacking consistent interventions experienced limited progress.



Academic Achievement Reflections

Math

A review of principal responses revealed two main themes related to math achievement. First, several schools reported overall growth, especially in early and upper grades, with many meeting or exceeding MAP math goals. Principals felt new math curriculum and targeted instruction contributed to gains, particularly in preschool and grades K–3. However, progress was uneven, with some grades and classrooms falling short, and ongoing challenges noted across sites. Second, curriculum and instructional shifts played a key role in driving improvement. Principals felt that full adoption of new curricula, professional development, and leadership efforts supported positive outcomes related to math achievement.



Academic Achievement Reflections

How the SECP Currently Supports Academic Achievement

Principals reported that engagement in the SECP supports academic achievement through two key pathways: building staff capacity and strengthening alignment across the birth–grade 3 continuum. Principals shared that SECP funding allowed for targeted coaching, professional learning, and leadership development, with Teacher Leadership Network members and specialists providing classroom modeling and strategy refinement. Monthly meetings, coaching, and professional learning structures kept instructional practices consistent and focused. Additionally, principals noted that SECP engagement enhanced family and community partnerships through family events, home communication tools, and support for varying language needs. This helped foster alignment between preschool and elementary efforts, ensuring district priorities, especially in reading, were reflected in home visits, classroom instruction, and leadership planning.

“The Family Facilitator/Home Visitor led the coordination of 8 or 9 family engagement events this year. Of those, 4 were specifically focused on reading... ensuring they were aligned with school goals and provided meaningful opportunities for families to connect with their children’s learning.”

- School Administrator

How the SECP Can Support Academic Achievement in 2025-2026

Principals shared that SECP can best support academic achievement in 2025–2026 by continuing to provide targeted coaching, professional learning, and cross-grade alignment, especially in early literacy, math, and transitions from preschool to elementary. They emphasized the value of sustained Communities of Practice, the Teacher Leadership Network, and support from specialists to strengthen instructional consistency and collaboration. Equally important, principals noted that SECP’s role in deepening family engagement through events, home-school communication, and culturally responsive outreach helps build trust and supports learning from birth through grade 5.

“It’s been helpful to have [program specialist] more available for coaching, allowing teachers to focus on planning”

- School Administrator

“Strengthen efforts to gather meaningful feedback from families by creating more opportunities for dialogue and connection. Increase family involvement by inviting them into the building and fostering conversations about what’s happening in classrooms. Ensure families feel heard and valued.”

- School Administrator



Ages and Stages Questionnaires

How the SECP Supports Social Emotional Development

The SECP advances children’s social-emotional growth through both home visitation and family-facilitation programs, organized around three core activities: individual engagement, group engagement, and transition planning.

- **Individual Engagement:** Recruit and work with families of children from the prenatal stage through school entry via scheduled in-home visits. A structured curriculum guides each family in setting and achieving personalized social-emotional development goals.
- **Group Engagement:** Convene families for facilitated learning sessions, using a family-learning curriculum to plan and deliver interactive activities that build social-emotional skills among children and caregivers.
- **Transition Planning:** Develop and facilitate customized transition plans and supports that help children and families move smoothly between different early care and education settings.

Findings for ASQ-SE

- A total of 117 observations were recorded across six districts and 12 schools, representing 77 unique students (with 18 students assessed twice and 11 students assessed three times).
- Approximately 87% of observations were screened as No-to-Low Risk, 9% Monitor risk, and 3% Referral risk.
- Percentage of observations at No-to-Low Risk by year of program participation:

Years of participation	1	2	3+
Sample size	43	51	22
% No-to-low risk	74.4%	98.0%	86.4%

*Combined 3,4,5,6 years due to small sample size

- Approximately 90% of female student observations and 83% of male student observations were screened at No-to-Low Risk.
- Approximately 15% of observations were conducted in Spanish.

Survey Information

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE) are complementary screening tools designed to help caregivers and professionals monitor young children’s development.

The **ASQ-SE** screens social and emotional behavior for children aged 1–72 months using 9 questionnaires and scoring sheets. Its cut-off scores categorize children into Referral, Monitor, or No-to-Low Risk.

The **ASQ** provides broad developmental screening for children aged 1–66 months using 21 questionnaires and scoring sheets. It assesses five domains, Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social, each classified by cut-off scores into Developmental Concern, Borderline, or Typical.

Ages and Stages Questionnaires

Findings for ASQ

- A total of 175 observations were recorded across 6 districts and 13 schools, representing 104 unique students (with 41 students assessed twice and 15 students assessed three times).
- Across the five ASQ domains, 65%–76% of student observations were screened.

	Communication	Gross motor	Fine motor	Problem solving	Personal-social
Typical	65%	76%	72%	69%	67%
Borderline	8%	5%	7%	9%	11%
Development Concerns	11%	2%	5%	6%	5%

- Percentage of observations at Typical by years of program participation:

Years of participation	1	2	3+*
Sample size	63	74	38
Communication, % Typical	58.1	72.6	63.2
Gross motor, % Typical	74.2	78.1	76.3
Fine motor, % Typical	67.2	75.0	73.7
Problem solving, % Typical	60.0	75.3	71.1
Personal-social, % Typical	56.7	72.6	73.0

*Combined 3,4,5,6 years due to small sample size

- Approximately 68-77% of female student observations and 60-76% of male student observations were screened at Typical across the five ASQ domains.
- Approximately 17% of the student observations were conducted in Spanish.



Family Engagement Survey

Survey Information

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 ranked items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Surveys were distributed to families in the six districts with School as Hub sites in an online format. Families that had been enrolled or were currently enrolled in home visiting or family facilitation also received the surveys (n=98). The survey was available in 19 languages to accommodate the language needs of all the families at the participating schools.

A total of 455 families with at least one child aged birth to grade 3 responded to the survey across 10 schools, with 90 (19.8%) of these families reporting that they speak a language other than English in the home. The majority of the families reported their race as White (n=299; 66.2%). The next largest race category reported was two or more races (n=31; 6.9%), followed by Black (n=28; 6.2%), Asian (n=20; 4.4%), and American Indian or Alaska Native (n=7; 1.6%). Just over a quarter of the families (n=119; 26.1%) reported their ethnicity as Latinx. Just under half of the families (n=202; 44.4%) reported that they qualify for the Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program, with 26 families (5.7%) preferring not to answer this question. Across the schools, the number of families responding to the survey ranged from 12 to 79 per school.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high), families rated schools very positively, with item averages ranging from 5.6 to 6.4 out of 7. The highest-rated items across the schools were "I know who to talk with at school regarding my concerns about my child's education and development" (6.4/7.0) and "I know how well my child is doing academically in school (6.4/7.0)." The lowest-rated item, while still very positive, was "I have opportunities to influence what happens at this school" (5.6/7.0).

Comparison of the survey scales from the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 academic years revealed no significant differences from year to year; however, scale scores remain high. Among families engaged in home visiting/family facilitation, families that have been engaged in home visiting or family facilitation services for 0-1 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.5; those who have been engaged for 1-2 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.3; those who have been engaged for 3-5 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.6 and those engaged for greater than 5 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.8.

Family Engagement Survey

Ratings of Family School Partnerships

The principal at this school seeks and uses parents' ideas and suggestions to improve the school.

6.0

The principal at this school makes a conscious effort to make parents feel welcome.

6.3

I know someone at this school who will assist me and my family in our home language in resolving questions and concerns regarding my child.*

6.0

My child's teachers, home visitors, or family facilitator help me understand what I can do to help my child learn.

6.3

The school staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with my family.

6.2

I feel my input is valued by most of my child's teachers, home visitor or family facilitator.

6.2

I have opportunities to influence what happens at this school.

5.6

School staff work closely with me to meet my child's needs.

6.3

My home culture and home language are valued by this school.

6.3

I am greeted warmly when I visit or call this school.

6.1

I know who to talk with at this school regarding my concerns about my child's education and development.

6.4

I know how well my child is doing academically in school.

6.4

*If your home language is not English

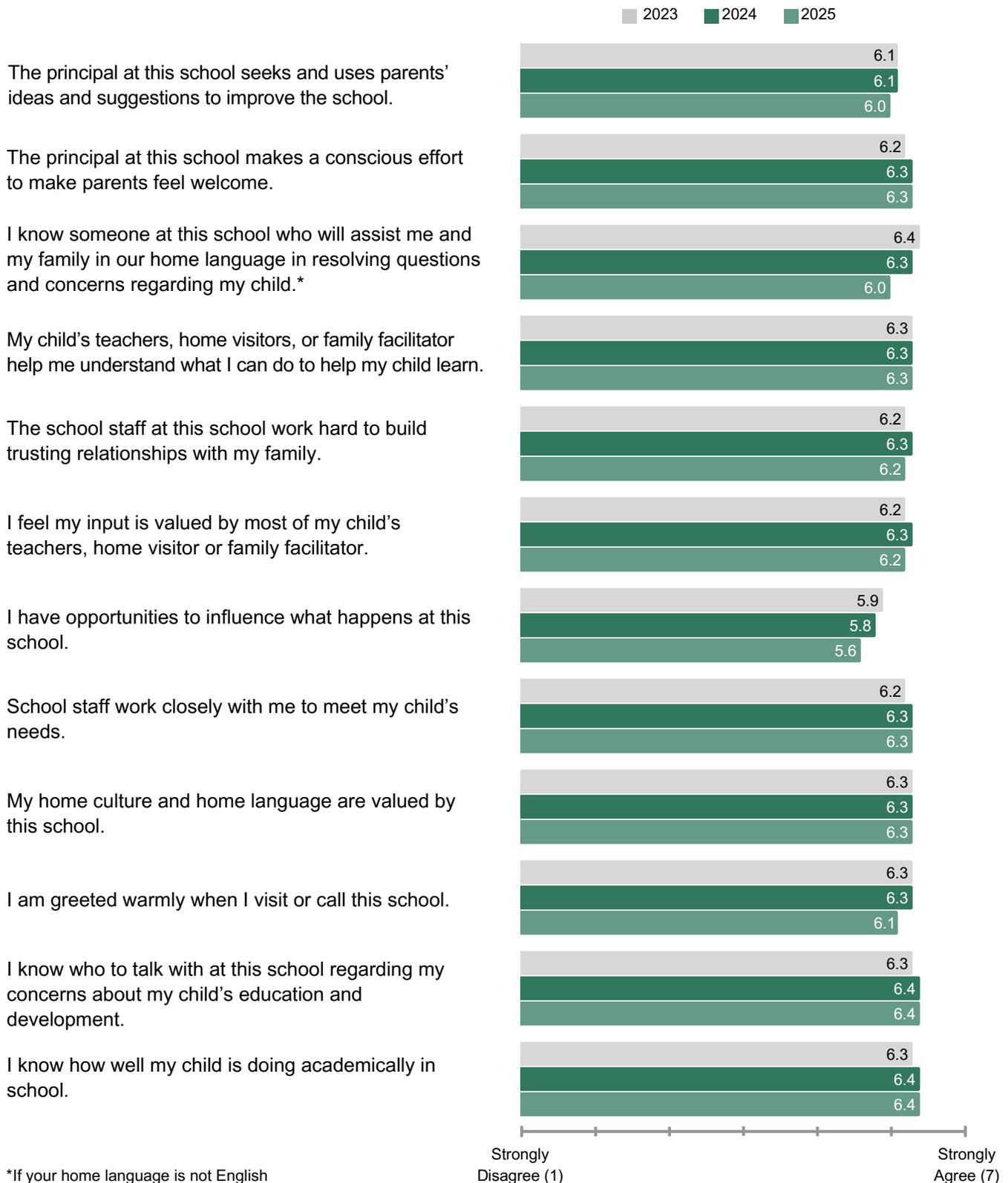
Strongly
Disagree (1)

Strongly
Agree (7)



Family Engagement Survey

Family Ratings Comparison Year to Year

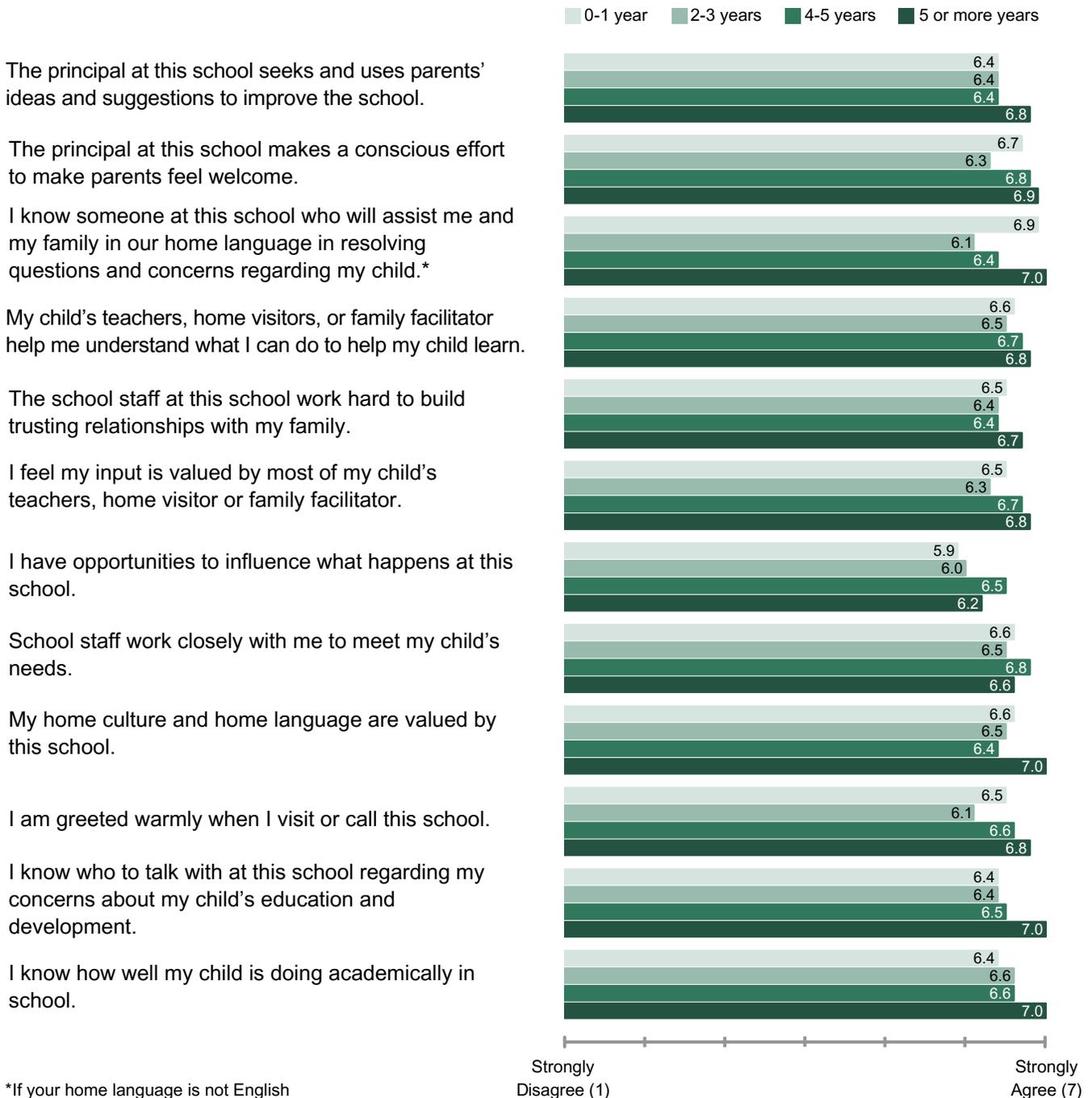


*If your home language is not English

Family Engagement Survey

Families Engaged in Home Visiting and Family Facilitation

A total of 190 individuals who completed the survey reported that their family was engaged in home visiting and/or family facilitation at their school. A majority of these individuals reported being engaged for 0-1 year (45.8%), followed by those with 2-3 years of participation (32.1%), 4-5 years of participation (12.63%), and those who had been engaged for more than 5 years (9.5%).



*If your home language is not English



Family Engagement Interviews

Perceptions of Social Support Among Family Engagement Staff and the Families They Serve

In the Spring of 2025, Evaluators within the Munroe-Meyer Institute conducted interviews and focus groups with family engagement staff and families within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP). A total of 26 family interviews took place with family representatives (e.g., parents, legal guardians) who had at least one child enrolled in an SECP home visiting and/or family facilitation program at a School as Hub site. When possible, interviews took place in the family's primary language with the assistance of an interpreter. Interviewees identified their primary language as one of the following: English, Spanish, African Dialect, Karen, Karenni, or Vietnamese. Family engagement staff (i.e., family facilitators and/or home visitors) perceptions were also captured via three focus groups (n=12). Interview and focus group questions were designed to address two primary evaluation questions: (1) How does engagement in family engagement programming influence how a family receives social support? (2) What are the primary support types that engaged families are currently receiving? Questions were guided by Social Support Theory, and definition constructs can be seen below. Qualitative data was analyzed via a process of immersion/crystallization using deductive content analysis. Primary findings from families and family engagement staff are identified in this report.

SOCIAL SUPPORT THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

Instrumental Support	Informational Support	Appraisal Support	Emotional Support
Tangible aid and service	Advice, suggestions, and information	Information that is useful for self-evaluation	Expressions of empathy, love, trust, and care
Examples: food, diapers, activity materials and children's books	Examples: pamphlets, step-by-step instructions, teaching about new topics	Examples: asking questions about a person's values, identifying strengths,	Examples: listening without judgement, comforting words, validating emotions

Family Engagement Interviews

Instrumental Support: Family Engagement Staff Perspective

Family engagement staff emphasized that the School as Hub model plays a vital role in supporting the community, often serving as a primary access point for basic needs. However, they noted that limited budgets constrain their ability to fully meet families' needs, particularly when it comes to providing linguistically appropriate materials. Family engagement staff also pointed to ongoing gaps in broader support systems, especially in housing, transportation, and mental health services, which further limit families' access to comprehensive care.

(1) Schools and Community are Seen as Essential Hubs of Support

Family engagement staff emphasized the critical role of schools in providing tangible aid such as food, clothing, and transportation. Family engagement staff reported that partnerships with community organizations were seen as essential to meeting families' basic needs.

"I would say when we say school as a hub out here, we really are. We are the food pantry. We are the clothing closet. The biggest thing I have is a need for helping people get transportation, cars, cars repaired."

"The best way to support families in this sense is connecting with your community, building partnerships."

(2) Budget Constraints Limit Access to Essential Materials

Family engagement staff felt limited funding restricts the ability to purchase linguistically appropriate materials, such as bilingual books, which was deemed essential for equitable support.

"It's very, very difficult to get bilingual books because of the fact that we cannot go to anywhere to buy these books.. We have to go to specific places like Scholastic, which don't have a large option of bilingual books."

(3) There are Gaps in Services for Housing, Transportation, and Mental Health

Family engagement staff identified systemic service limitations: particularly in housing, transportation, and mental health as major barriers to supporting families with young children. Language access and provider availability (e.g., Medicaid-accepting therapists) were also significant challenges.

"There's not enough services because the age group that we serve 0 to 5, there's not a specialty service. So even finding a therapist in the community that takes perhaps Medicaid or on a pro-bono or sliding fee as a challenge, along with the family."



Family Engagement Interviews

Instrumental Support: Family Perspective

When considering the perspective of families, there were three primary themes related to the provision of instrumental supports. These themes included: (1) staff providing personalized engagement, (2) families receiving tangible support and opportunities to engage, and (3) staff increasing access to community connections.

(1) Family Engagement Staff Provide Personalized Engagement

Families described the support they received based on conversations about their specific needs, including books and activities selected because of their children's developmental milestones and interests. Some families mentioned that their home visitor or family facilitator regularly checked in via text or in person to ask about upcoming needs or offer new resources that could be beneficial.

“They customize the curriculum for where he's at and his development and then follows up on different conversations that we've had and provide the resources.”

(2) Families Receive Tangible Support and Opportunities to Engage

Families provided examples of concrete resources and supports they received during home visits or at facilitation events, including food, winter coats, books, and age-appropriate learning activities. Many also discussed the benefits of accessing socialization opportunities and family events hosted by their programs.

“Whenever she comes and does the home visit at our house, she brings over an activity for the kids to do and explains everything thoroughly. And she provides several opportunities a month to meet with her, with the other kids in the groups and with the people that are in the whole [school district] for us to all get together.”

(3) Family Engagement Staff Increase Access to Community Connections

Multiple families discussed community resources and programs they heard about based on referrals from their home visitors/family facilitators (e.g., holiday gift programs and food pantries). In addition to raising their awareness, families also received help in applying for programs and navigating language barriers.

“One of our big things with older sister has been potty training. That's been years in the making at this point. She's found a lot of things that we could attend in the community, just like different professionals and stuff to help with that.”

Family Engagement Interviews

Informational Support: Family Engagement Staff Perspective

Family engagement staff identified three key ways informational support is or could be strengthened within the Superintendents' Plan: (1) families sharing knowledge and resources within their networks, (2) leveraging early insights and technology to support school readiness, and (3) simplifying and personalizing information to improve accessibility.

(1) Families are Serving as Informational Bridges

Family engagement staff noted the growing impact of families sharing independent referrals and resources with one another, creating informal yet powerful knowledge networks through relationships formed in programming.

“Something I find interesting, families are talking with each other and passing on independent referral sources amongst themselves.”

“Those are very powerful things that are occurring because of relationships that are forming, relationships that are forming from our programming, that we are doing.”

(2) Staff Work to Simplify and Personalize Information for Accessibility

Efforts to adapt information, such as simplifying curriculum content or tailoring resources to families' language and learning needs were seen as essential to ensuring families could use and relate to what they receive.

“One for me is that our curriculum is pretty massive. So sometimes we have to simplify things. So, for me, it would be like finding ways to simplify more of that information, to be able to provide it to families so that for them it'll be easier, and they can relate to.”

(3) Staff Support School Readiness Through Early Insights and Resources

Family engagement staff report home-based observations provide unique insight into children's behaviors and needs prior to school entry, while technology (like websites or interpretation services) offers additional ways to deliver relevant, on-demand information.

“We are catching [children], like these two [staff members] are catching them [children] at home where they're hidden and nobody really sees them. So they're being able to see them at home and in their own environment. We see them at centers, and we're able to catch both of these children before they get into school.”



Family Engagement Interviews

Informational Support: Family Perspective

Three primary themes emerged related to informational support: (1) varied and ongoing information sharing, (2) open lines of communication with trusted staff, and (3) staff provide tailored information to support children's development.

(1) Information Sharing is Varied and Ongoing

Multiple families mentioned receiving informational text messages between their regular meetings with family engagement staff. Typically, these texts were because FES found information they thought families would be interested in or followed up on families' concerns. Families also discussed information provided through group or one-on-one conversations, screenshots, website links, articles, and handouts.

"If we're visiting, she just tells me or shares some social links, or by text. And if we're not together, she can call me and let me know and send [a text message]."

(2) Open Lines of Communication with Trusted Staff

Families discussed family engagement staff's responsiveness to their questions and concerns. Many families shared that they felt comfortable reaching out via text message, phone call, or email, and trusted their home visitor/family facilitator to share information or research to find the answers they needed.

"She's really good about checking in. I think that's the main thing. The texts, the little flyer she hands out. She's excellent at that."

(3) Staff Provide Tailored Information to Support Development

Many families said that their home visitor/family facilitator tailored information to meet their child's needs and interests. Examples included potty training, speech, parent-child play strategies and activities, special education services, and preparation for school. Some families shared about receiving information specific to their children's ages and developmental levels, which they said helped manage their expectations about milestones and age-appropriate behaviors.

"And she's always send me home with flyers for kids, and where they should be and different strategies to encourage independent play or helping around the house or developing a routine or just what they should be doing at their age. She's always just like, 'Here's some information for this kid.'"

While most feedback related to instrumental supports was positive, one family discussed long waits for responses to texts, and another mentioned the time and attention demands that family engagement staff face with large caseloads.

Family Engagement Interviews

Appraisal Support: Family Engagement Staff Perspective

Family engagement staff emphasized the importance of building trusting relationships that honor families' strengths and goals. FES report their approach focuses on empowering families by recognizing their daily efforts, supporting family-led goal setting, and centering families' voices in planning for their children's development.

(1) Family Engagement Staff Recognize Efforts and Intentions in Parenting

Family engagement staff report trying to help parents recognize the value of their everyday efforts and intentions in supporting their child's development, focusing on the process rather than just the end result.

"I think more than anything, being very genuine and also just always commenting not on the outcome, but the process of that, and making sure they're aware of that more."

(2) Family Engagement Staff Support Family-Led Goal Setting and Progress

Family engagement staff report supporting families by helping them set goals that reflect their own needs and priorities, both for the family as a whole and for their children.

"I think some of this comes even from individual family goals, child goals, checking back in with families to see where do they stand in that."

"So let's see, where is the child meeting standard-wise and if they are meeting okay, then let's move beyond that. Or is this an area where we need to spend a little bit more time and allowing that to help them make those decisions around what to focus on for their child, I think it's very helpful. And in the same respect, with those family goals, coming back to them in those three times that we do those outcomes is just saying, all right, you know, we'll review these are the things that you said were an area before. Gosh, here you keep saying that this need around food keeps resurfacing. What can we do?"

(3) Navigating Differences in Parenting Beliefs and Backgrounds

Family engagement staff shared that offering appraisal support can be difficult when parenting beliefs differ due to generational patterns or socioeconomic backgrounds. Parents often revert to how they were raised, and staff work to gently guide them toward new strategies. These efforts are sometimes complicated by class differences, which can create misunderstandings between staff and families.

"It can be generational things. And so, you can continually talk to a parent about e-parenting. We can be working on it. We can be and they can be even aware of it. But it's so deeply ingrained that you know the punishment and we're going to spank, which is like their decision. It's not like I have no judgment on that. But then it's like constantly kind of bringing them back to like, like, hey, let's think about what happened, you know, before the behavior and talking that through."



Family Engagement Interviews

Appraisal Support: Family Perspective

Collaborative planning based on assessment and family priorities emerged as a theme related to the appraisal support provided to families enrolled in family engagement programs.

(1) Collaborative Goal Setting with Families

Families discussed the ways that family engagement staff involved them in goal setting and identifying topics for future visits. Some mentioned completing and reviewing developmental assessments like the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ®) as a tool for planning. Others shared examples of prompting questions that invited them to share their concerns and priorities related to child development, parenting, and behavior.

“I like that towards the end of our visit, she’s always like, ‘Okay, so what do you want to work on next? What do you want to focus on?’ so that it makes me feel like I have a say in what we do... Say I’m worried about my son [because he doesn’t] have a pencil grasp. So okay, then she would plan a lesson around that. So it makes me feel like what he needs is being met.”

“We always did like the ASQ questionnaire. She had this book that went through all the stages of development for every age group. She had activities for every stage of development.”



Family Engagement Interviews

Emotional Support: Family Engagement Staff Perspective

Family engagement staff reported playing a vital emotional support role by building trusting, responsive relationships with families. Through consistent presence, active listening, and celebrating families' progress, FES created a safe space where parents feel seen and supported. While family engagement staff felt they offered essential emotional support, they also voiced a growing need for expanded access to mental health services, a concern that was echoed in previous years' evaluations.

(1) Building Trust Through Consistent Emotional Support

Family engagement staff emphasized that strong relationships are built through consistent communication, showing up every week, and truly listening to families, especially when parents may not have other sources of support. FES reported striving to create a safe, nonjudgmental space where families feel heard and valued.

“Also, empathy by trying to understand the position that the parent is in and being non-judgmental is another way that we can provide emotional support. Just really trying to be in the here and now with that parent where they're at, and relating to them and what they need. I think it's really important.”

“Whether they just need somebody to vent to, maybe they're going through things, perhaps they didn't have other family support system or friends. So, us being there like every week or every month and having that connection.”

(2) Celebrating Milestones and Moments of Growth

Family engagement staff described the importance of celebrating with families, both big and small achievements, as a way to provide emotional support and encouragement.

“Emotional support by being there with the family, celebrating with them every step of the way. Whether it's when we're talking about, you know, the growth and, social development milestones that the children are meeting.”

(3) Being Present and Responsive to Family Needs

Family engagement staff highlighted the importance of meeting families where they are by following their lead and focusing on what they need in the moment. They described their role as a parallel partnership that is family-driven and family-led.

“And I'm very much a person who follows the lead of my families as well.”

(4) Recognizing the Need for Mental Health Support

Family engagement staff expressed a strong desire for more resources to help families access mental health therapy and counseling. While they strive to provide emotional support through listening and building trusting relationships, FES acknowledged the limitations of their role and the growing need for professional mental health services.



Family Engagement Interviews

Emotional Support: Family Perspective

Three primary themes emerged related to informational support: (1) genuine interest in families, (2) encouragement, and (3) trust and consistency.

(1) Family Engagement Staff Have Genuine Interest in Families

Families shared ways that family engagement staff showed care for them and their children as individuals. Examples included remembering birthdays, checking in during emergencies and high-stress times, connecting with and sending updates about their school-age children during the school day, and ensuring they feel welcome at socialization and school events. Some families said that they saw their home visitor/family facilitator as a friend or family member.

“We had the power outage... She checked in, made sure we were okay. She's like, ‘Hey, I heard the power's coming back up.’ So it just she just makes it really easy to trust her. I guess just more like a friend.”

(2) Family Engagement Staff Build Confidence Through Encouragement

Many families discussed feeling encouraged and supported by the feedback provided to them and their children. Examples of feedback included encouraging caregivers to keep trying when learning new skills, reminding them that they are good parents when they are self-critical, and praising children's efforts and accomplishments during visits (e.g., listening to instructions). While most shared examples of verbal support, some families mentioned feeling encouraged by their home visitor/family facilitator's positive attitude.

“I feel like sometimes like I'm not a good enough mom or a good enough wife and she would like, say, ‘No, this is what you do. And you know, this is what is great.’ And so it does, it's like a little pat myself on the back.”

(3) Family Engagement Staff Provide Trust and Consistency

Families discussed the importance of trust in their relationships with family engagement staff. Some families shared about initial hesitance to share private information when joining their programs, and that early conversations about confidentiality—paired with demonstrations of protecting their information—built their trust and encouraged them to open up more. Some gave examples of their home visitor/family facilitator checking in about their comfort level with the program, communicating about changes, and listening without judgment or agenda.

“I feel like she's never, like, told anybody, like, our business and whatnot, which is something that I would say I can trust, especially with how much we have going on. I know sometimes that can be hard. Like not to tell people like, “Oh, they can't come because of X, Y and Z,” but that's never been the case before.”

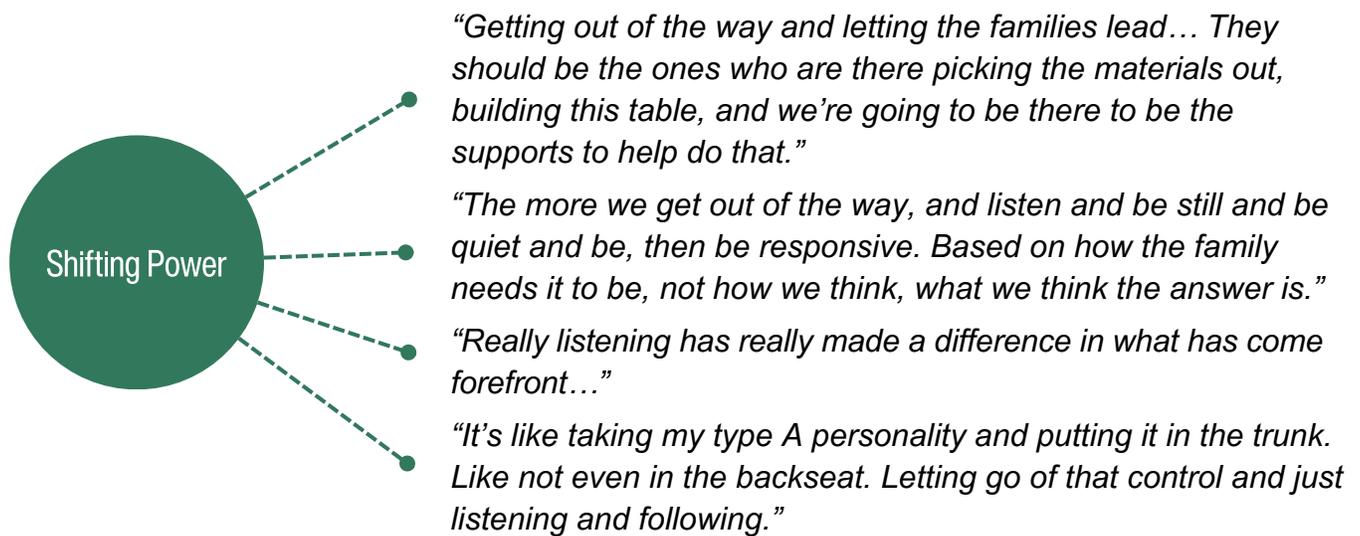
Family Engagement Interviews

Greatest Accomplishments: Family Engagement Staff Perspective

Two prominent themes arose when family engagement staff were asked to share the greatest accomplishments associated with family engagement programming: (1) shifting power to families and following their lead and (2) building trusting, long-term relationships with families and schools.

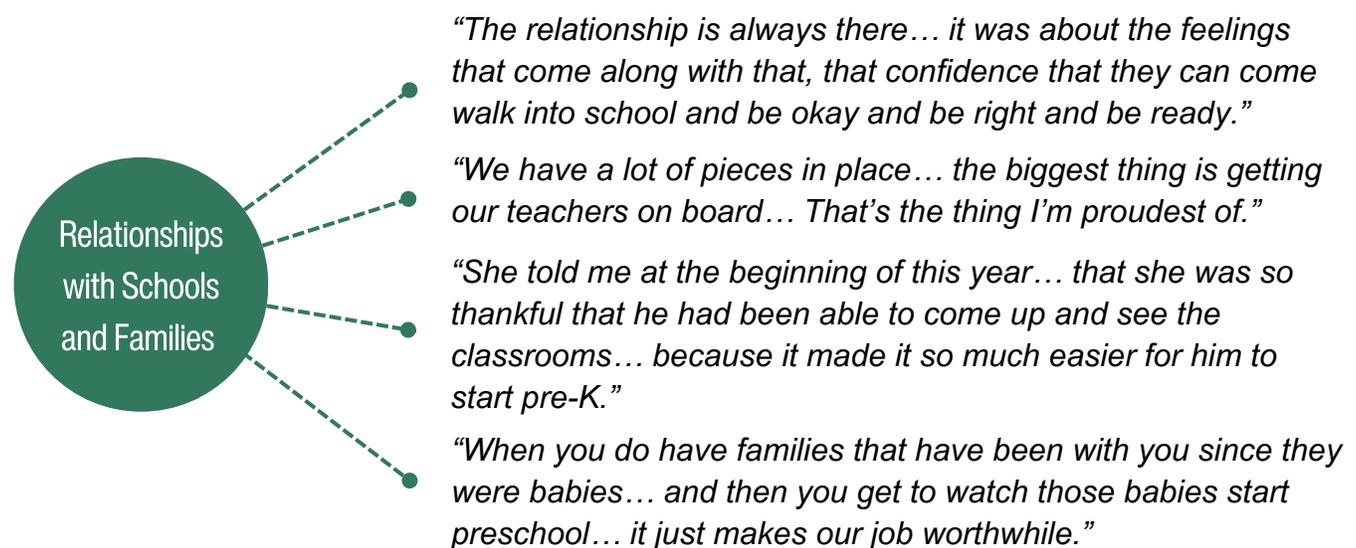
(1) Shifting Power to Families “Getting out of the way” and Following Their Lead

Family engagement staff consistently emphasize a paradigm shift from professional-driven programming to family-led decision-making.



(2) Building Trusting, Long-Term Relationships with Families and Schools

The second dominant theme is the pride in cultivating deep, enduring relationships with families and within school communities. Family engagement staff highlight their roles as connectors and trusted anchors between families and schools.



Family Engagement Interviews

Greatest Accomplishments: Family Perspective

Four prominent themes emerged when interviewees were asked to share their child's greatest accomplishment related to participation in family engagement programming: (1) staff support of children meeting developmental milestones, (2) improved parent-child interactions, (3) improved relationships between families and school staff, and (4) children's increased confidence in social settings.

(1) Staff Support of Children Meeting Developmental Milestones

Many families shared that their children were reaching developmental milestones. Some also described how family engagement staff provided helpful resources, such as parent seminars, school-based services, and activity ideas in response to concerns or observations raised during visits, which supported their children's development.



"Probably, like her walking and her talking. She struggled with that a bunch... So she [FES] got me in contact with somebody that did an evaluation to see why she wasn't walking by one. And then with her talking and all those things, and now she's walking perfectly fine"

"I would say he is very on track with his milestones. He was premature, so there's always that worry of them being a little bit behind their peers. But he's actually—just like overall advice and stuff that I've gotten from our home visitor—he's actually been hitting all of his milestones like right on time. And there's no concern for him being behind at this point right now"

(2) Improved Parent-Child Interactions

Some families shared accomplishments in their everyday interactions with their children as a result of knowledge and skills gained through their participation in family engagement program. Examples included having a better understanding of child development and age-appropriate expectations, greater patience, and intentionality in their interactions.



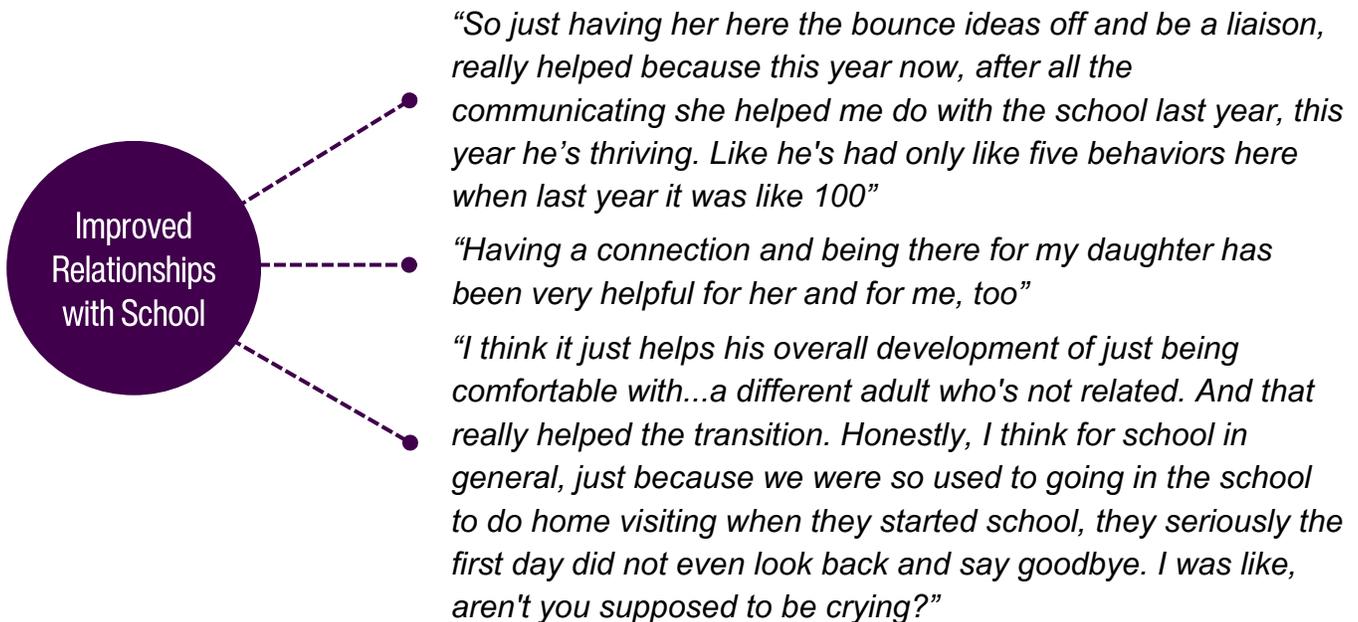
"In this case, communication between my children, trust with them, as I have worked on patience with them as well"

"And after all the, when I started first, like for now I think I put like more attention to what they doing and then I try to praise them. Yeah. Uh for everything that they do. Because you know what I'm learning with them too"

Family Engagement Interviews

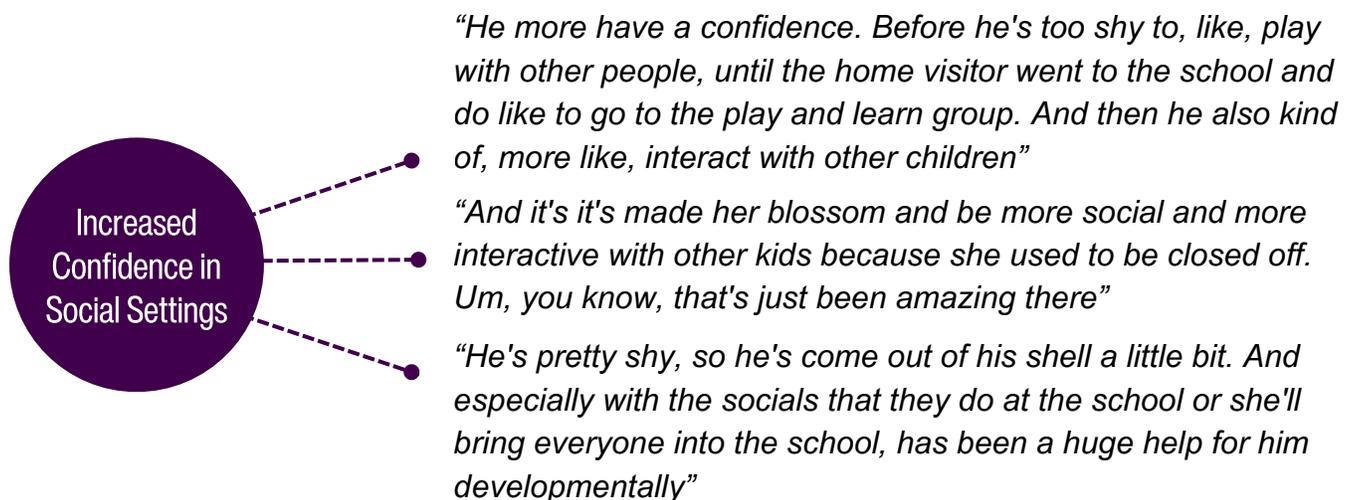
(3) Improved Relationships Between Families and School Staff

Some families noted that they and/or their children had better relationships with school staff because of their participation in the program. Reasons for families' improved relationships included family engagement staff's advocacy for their children, having a connection beyond their child's classroom teacher, and knowledge of the school from attending socializations and drop-in play times. Improved child relationships were attributed to experience building relationships with family engagement staff and familiarity with the building before starting school.



(4) Children's Increased Confidence in Social Settings

Many families said that they noticed changes in their children's behavior with peers, saying that their children were notably less shy around other children and were more likely to approach and play with others at socials.



Family Engagement Interviews

Common Findings Between Staff and Families

This section highlights common themes identified by both family engagement staff and families, offering a comprehensive look at how families experience support and how FES navigate their roles. Findings illustrate strong alignment in recognizing the value of the School as Hub model, the importance of clear and personalized communication, and the critical role of trusting relationships. Alongside these strengths, both groups pointed to key areas for improvement including the need for more accessible materials, expanded mental health services, and stronger infrastructure to support housing, transportation, and information sharing. Primary strengths and areas for growth are outlined below.

Areas of Strength

- Family engagement staff effectively help families access essentials like food, clothing, and learning materials.
- Family engagement staff have effective and valued communication strategies. Families appreciate the personalized communication. FES recognize the need to continue to simplify materials and access to information.
- Family engagement staff build strong relationships by listening, encouraging families, and being consistently present.

Areas for Improvement

- Increase access to culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, such as bilingual books and translated resources.
- Simplify and streamline educational content to make it more understandable and usable for families with varied literacy and learning needs.
- Expand mental health support options, including access to affordable, Medicaid-accepting providers and counseling services.
- Strengthen communication tools to allow for the sharing of timely information.
- Address gaps in housing and transportation services, which remain major barriers for many families.
- Provide additional training for staff to support goal setting and emotional well-being in culturally responsive ways.
- Ensure consistent funding and resources to maintain and grow personalized, high-impact services for families.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Survey Findings

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute hosted 49 learning opportunities throughout the 2024-2025 academic year. At the end of the event, attendees were presented with a QR code and asked to complete a post-evaluation survey. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale of 1-5 (1, low; 5, high) regarding how the information they learned would help them in their current role and the extent to which the format of the professional development was an effective way to receive helpful information. Respondents were asked to identify specific strategies or pieces of information they found most helpful and asked what additional support they would need to apply what they had learned. In addition, an experiencing scale was included to evaluate how engaging in professional learning opportunities influenced experiential learning based on the Kolb cycle of learning. The experiencing scale is a 20-item instrument that asks individuals to rate their experience across several constructs (Stock & Kolb, 2021). The scale assesses learning through a process of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. The scale is meant to assess the learner's novelty, presence, and embodiment.



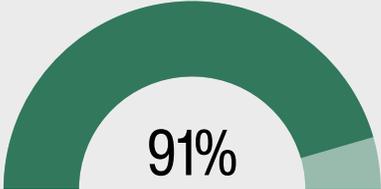
989

Educators engaged in professional learning opportunities



437

Post-program surveys completed by attendees



91%

of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the information learned during the professional learning opportunity could help them in their current role.



90%

of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the format of the professional learning opportunity was an effective way to receive helpful information.



Professional Learning Opportunities

Qualitative Findings

What specific strategies or pieces of information did you find most helpful from this professional learning opportunity?

- Information on Guided Play: Importance, implementation, tools, and teacher reflections.

“Learning how to incorporate play within my classroom setting and different techniques to add play alongside with the curriculum.”

- Information on Guided Play: Importance, implementation, tools, and teacher reflections.

“I enjoyed learning about how the development of child and their needs starts at a young age, and how everything affects them.”

- Teacher Collaboration and Engagement: Benefits of collaborative learning, personal reflections, and active engagement.

“I learned to continue to be open minded when approaching all situations as a learning moment.”

- Practical Applications and Activities: Hands-on activities, strategies implemented, and real-life examples.

“The brain architecture game was very helpful in giving us a hands on example of how a child’s mind really works and the importance of our roles in that development.”

- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Importance, strategies, and specific examples like Pyramid Model.

“Learning about the pyramid of how trauma compounds to affect children over time.”

What additional support do you need to apply what you learned today?

- Time for planning and collaboration

“More time! I would love to be able to collaborate with my team on this, but time is needed for that.”

- Resources and materials

“We are looking at more materials that are needed in our classroom to better support our students.”

- Support and guidance

“I would like to be able to shadow a someone else who is a community facilitator that is already established at their schools program.”

- Collaboration and engagement

“I would like to see examples of teachers and how they do play...it would be beneficial to see colleagues engaged through videos or pictures.”

Kolb Cycle of Learning Survey Findings

Survey respondents (n=437) completed the Experiencing Scale in August 2024 (Stock & Kolb 2021). Items that represent Novelty are highlighted in green, items representing Presence are highlighted in orange, and items representing Embodiment are highlighted in brown. Mean scores on a reverse order scale of 1-7 (1, low, 7, high) are reported. The mean score for novelty items was 5.51; the mean score for presence items was 5.67, and the mean score for items reflecting embodiment was 4.76.

MEAN

5.54	My views did not change	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I saw things in new ways
5.25	It was pretty much as I expected	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	It was fresh and new
5.75	I didn't learn anything new	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I learned something new
5.60	I was uninvolved	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was deeply involved
5.78	I was easily distracted	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was alert and aware
5.83	I did not participate	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I actively participated
5.63	My senses were not engaged	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	My senses were engaged
5.79	I was somewhere else	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was fully present
5.71	I felt resistant	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was "in the flow"
5.76	I felt connected and whole	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	My attention was focused
5.69	I felt scattered	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I felt connected and whole
5.72	I was in the there and then	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was in the here and now
5.81	I was on "automatic pilot"	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I responded to what was happening
5.48	I was self-absorbed	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I was not self-conscious
5.24	I was aware of time passing	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I didn't notice the passage of time
4.97	I did not feel a connection with the natural world	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I felt a sense of oneness with the natural world
4.68	I had no bodily sensation	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I felt the experience in my body
4.63	I had no emotional reactions	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input checked="" type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	The experience was emotional



Teacher Self-Efficacy

Survey Findings

In the Fall of 2024 (n=25) and Spring of 2025 (n=17), teachers who were engaged in coaching and/or consultation within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan completed the short form of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). The survey items utilized can be seen below. Items related to each domain are highlighted as follows: (Student Engagement; Instructional Strategies; Classroom Strategies).

How much can you do?

1 Nothing 3 Very Little 5 Some Influence 7 Quite A Bit 9 A Great Deal

How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?

How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?

How much can you do to help your students value learning?

How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?

To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?

How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?

To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?

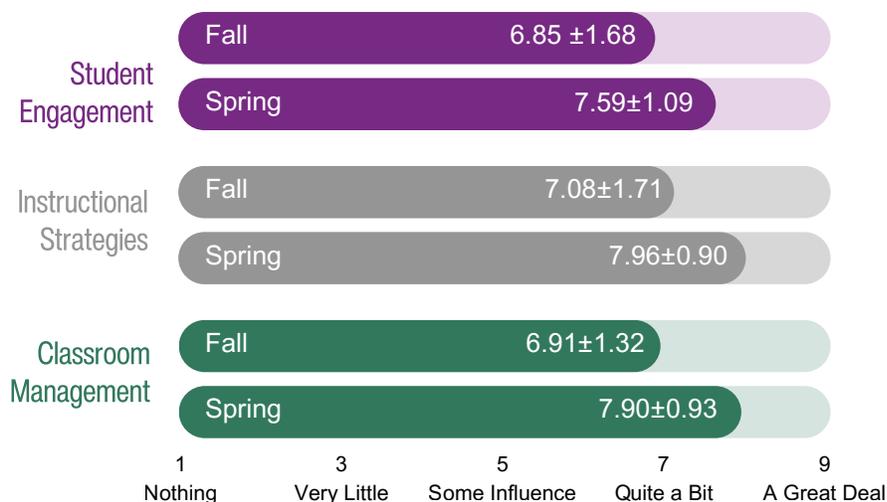
How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?

How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?

How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?

How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?

How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?



There were increases in self-efficacy in all domains from Fall to Spring. The largest areas of growth occurred in assisting families in helping their children do well in school (5.68; 7.53) and implementing alternative strategies in the classroom (6.76; 8.12).

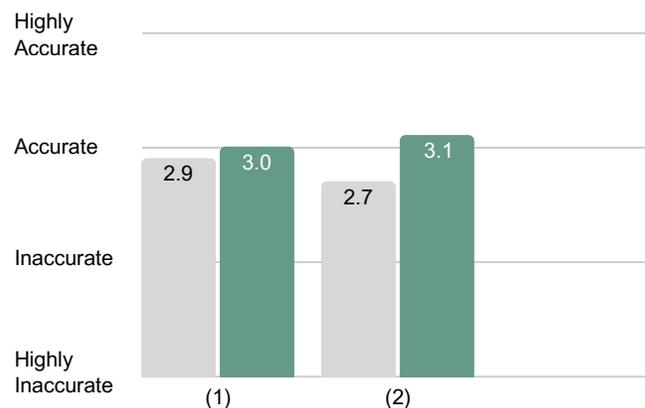
Leadership Effectiveness

Principal Leadership

In Fall 2024, Principals from 10 Omaha-based schools participated in a community of practice focused on NAESP competencies. Principals were asked to complete a self-reflective assessment at two time points (January & May). Reflective assessments provided several constructs and asked respondents to rate themselves on a scale of (1) highly inaccurate, (2) inaccurate, (3) accurate or (4) highly accurate. Example questions are highlighted below. Full report details are available upon reasonable request. Aggregated scores are reported below at each time point: (1) Fall 2024=Grey; (3) Spring 2025=Green.

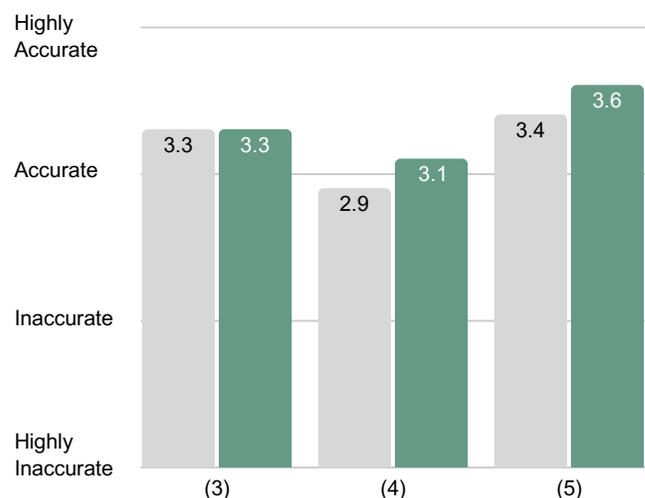
→ **Strategy 2.2:** Establish relationships and support collaboration with early care and education, including home visitors. Birth to entering school (ECE) programs in the community.

- (1) I am familiar with and have established relationships with ECE programs in my community.
- (2) Our school provides opportunities and supports to kindergarten teachers to meet with ECE teachers and staff (both those on-site and in community-based programs and including home visitors).



→ **Strategy 2.3:** Ensure smooth transitions for students and families not only between the variety of ECE programs and kindergarten, but also across the birth through 3rd grade continuum.

- (3) Our school has a transition plan in place to welcome and embrace students and families new to our school.
- (4) We reach out to and partner with ECE programs and community organizations to support the transitions of students and families.
- (5) We have a well-defined, manageable, and shared process to help parents register at our school. (i.e., supportive of languages other than English)



Leadership Effectiveness

Principal Self-Efficacy

Principals (n=10) engaged in the SECP community of practice were asked to rate their leadership self-efficacy across 5 domains. Enhanced feelings of self-efficacy were seen across each domain from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025.

Develop Goals

1. Develop clear goals and expectations for teaching utilizing the School as Hub approach
2. Develop a strategic plan for achieving goals within the School as Hub approach
3. Develop clear and achievable goals using the School as Hub approach

Guide Teachers

1. Guide teachers about educational matters using the School as Hub approach
2. Observe teaching and provide helpful feedback using the School as Hub approach
3. Using school-based self-assessment to improve teaching and learning using the School as Hub approach

Create a Positive and Safe Learning Environment

1. Promote a safe school environment for students which is free from bullying using a School as Hub approach
2. Ensure a learning environment in which students feel safe using the School as Hub approach
3. Promote a good teacher-student relationship using the School as Hub approach

Motivate Teachers

1. Create enthusiasm and engagement among teachers using the School as Hub approach
2. Motivate teachers for teaching and instruction using the School as Hub approach
3. Motivate teachers to commit to goals using the School as Hub approach

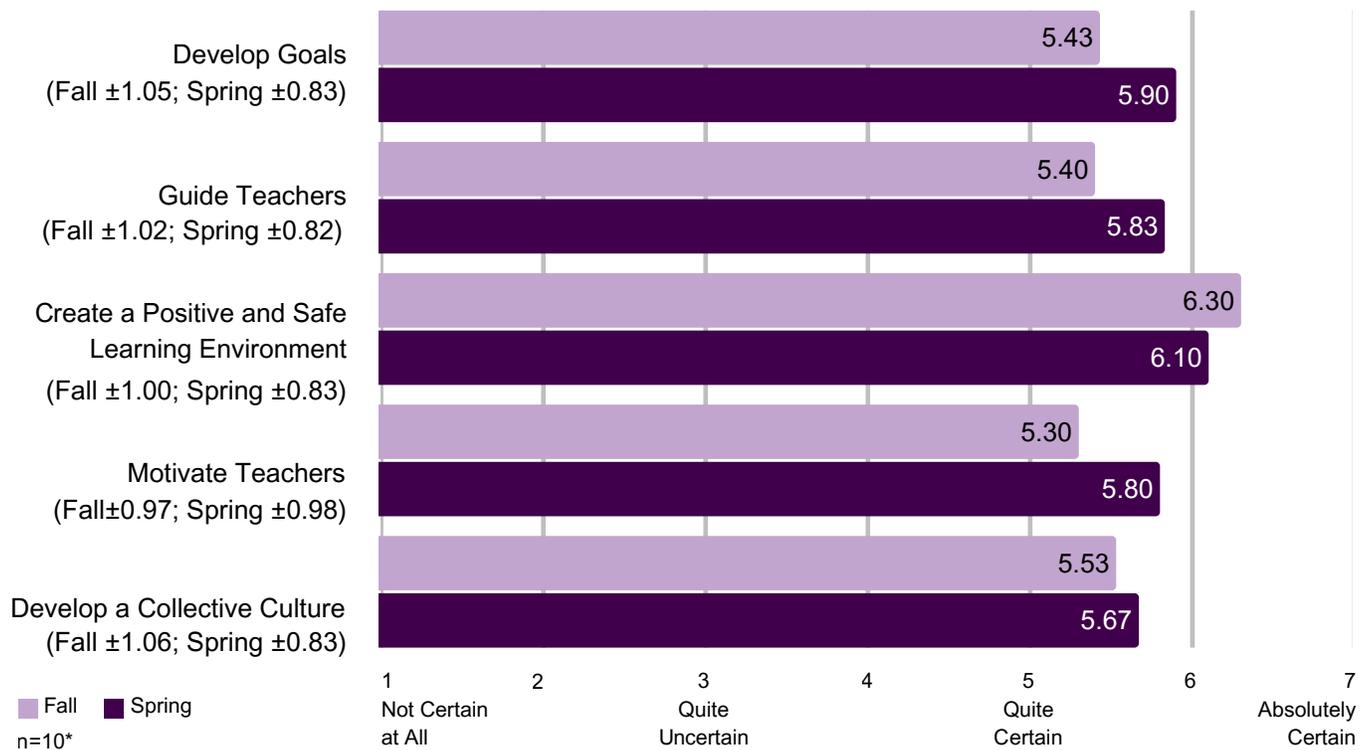
Develop a Collective Culture

1. Develop a collective culture in which everyone works to achieve shared goals using the School as Hub approach
2. Develop a culture in which teachers support one another using the School as Hub approach
3. Promote a shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching using a School as Hub approach

Leadership Effectiveness

Principal Self-Efficacy

Domain mean scores on a scale of 1-7 can be seen below. Growth was seen in all domains.



Greatest Growth Areas

- Developing clear goals and expectations for teaching using the School as Hub approach (Fall: 5.3; Spring: 5.9)
- Using school-based self-assessment to improve teaching and learning using the School as Hub approach (Fall: 5.3; Spring: 5.9)
- Creating enthusiasm and engagement among the teachers using the School as Hub approach (Fall: 5.3; Spring: 5.8)
- Motivating the teachers for teaching and instruction using the School as Hub approach (Fall: 5.3; Spring: 5.8)

Overall Scale Mean Scores



*Some respondents chose not to answer all of the questions



Action Planning Progress

During the annual Action Planning Retreats within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, focus groups were held with members of each District team. District team members from Bellevue Public Schools, DC West Community Schools, Omaha Public Schools, and Millard Public Schools were asked to reflect on their engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan over the past year. A 5-question semi-structured interview guide was utilized to evaluate progress, challenges and future directions within the three primary program domains of **Leadership Effectiveness**, **Instructional Excellence**, and **Family & Community Partnerships Engagement**. Scores below represent the mean level of progress districts felt they made across domain areas from a scale of 1 to 100.

Leadership Effectiveness



AREAS OF PROGRESS

- Stronger staff commitment and active involvement in action plan efforts
- Expansion of leadership teams and access to monthly professional development
- Improved communication and more effective goal-setting resulting in enhanced collaboration

CHALLENGES

- Constraints on staff time reduced opportunities for meetings and peer collaboration
- Ambiguity in school staff responsibilities and ongoing changes in organizational focus
- Administrative limitations and communication gaps between districts and Institute staff

FUTURE PLANS

- Enhance range of resources to support effective leadership and project implementation
- Clearly define staff roles and increase staff support to reduce role strain
- Provide more opportunities for teacher feedback on action plan goals

“They [Principal] encourage and support our programming and our work.”

“There’s so many things we want to do just to make sure it’s not a checkbox for us but continuing to reevaluate and deepen that goal or outcomes that we’re looking for.”



Action Planning Progress

Instructional Excellence

82

1

100

AREAS OF PROGRESS

- Building a strong social-emotional foundation for students
- Enhanced teacher capacity to create responsive learning environments that meet the varying needs of students
- Improved instructional planning and devotion to intentional curriculum work

CHALLENGES

- Ongoing shifts in curriculum disrupted continuity and hindered instructional consistency
- Educator fatigue due to repetitive nature of scripted literacy instruction and lack of adequate support for classrooms
- Barriers in communication, time restraints, and systematic use of data in instructional planning

FUTURE PLANS

- Formulate a more efficient teaching plan to support new curriculum implementation
- Strengthen instructional planning by integrating qualitative and quantitative data into regular team discussions
- Increase access to bilingual and relevant curriculum materials
- Broaden staff access to coaching and professional development

“I think we’ve done a good job of the Responsive Classroom and making sure everyone’s on the same page and really helping kids socially, emotionally before we can really worry about academics.”

“That’s really important and developmentally appropriate that kids have that opportunity to have that free play. So, understanding that maybe kindergarten is not going to always look like worksheets and that kind of thing, that they should be up and should be interacting with toys and that kind of stuff, that is my opinion.”

Family and Community Partnerships Engagement

91

1

100

AREAS OF PROGRESS

- Establishment of safe and welcoming environments to promote family/child engagement and satisfaction
- Increased opportunities for socializations and family engagement in the school community
- Expansion of partnerships between childcare, schools, and families

CHALLENGES

- Lack of time and consistent opportunities to build meaningful relationships with families
- Difficulty connecting with families or caregivers working nonstandard hours
- Gaps in communication resources for outreach to families with limited English proficiency

FUTURE PLANS

- Establish organized and accessible support systems to meet family engagement needs in and outside of the classroom
- Strengthen partnerships with community resources and childcare providers to support transitions and consistency
- Improve flexibility around scheduling to boost engagement at family events.

“The relationships, the collaboration...and the communication, and I think it starts with these traits here. Like the positive things that they bring every single day.”

“I think it’s the time to build those relationships... You can’t just walk in.”



Districts & Institute Collaboration

In the Spring of 2025, evaluators within the Munroe Meyer Institute and the University of Nebraska at Omaha conducted an external collaboration evaluation between the Buffett Early Childhood Institute and its key partners within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (SECP). The two primary objectives of the evaluation were (1) to determine the level of collaboration between the Institute and plan stakeholders within school districts and (2) to determine the barriers and facilitators for collaboration between the Institute and plan stakeholders.

A total of 70 surveys were completed by plan stakeholders across 10 school districts (6 full-implementation districts, 4 customized-assistance districts) and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. Survey respondents included 3-to-5-year-old classroom educators/paraprofessionals (n=14), home visitors/family facilitators (n=12), school-based leaders (n=18), district-based administrators (n=20), and Institute staff (n=6).



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Survey Findings

A survey was developed in collaboration between a Munroe Meyer Institute Education and Child Development Faculty member and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute Research and Evaluation Staff. The District survey was comprised of closed/open-ended questions and included an adapted version of a previously validated "Level of Collaboration" scale.* Questions were developed based on the Action Plan program domains of focus noted below. Respondents were asked to identify the level of collaboration they believe they had with Institute Staff and with other Districts within the SECP in each of the following areas. Institute staff members were given a similar survey and asked to identify the level of collaboration with districts as a whole.

PROGRAM DOMAINS OF FOCUS

Leadership Effectiveness	Instructional Excellence	Family and Community Partnership Engagement
District Organization and Capacity	Foundations for Early Learning	Family Focus
School Leadership	Essential Child Experiences	Community-School Connections

LEVEL OF COLLABORATION

Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loosely defined roles Little communication All decisions are made independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to each other Somewhat defined roles Formal communication All decisions are made independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share information and resources Defined roles Regular communication Some shared decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share ideas, information, and resources Regular and focused communication Frequent shared decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent and strategic communication Mutual trust Shared decision-making in all decisions Consensus reached in all decisions

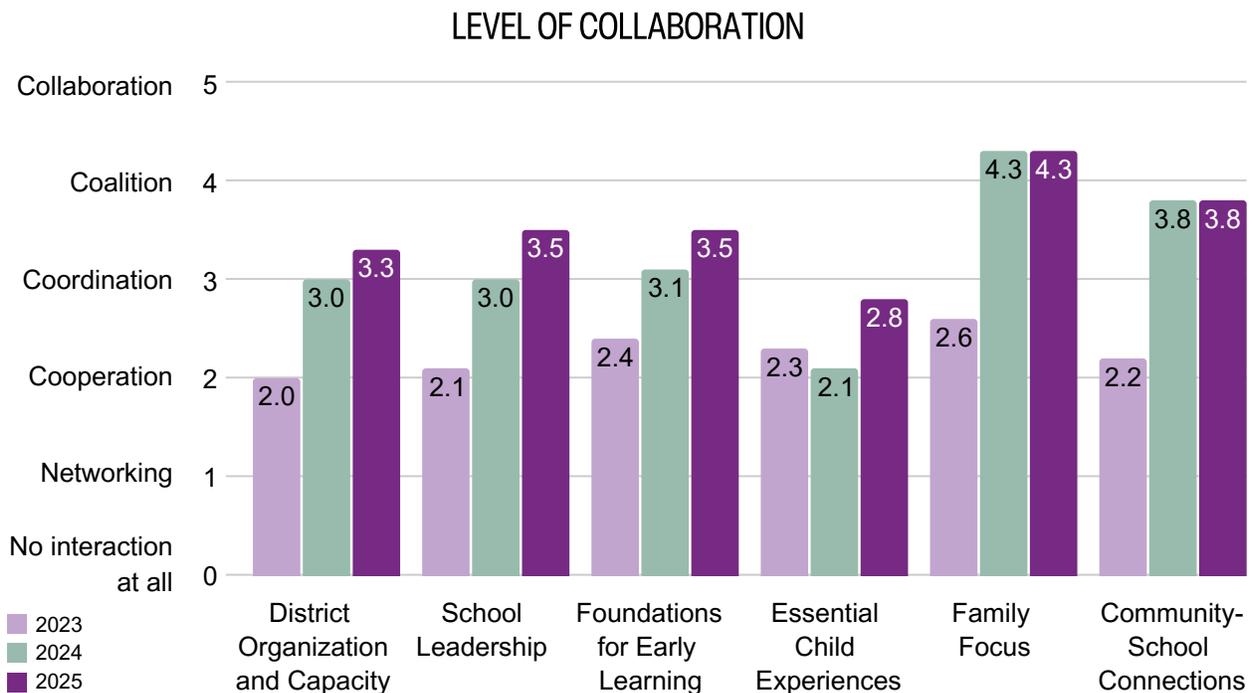
*Survey adapted from: Frey, B. B., Lohmeier, J. H., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring collaboration among grant partners. *American journal of evaluation*, 27(3), 383-392. Please note only respondents who identified as engaged in the action planning process or engaged in domain-specific goal setting completed the collaboration scale.



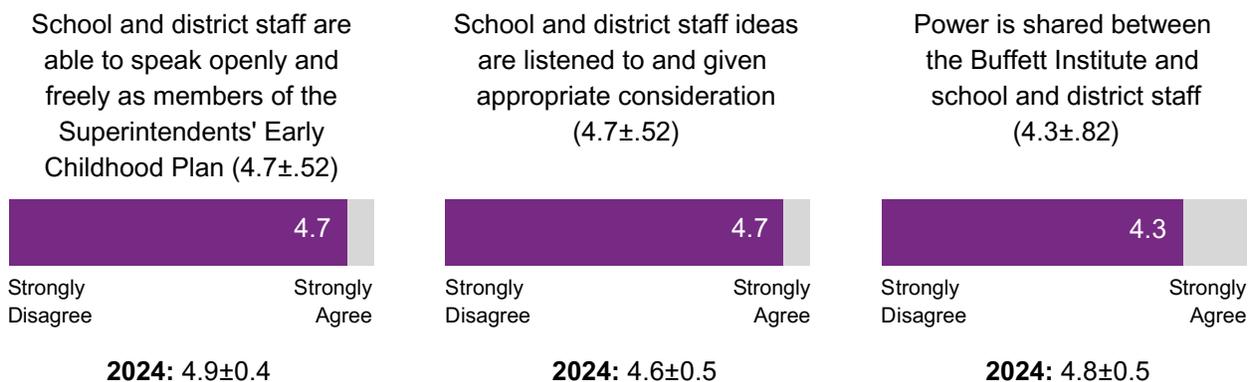
Districts & Institute Collaboration

Institute Staff Survey Findings

Institute Staff members (n=6) were asked to identify the level of collaboration they have with all district/school stakeholders on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Institute collaboration perceptions had a mean of 3.5 in 2025, compared to a mean of 3.7 in 2024, indicating a level of Coalition (i.e., share ideas, information, and resources; defined roles; regular and/or focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making).



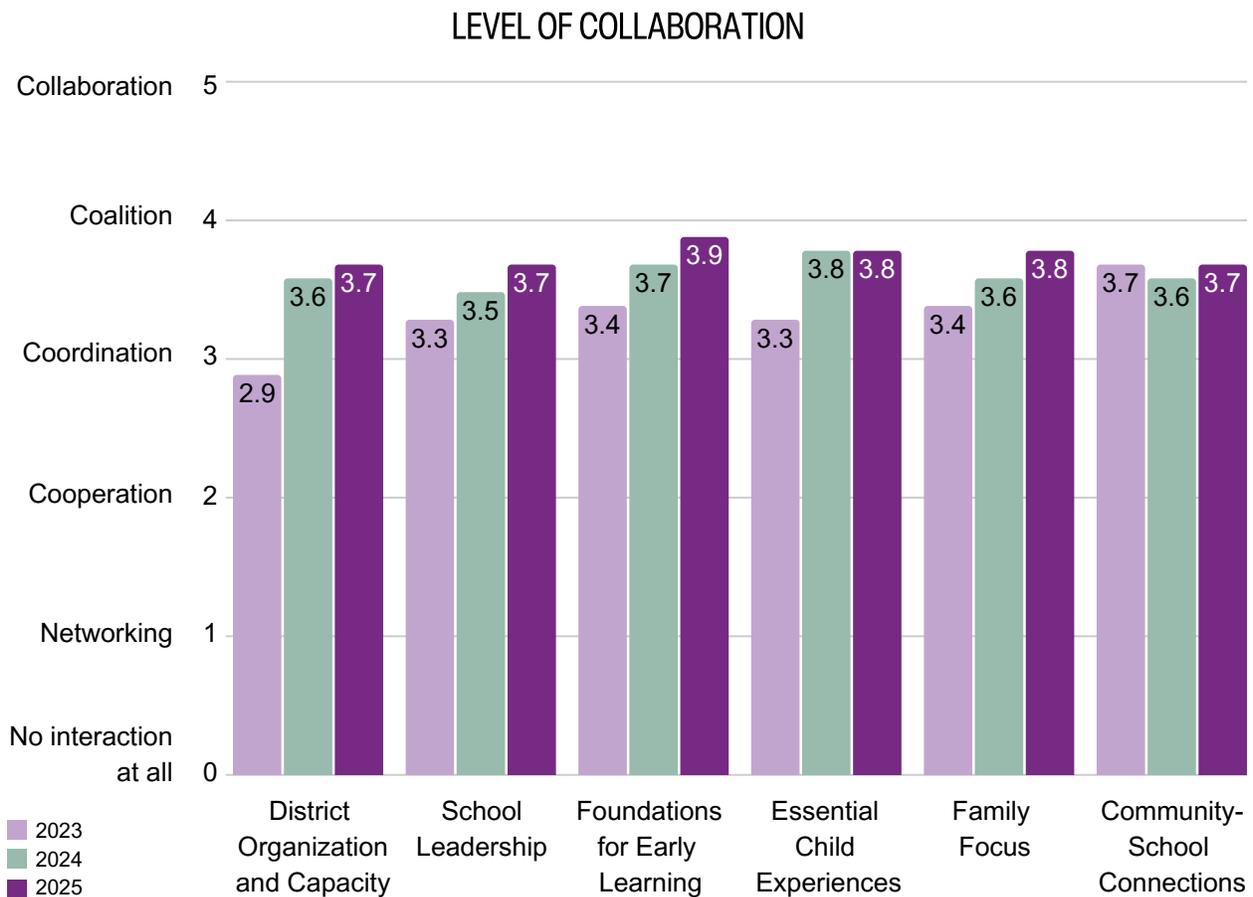
Institute staff (n=6) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Full Implementation Districts Survey Findings: Collaboration with the Institute

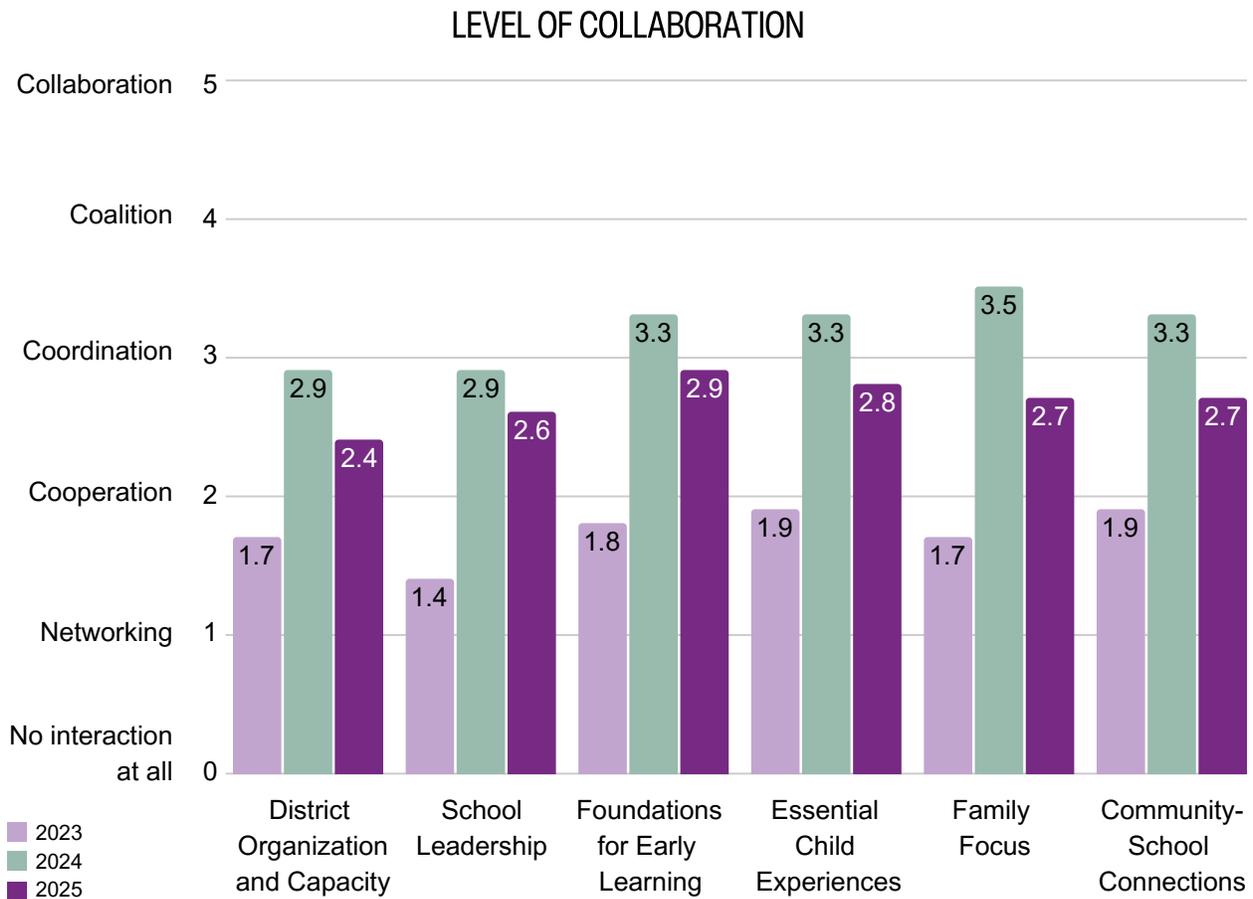
School/district program stakeholders from full-implementation districts were asked to reflect on their level of collaboration with the Institute using a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Findings for district stakeholders (n=58) can be seen below in dark purple, compared to findings from the 2023-2024 school year (green) and the 2022-2023 school year (light purple). Respondents came from the following districts: Bellevue Public Schools, DC West Community Schools, Millard Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools. District stakeholders identified a mean of 3.8 for 2025, which increased slightly from 2024 (M=3.6). Responses for 2025 indicated a level of coalition (i.e., share ideas, information, and resources; regular and focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making).



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Full Implementation District Survey Findings: Collaboration With Other Districts

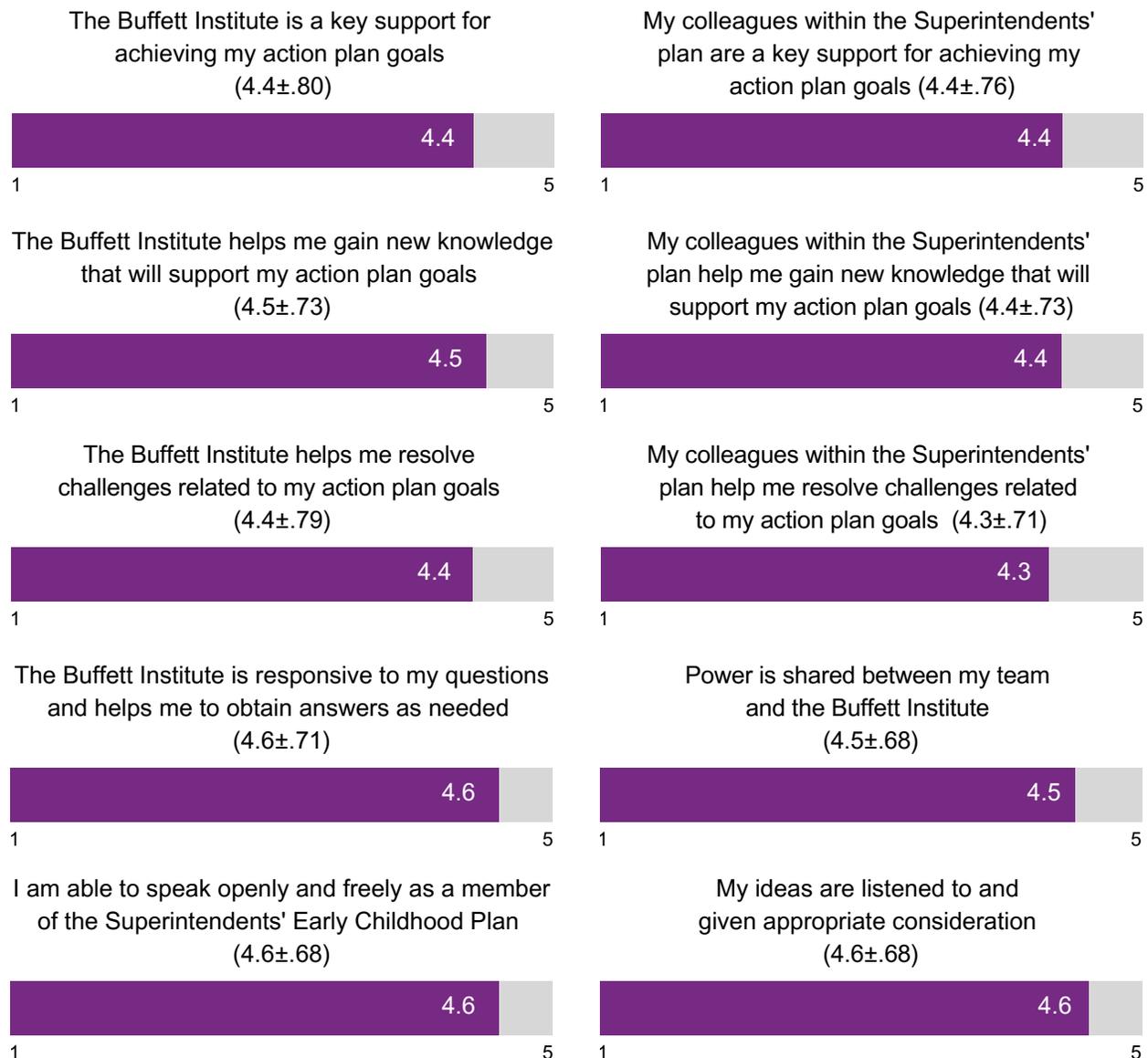
Respondents from full-implementation districts (n=58) described their level of collaboration with other districts in the SECP (0=no interaction at all, 5=collaboration). Only individuals who self-identified as a workgroup member or a participant in an Institute led Community of Practice (COP) answered this set of questions. Overall, the average response mean was 2.7, indicating that staff from full-implementation districts typically reported coordination with other districts.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Full Implementation Districts Survey Findings: Levels of Agreement

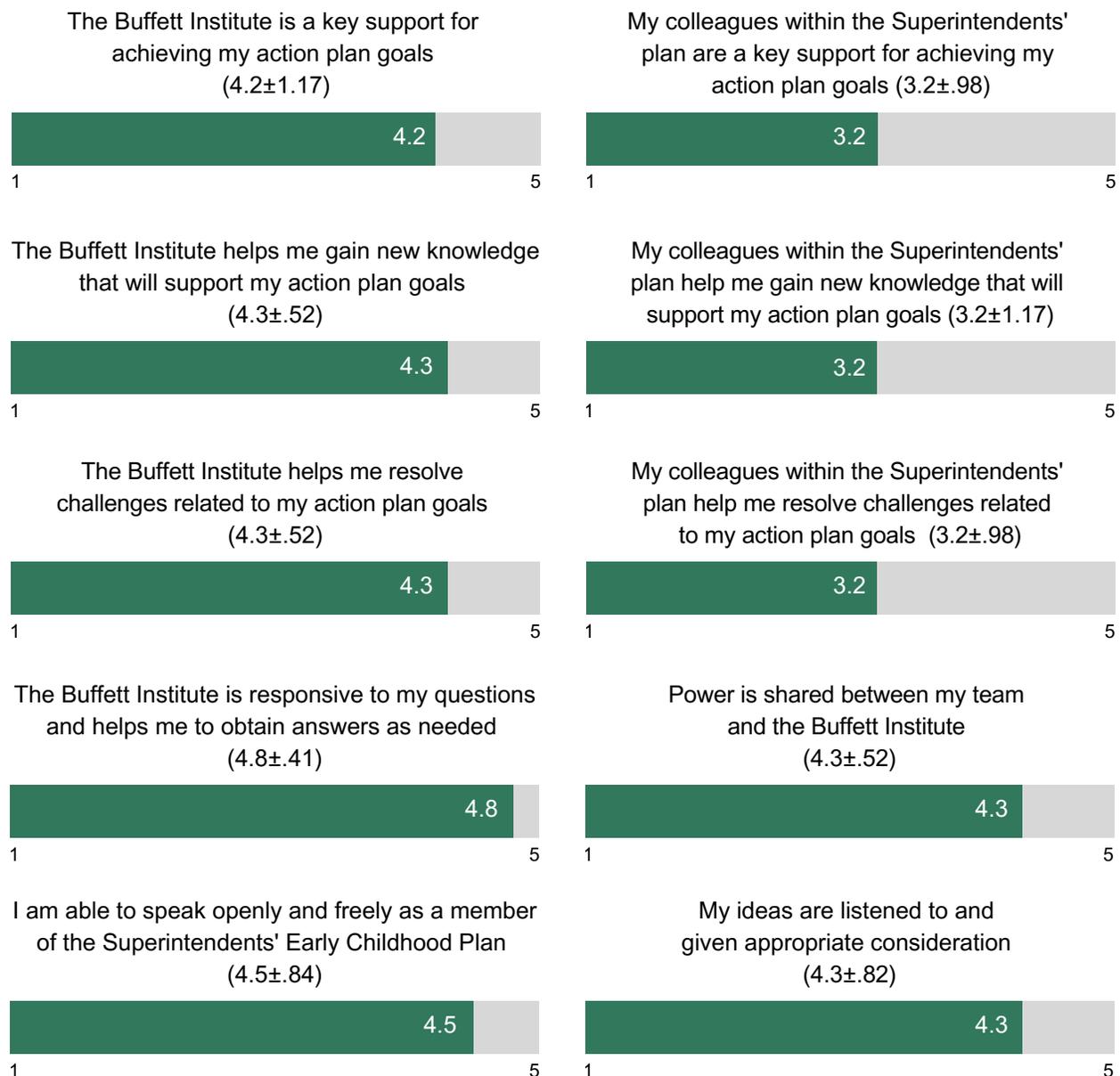
Plan stakeholders from full-implementation districts (n=58) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were related to ideas being listened to and given appropriate consideration (M=4.6±.68), district staff's ability to speak openly (M=4.6±.68), and Institute responsiveness to questions (M=4.6±.71). The lowest level of agreement was noted in the following statement: Colleagues within the SECP help resolve challenges related to action plan goals. (M=4.3±.71), although responses were still at the level of "somewhat agree." Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Customized Assistance District Survey Findings: Levels of Agreement

Plan stakeholders from customized-assistance districts (n=6) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest level of agreement was related to the Institute being responsive to questions and helping obtain the answers as needed (M=4.8±.41). The lowest levels of agreement were related to colleagues within the SECP being a key support for achieving action plan goals (M=3.2±.98), helping gain new knowledge that support action plan goals (M=3.2±1.17), and helping resolve challenges related to action plan goals (M=3.2±.98). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Comparison of Findings by Stakeholder Type

A comparison analysis for the level of collaboration between the Institute and all districts (full-implementation and customized-assistance) for the action plan domains was completed across district stakeholder types. Responses were split into four groups: (1) paraprofessional/educator (n=14), (2) family facilitator/home visitor (n=12), (3) school-based leader (n=18), and (4) district-based leader(n=20). Only individuals who self-identified as engaged in the action planning process answered the collaboration scale questions. Mean findings were based on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all, 5=collaboration).

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND CAPACITY



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



■ Paraprofessionals/Educators ■ Family Facilitators/Home Visitors ■ School-Based Leaders ■ District-Based Leaders

Districts & Institute Collaboration

FOUNDATIONS FOR EARLY LEARNING



ESSENTIAL CHILD EXPERIENCES



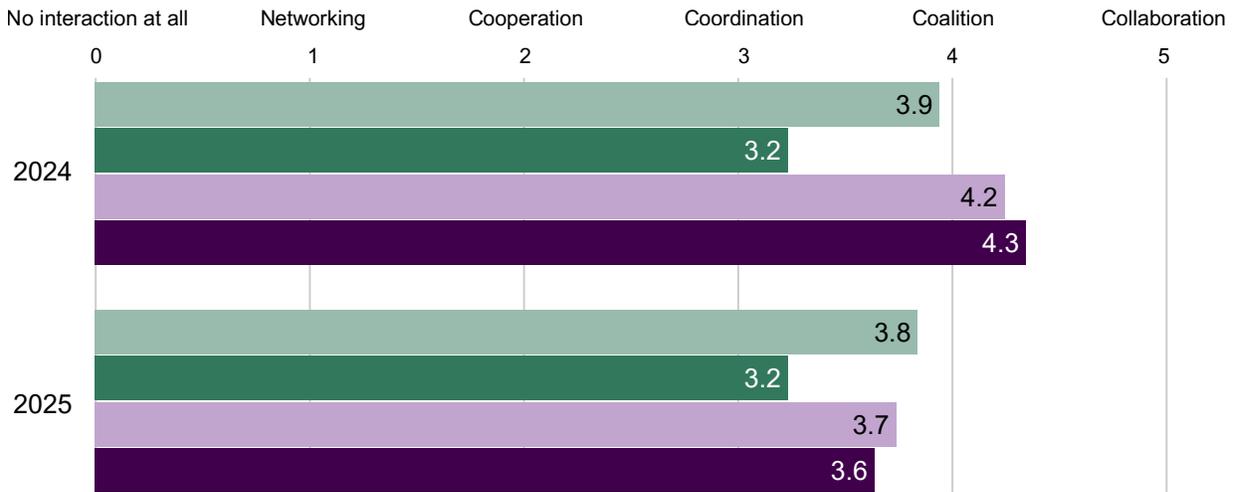
■ Paraprofessionals/Educators
 ■ Family Facilitators/Home Visitors
 ■ School-Based Leaders
 ■ District-Based Leaders

Districts & Institute Collaboration

FAMILY FOCUS



COMMUNITY-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS



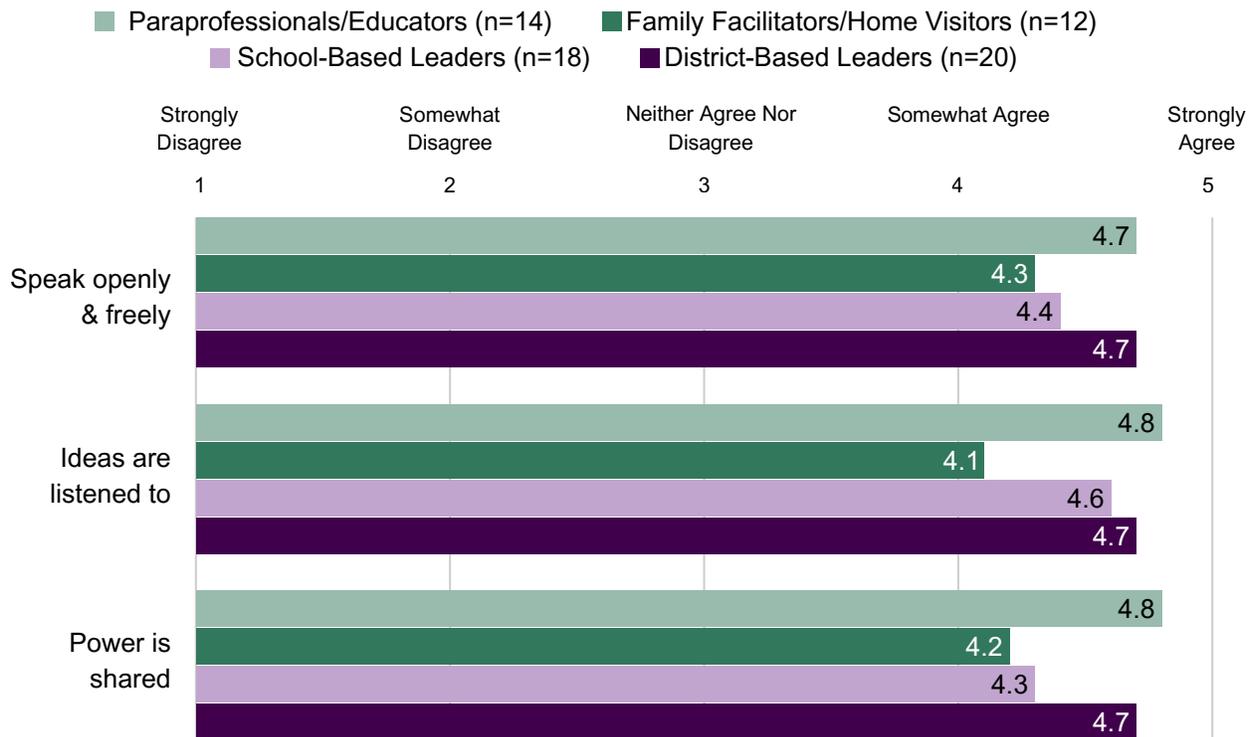
■ Paraprofessionals/Educators ■ Family Facilitators/Home Visitors ■ School-Based Leaders ■ District-Based Leaders

Districts & Institute Collaboration

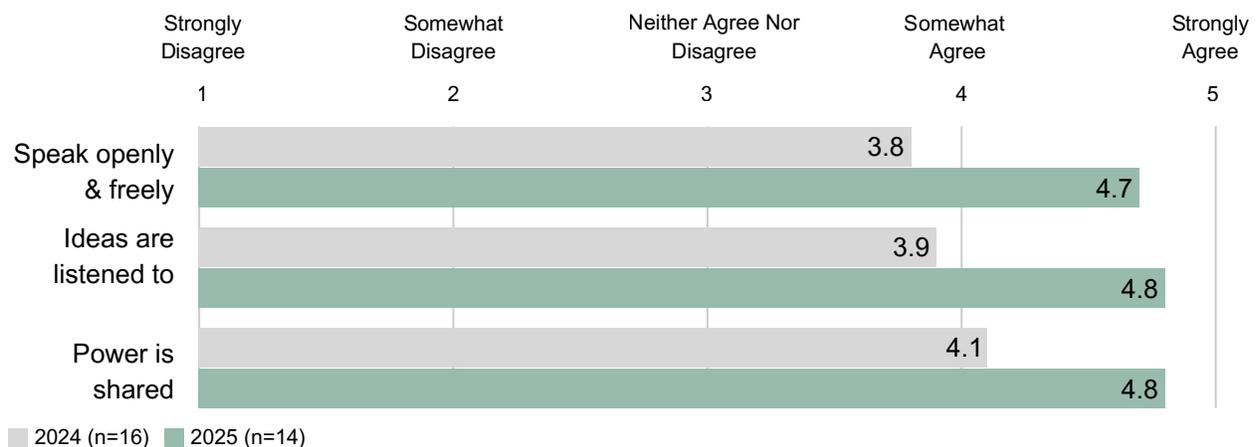
Level of Collaboration Findings by Stakeholder Type: 2024 & 2025 Comparisons

Findings are separated by district stakeholder type for the following: (1) School and district staff are able to speak openly and freely as members of the SECP, (2) School and district staff ideas are listened to, and their ideas are given appropriate consideration, and (3) Power is shared between the Buffett Institute and school and district staff. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

2025 FINDINGS FOR ALL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

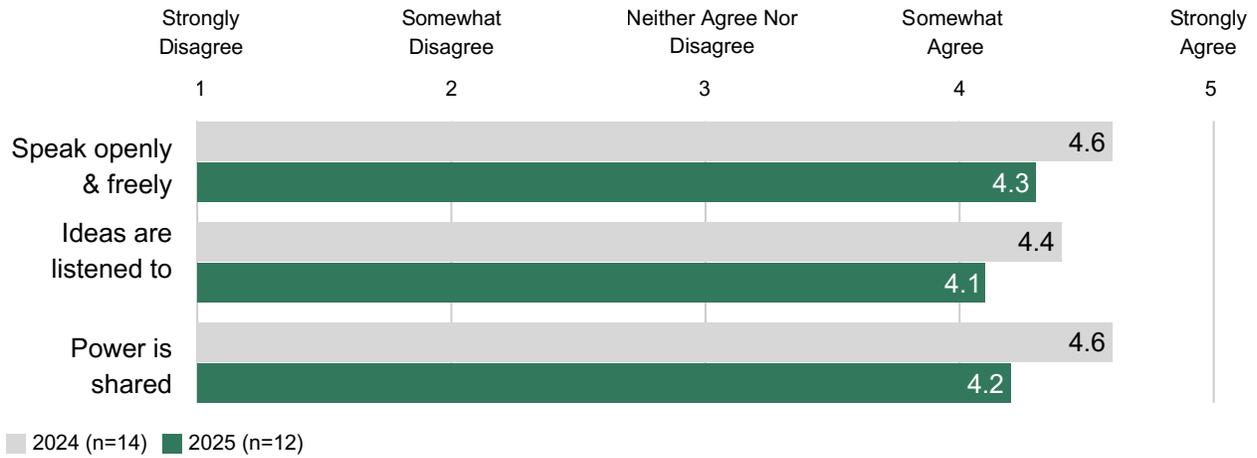


PARAPROFESSIONAL/EDUCATOR FINDINGS: 2024 AND 2025

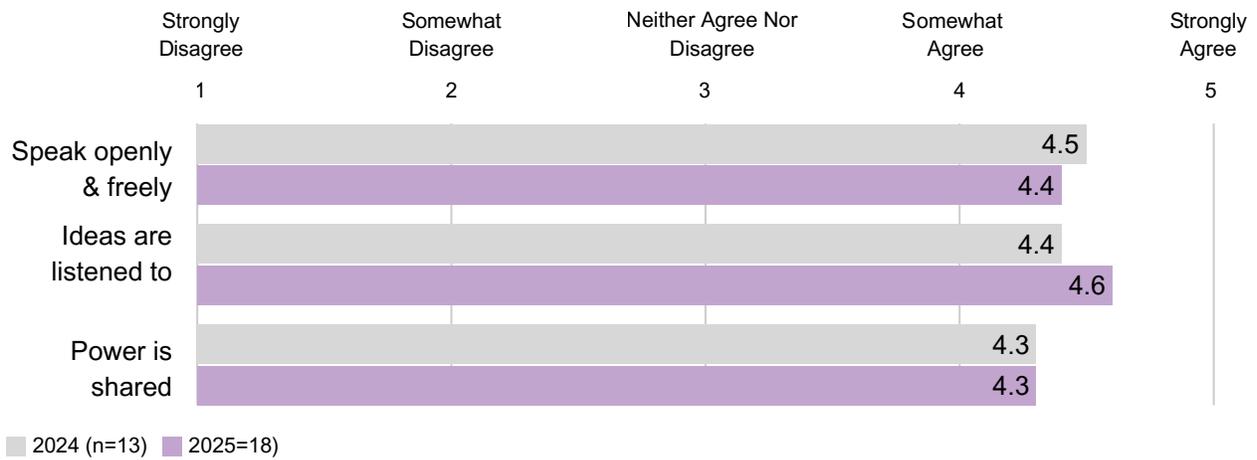


Districts & Institute Collaboration

FAMILY FACILITATOR/HOME VISITOR FINDINGS: 2024 AND 2025



SCHOOL-BASED LEADER FINDINGS: 2024 AND 2025



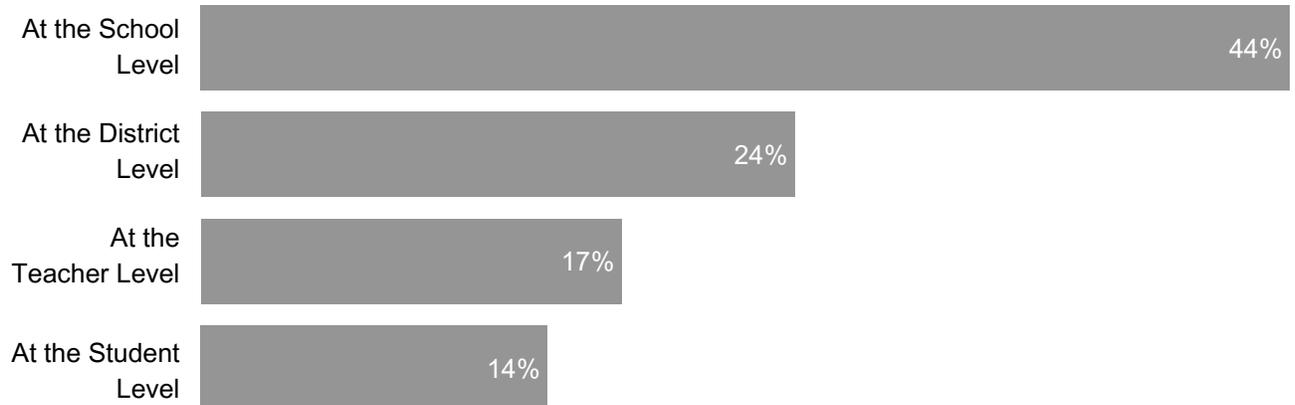
DISTRICT-BASED LEADER FINDINGS: 2024 AND 2025



Districts & Institute Collaboration

District Perceptions of SECP Impact: Where is the SECP Making the Biggest Difference?

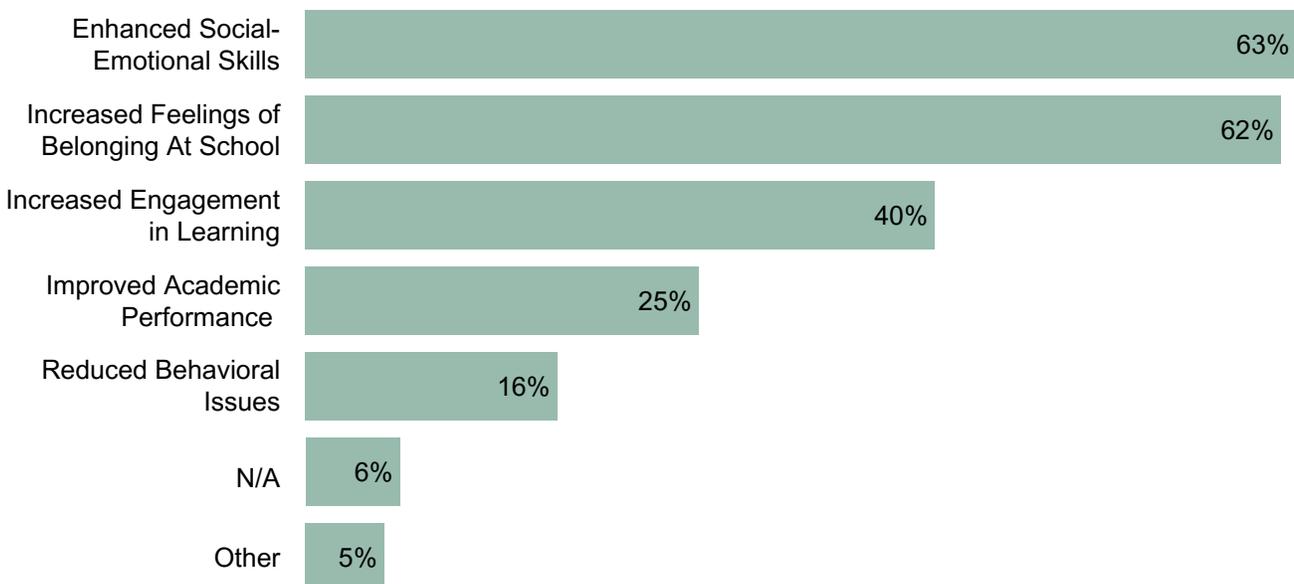
The chart below illustrates district stakeholders' (n=63) perspectives on where the greatest changes have occurred as a result of participating in the SECP. It was most common for respondents to report that the greatest changes took place at the school level (44%), followed by the district level (24%), the teacher level (17%), and the student level (14%).



Districts & Institute Collaboration

District Perceptions of SECP Impact: Student Outcomes

Stakeholders (n=63) were asked to share how engagement in the SECP has influenced student outcomes. The most common impacts noted by respondents were enhanced social-emotional skills (63%) and increased feelings of belonging at school (62%), followed by increased engagement in learning (40%), improved academic performance (25%), and reduced behavioral issues (16%). A few participants responded that there was no impact on student outcomes (6%). Participants who reported other impacts (5%) highlighted improved school readiness skills, stronger collaboration with families (which supports student outcomes), and more structured processes across the district.



Respondents were asked to share specific examples of changes in student performance or behavior since engaging in the SECP, and two primary themes emerged. First, respondents felt that there have been overall improvements in social-emotional skills and curriculum. Second, they reported stronger relationships with families and improved parent involvement and buy-in.



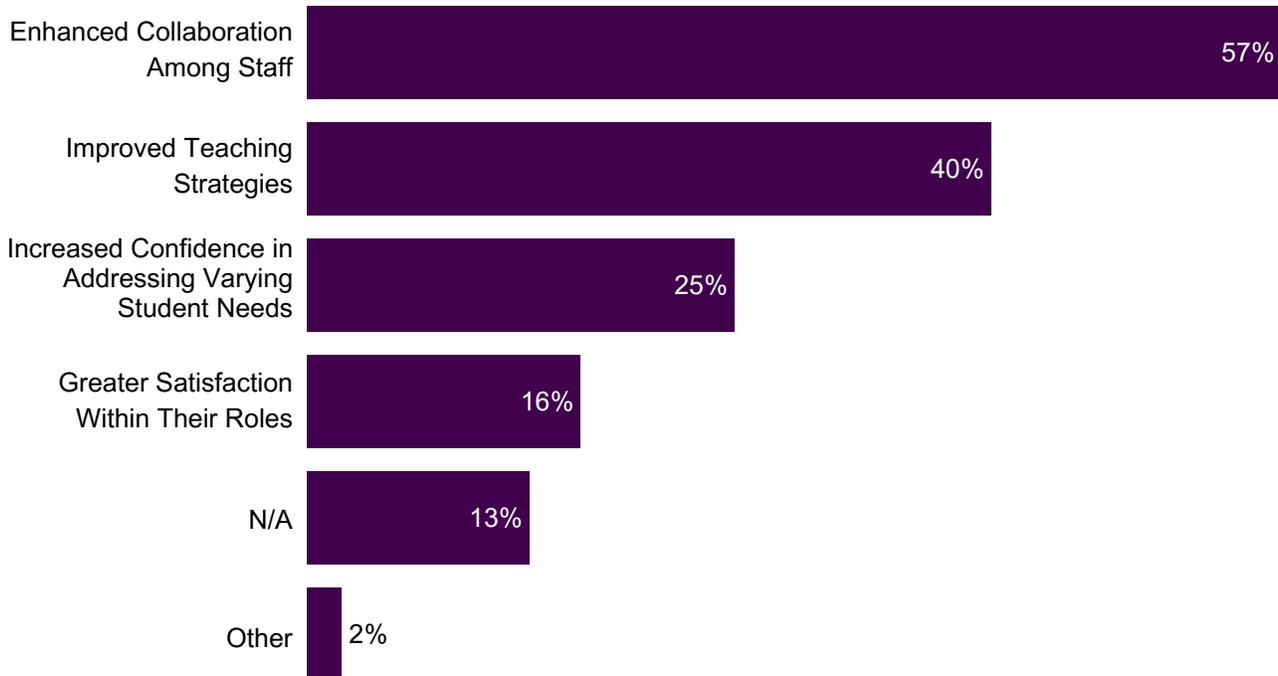
Parents having more opportunities to engage with the school before their child even attends has created more ease and connection between our school and families. Socializations have also created more opportunities for families and children to practice social and emotional skills within a group setting at our school.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

District Perceptions of SECP Impact: Teacher Impact

Participants (n=63) were asked how the SECP has impacted teachers. Enhanced collaboration among staff was the most common response (57%), followed by improved teaching strategies (40%), increased confidence in addressing varying student needs (25%), and greater satisfaction within their roles (16%). Thirteen percent of respondents felt there had been no impact on teachers.



Respondents were asked to share what professional development or resource provided by the SECP had the most significant impact on teachers, and two primary themes emerged. First, respondents felt that the Responsive Classroom and social-emotional curriculum training and resources had the largest impact on teachers. Respondents also felt that having more collaboration and meeting time with their team members had a significant impact.



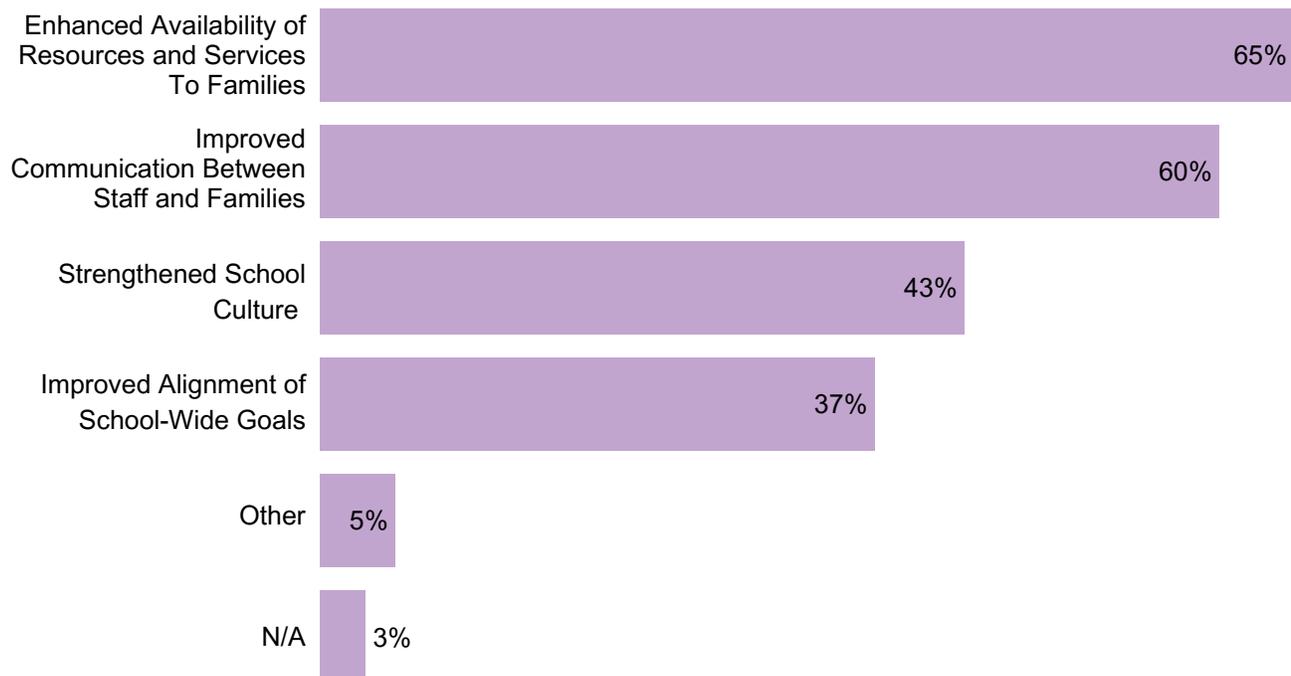
Buffett has really helped with targeting para training, which improves teaching strategies for paraprofessionals. I've also been able to collaborate more with our staff that is participating within the Teacher Leadership Network.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

District Perceptions of SECP Impact: School Impact

District survey participants (n=63) were asked about impacts at the school level related to participation in the SECP. Sixty-five percent of respondents reported enhanced availability of resources and services to families, followed by improved communication between staff and families (60%), strengthened school culture (43%), and improved alignment of school-wide goals (37%). Three percent of respondents felt there had been no impact at the school level. Other responses included improved systems.



Respondents were asked to describe any noticeable changes in their school environment or operations due to engagement in the SECP. Two primary themes emerged: (1) respondents felt that there had been improved family connections and engagement, which some specified was a result of the home visiting program, and (2) they also felt that, overall, social-emotional development strengthened across schools.



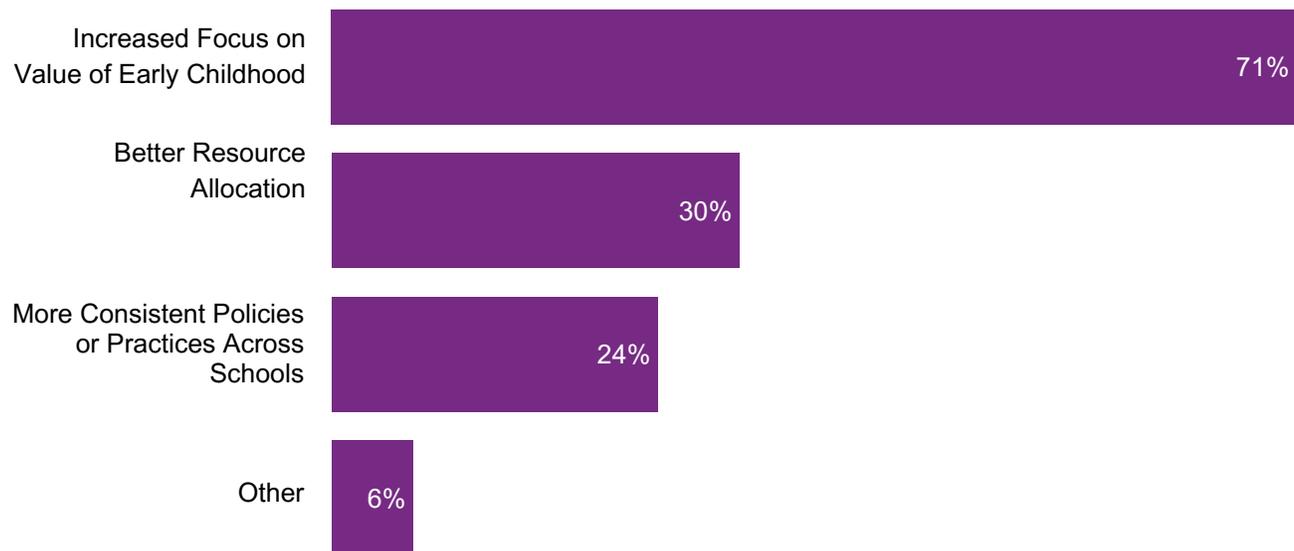
Our schools definitely view collaboration with families in different and more positive ways as a result of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. We are seeing families through a strength lens.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

District Perceptions of SECP Impact: District Impact

Participants (n=63) were asked to select impacts they had observed at the district level as a result of SECP participation. Increased focus on the value of early childhood was the most commonly reported impact (71%), followed by better resource allocation (30%), and more consistent policies or practices across schools (24%). Other responses included teacher leadership and district systems being more aligned as a result.



Respondents were asked to describe any noticeable changes in their district environment or operations due to engagement in the SECP, and a primary theme emerged. Respondents felt that, overall, there has been a stronger focus and emphasis placed on early childhood programs, young learners, and their families.



Admin from the district office are truly supporting Early Childhood by involving representation on the ground level of planning, collaboration and enhancing current practices in the classroom. By extending resources to the preschool level, including a commitment to strengthening teachers' capacities in teaching preliteracy and language skills, there is a sense of renewed interest and excitement which trickles down to the students!



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Institute staff members identified the average level of collaboration between the Institute and districts involved in the SECP as being at the Coalition level (i.e., share ideas, information, and resources; regular and focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making). Staff at full-implementation districts also rated their average level of collaboration with the Institute as Coalition.

When asked their level of agreement on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree), Institute staff, on average, strongly agreed that school and district staff are able to speak freely as members of the SECP ($M=4.7\pm.52$) and that district staff ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration ($M=4.7\pm.52$). Institute staff somewhat agreed that power is shared between the Institute and districts ($M=4.3\pm.82$). Full-implementation district respondents, on average, strongly agreed that power is shared between the Institute and districts ($M=4.5\pm.68$), district staff ideas receive appropriate consideration ($M=4.6\pm.68$), and school and district staff can speak freely ($M=4.6\pm.68$). Customized-assistance district respondents strongly agreed that school staff can speak openly and freely ($M=4.5\pm.84$). They somewhat agreed that the Institute and districts share power ($M=4.3\pm.52$) and their ideas receive appropriate consideration ($M=4.3\pm.82$).

Full-implementation district staff and customized-assistance staff strongly agreed that the Buffett Institute is responsive to their questions and helps them find answers as needed. Full-implementation respondents typically reported higher levels of agreement than respondents from customized-assistance districts, with the largest differences in agreement found in items regarding the impact of SECP colleagues on gaining knowledge, resolving challenges, and achieving action plan goals. Full-implementation participants, on average, somewhat agreed that their colleagues were helpful, while respondents from customized-assistance districts neither agreed nor disagreed that their colleagues were helpful.

Institute respondents identified the domain of Family Focus ($M=4.3$) as allowing for the greatest level of collaboration between districts and the Buffett Institute, while full-implementation districts identified Foundations for Early Learning ($M=3.9$) as the domain allowing for the greatest level of collaboration. Institute respondents reported the construct of Essential Child Experiences ($M=2.8$) as the area with the lowest level of collaboration, while full-implementation participants reported the lowest levels of collaboration to be tied to the domains of Organization and Capacity, School Leadership, and Community-School Connections ($M=3.7$).

Now in the third year of collaboration survey data collection, findings continue to demonstrate stable and positive collaboration between BECI and participating school districts. Institute and district staff consistently report strong communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making, indicators of sustained, high-quality partnerships that support early childhood systems change.



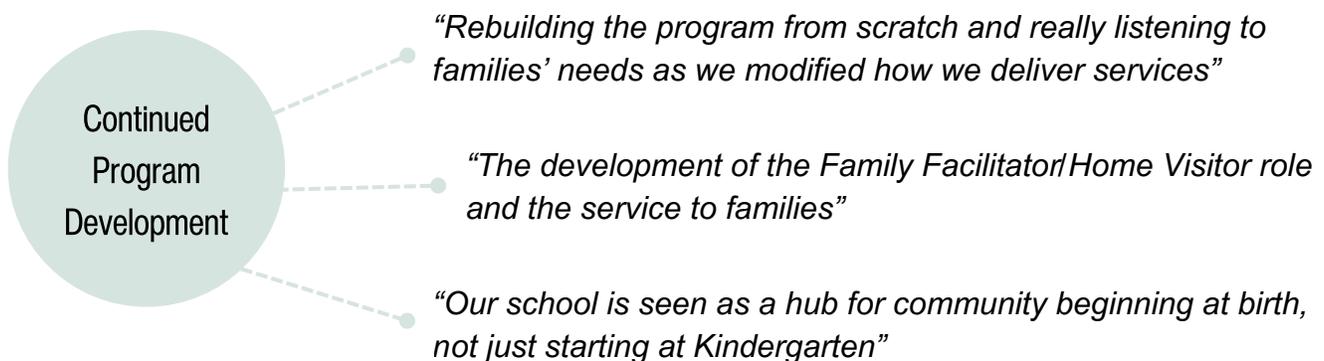
Districts & Institute Collaboration

Greatest Accomplishments of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: District Perspective

Four primary themes emerged when participants identified the SECP's greatest accomplishments: continued program development, district-Institute collaboration, enhanced professional learning, and advocacy for early childhood. Responses highlighted a comprehensive approach to enhancing childhood education through structural improvements, strategic partnerships, and policy-driven initiatives.

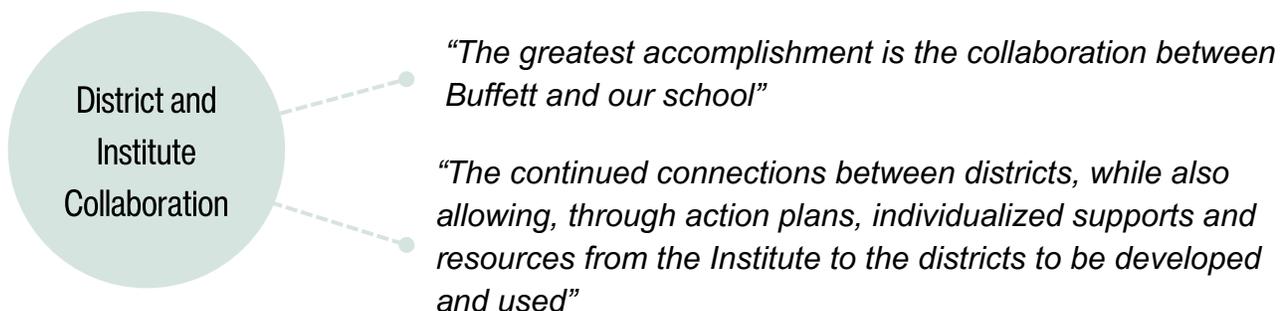
(1) Continued Program Development

A significant achievement identified was the growth and refinement of early childhood programs, with respondents emphasizing efforts to listen to families and adapt services accordingly. Additionally, expanding home visiting programs was identified as pivotal. Many responses emphasized the value of the "School as Hub" approach.



(2) District and Institute Collaboration

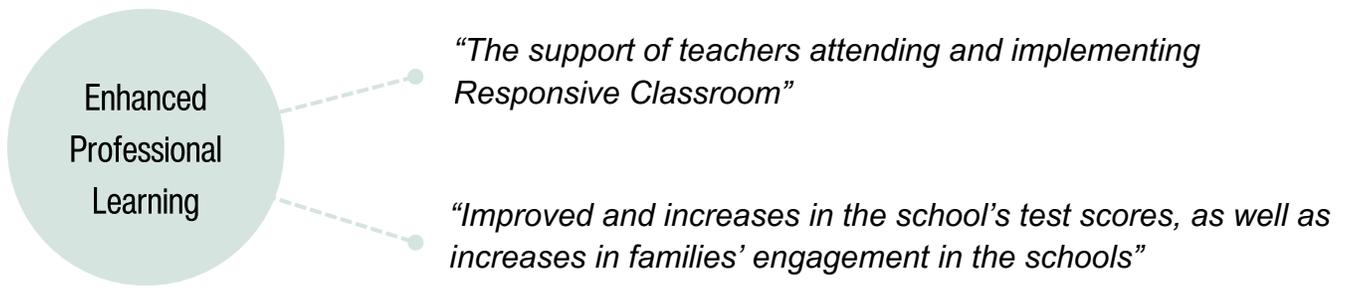
Participants reported collaboration between their district and the Institute played an integral role in the plan's success. Others highlighted efforts to align individualized supports.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

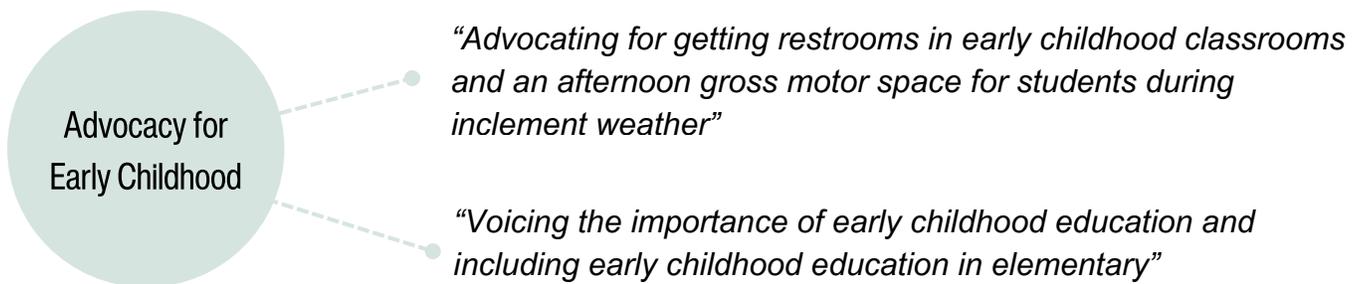
(3) Enhanced Professional Learning

Respondents emphasized how enhancing educational outcomes and professional development has been a priority. Improvements in school culture and instructional strategies, particularly through training initiatives like Responsive Classroom, were highlighted. Emphasis was placed on how these efforts have led to tangible results in educational outcomes.



(4) Advocacy for Early Childhood

Policy advocacy and infrastructure improvements were identified as central to the SECP. Respondents shared that the plan has influenced practical changes in schools. Others highlighted the broader policy impact of the plan.



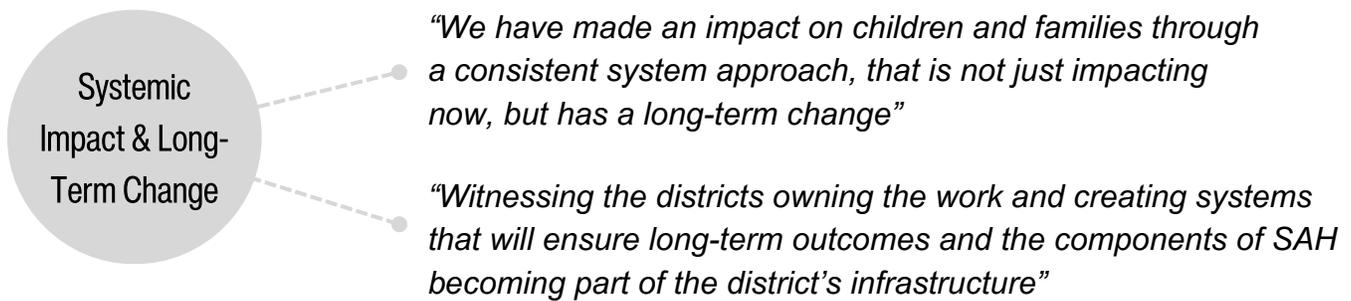
Districts & Institute Collaboration

Greatest Accomplishments of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: Institute Perspective

Participants identified three primary accomplishments of the SECP: systemic impact and long-term change, role clarity, and strong connections with schools.

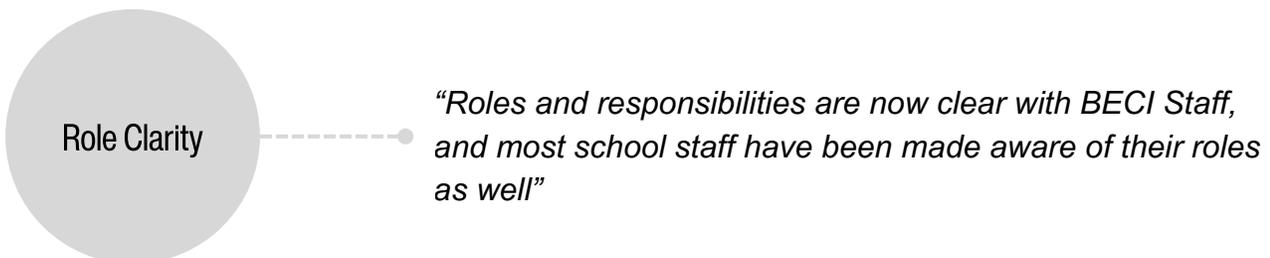
(1) Systemic Impact and Long-Term Change

A recurring theme in the responses was the broad, lasting impact of the plan on children, families, and school systems, with many respondents reinforcing the long-term vision of the Institute.



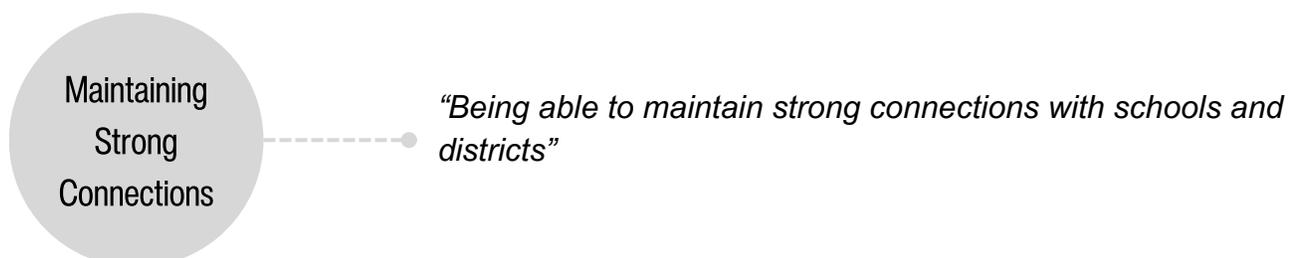
(2) Role Clarity

Another major accomplishment identified was the clarification of roles and responsibilities among BECI staff and district personnel.



(3) Maintaining Strong Connections

Strength of relationships between the SECP and participating schools and districts was emphasized throughout responses.



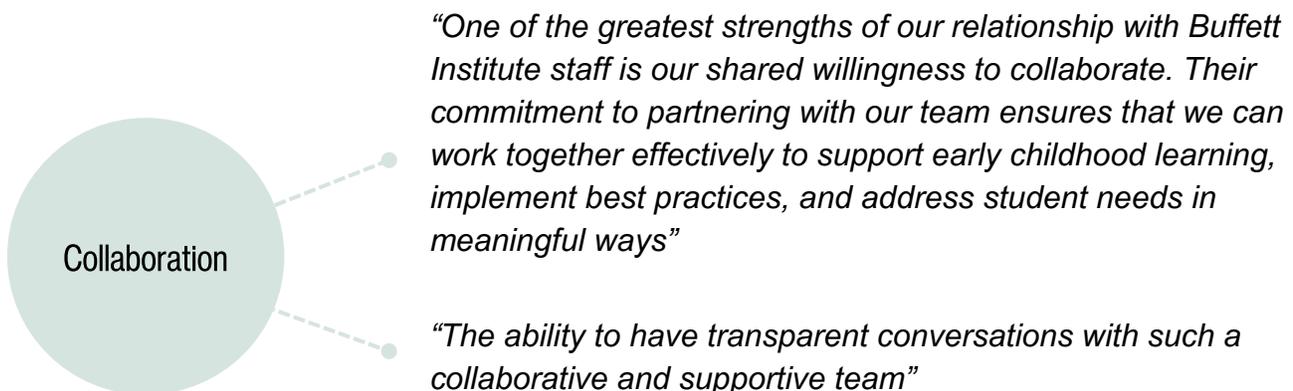
Districts & Institute Collaboration

Greatest Strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: District Perspective

Participants reported the greatest strengths of the SECP to be collaboration, communication, trust, professional support, and a shared commitment to early childhood education.

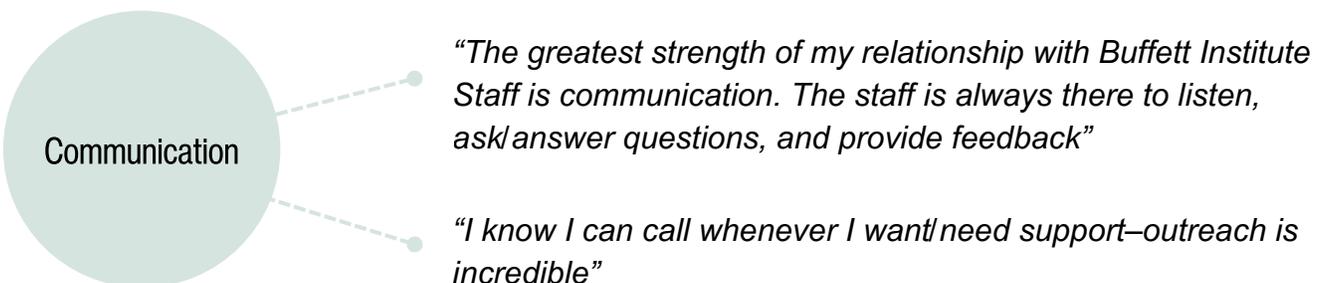
(1) Collaboration

A dominant theme was the collaborative nature of the partnership between districts and the Institute. The value of mutual respect and idea sharing within the partnership was heavily emphasized.



(2) Communication

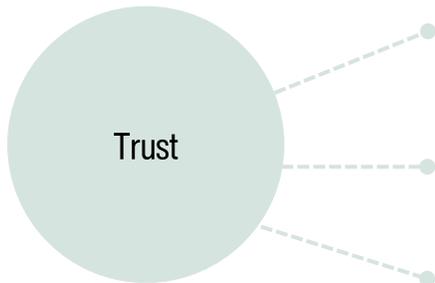
Open and effective communication was another identified strength. Many respondents noted that Buffett Institute staff are readily available, responsive, and engaged in problem solving. There was emphasis on the openness and accessibility of the Buffett staff.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

(3) Trust

A high level of trust was also evident, with many respondents describing Buffett Institute staff as an extension of their district, rather than outside consultants. Several respondents pointed out how trust has strengthened over time, particularly when there have been staffing transitions.



“They are an extension of our district. I don’t see them as an outsider, but as a colleague”

“We genuinely see them as partners”

“The refresh has been really productive. It has been easier to get questions answered in a timely and meaningful manner. There is more trust between the two institutions”

(4) Professional Support

Professional support including coaching, resources, and training opportunities was another frequently mentioned strength. Respondents noted that Buffett Institute staff provide thoughtful coaching and help educators navigate challenges. Participants emphasized the value of professional development.



“The coaching and resources that are available—I feel that if I need anything or have questions, I know I can reach out and have great support”

“From the start of my role, I have observed the profound support of the Buffett staff”

“The staff has provided so many occasions for me personally to grow as an educator and a leader by allowing me to stretch my thinking”

Districts & Institute Collaboration

(5) Commitment to Early Childhood Education

A shared commitment to early childhood education was identified as a key strength. Respondents expressed appreciation for the Buffett Institute's dedication to supporting young learners and creating systemic improvements. Some respondents highlighted how Institute staff help districts align efforts with research-based strategies.

Commitment to
Early Childhood
Education

"We are all truly on the same page. We want to improve outcomes for children and families, engage more meaningfully with families and communities, and provide vital support"

"Sharing and collaboration, research-based strategies, and support for our professional growth"



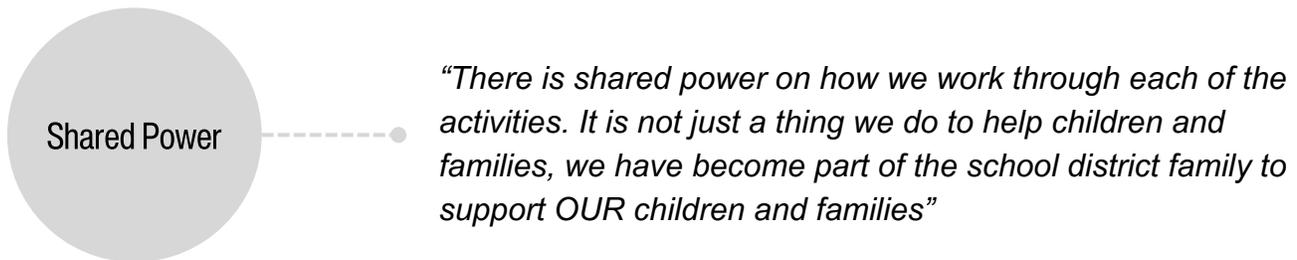
Districts & Institute Collaboration

Greatest Strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: Institute Perspective

Institute staff identified key strengths of the SECP, including collaboration and shared power, open and honest communication, and trust-based relationship-building.

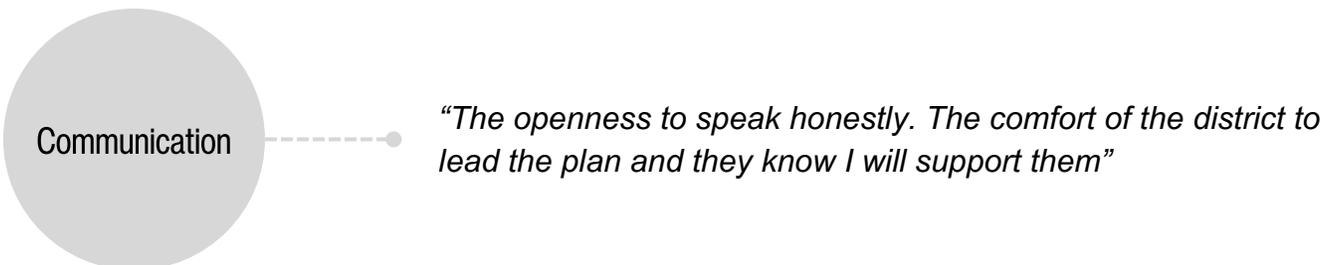
(1) Shared Power

A prominent theme in the responses was the sense of shared ownership over the work. Respondents emphasized that the plan is not just an external initiative but an integrated part of the school district's efforts.



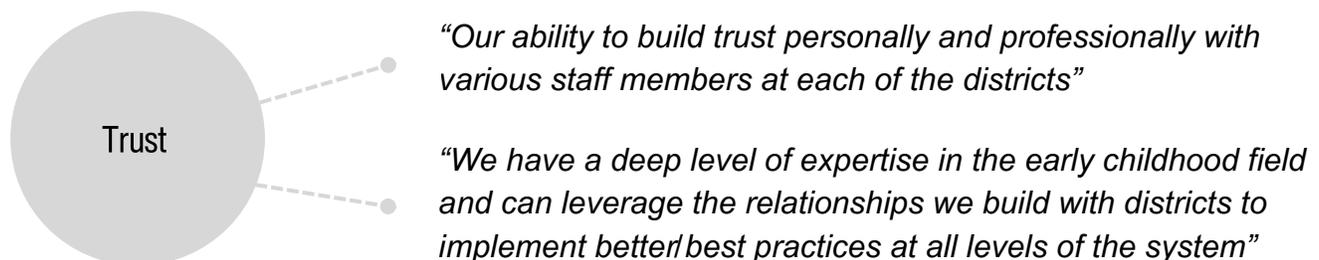
(2) Open and Honest Communication

The ability to have transparent and candid discussions was another strength identified in the responses.



(3) Trust

Trust, particularly in the professional and personal relationships built through the plan, was a recurring theme in responses. Depth of expertise among the plan's members and the ability to leverage these relationships was also noted.



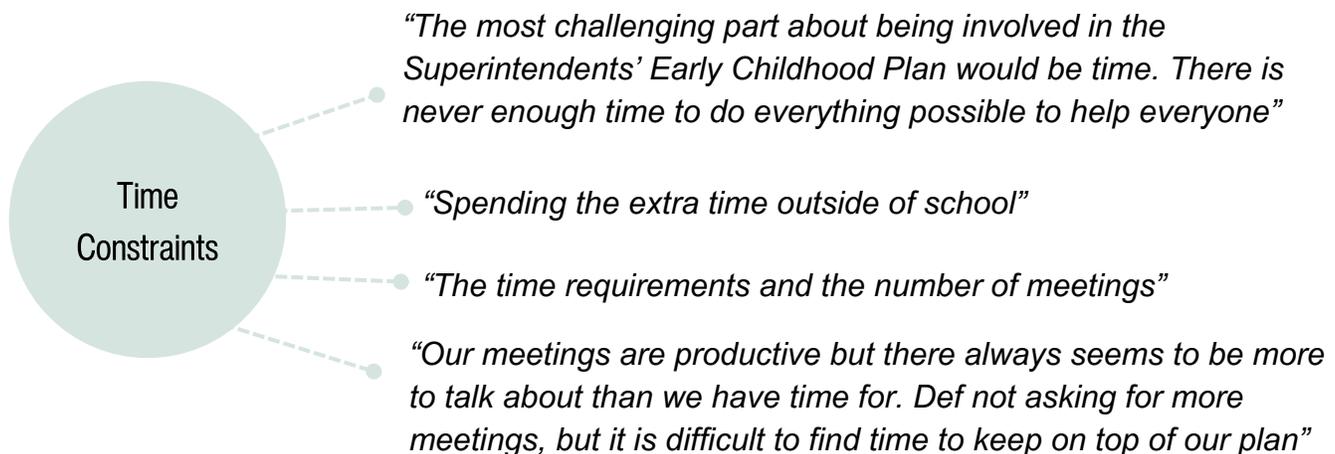
Districts & Institute Collaboration

Greatest Challenges of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: District Perspective

Respondents were asked to identify challenges in working with Institute staff, as well as broader challenges related to the SECP. Their responses highlighted several key obstacles, including time constraints, misalignment with district priorities, communication difficulties, implementation barriers, and shifting expectations, all of which hinder engagement with the SECP.

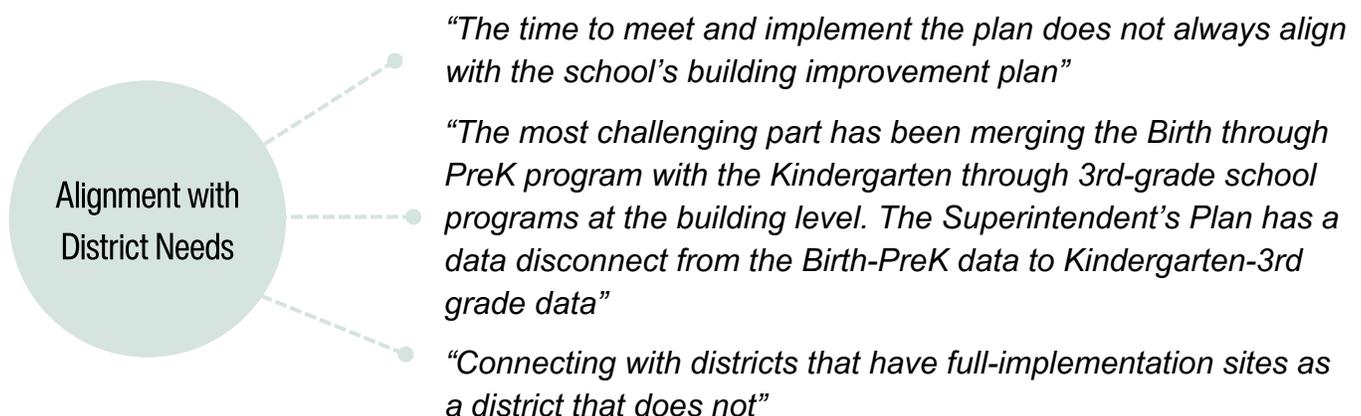
(1) Time Constraints

The most frequently cited issue was time, with respondents expressing that the demands of the plan add to an already overwhelming workload. The challenge of balancing commitments was emphasized.



(2) Alignment with District Needs

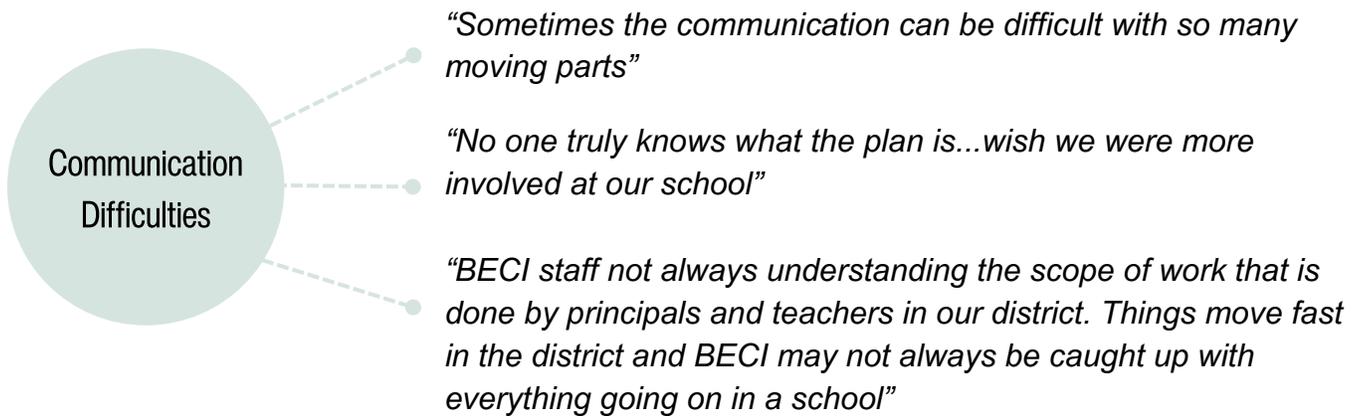
Another prominent challenge shared was alignment between the plan and district priorities, with some respondents noting mismatches between expectations and the realities of school implementation. Respondents highlighted the frustration and difficulties with these variations. Some participants also noted the issues with the transition from early childhood to K-3 programs.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

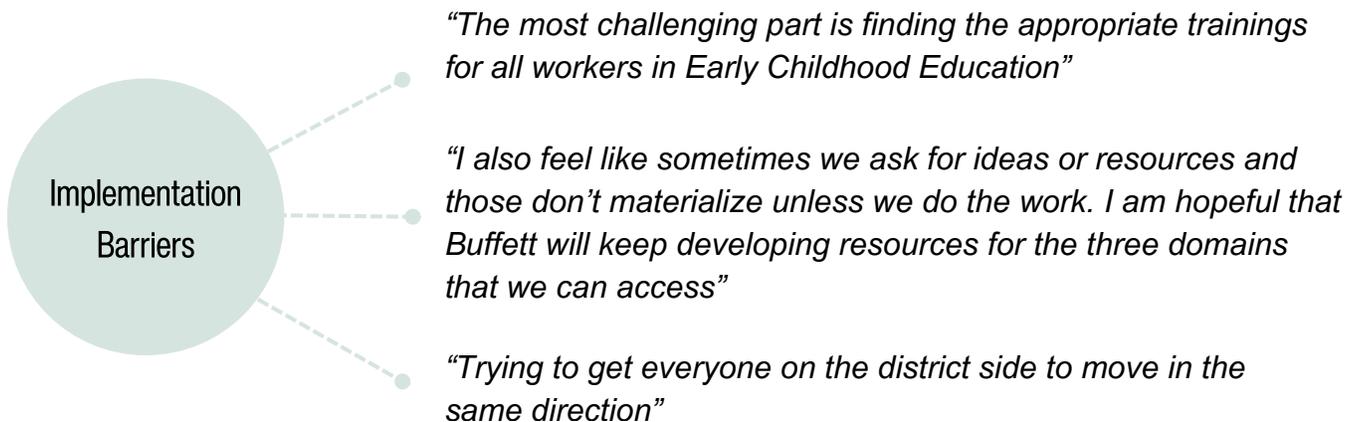
(3) Communication Difficulties

Communication difficulties emerged as a challenge, particularly with multiple stakeholders and shifting priorities. Participants stated that staff do not always feel fully informed about the plan and that Institute staff do not always fully grasp the realities of school operations.



(4) Implementation Barriers

Implementation barriers, particularly access to training and resources, were another concern. Some respondents expressed that there is not enough training available for early childhood staff. Other participants highlighted a lack of follow-through on resource requests and pointed to challenges of ensuring all staff are working toward the same goals.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

(5) Evolution of the Plan

A few respondents voiced concerns about the evolving nature of the plan, acknowledging that while changes can be positive, they also create challenges. Some respondents also noted the challenge of transitioning from learning about the plan to leading its implementation.

Evolution of the
Plan

“It is constantly evolving, which is a good thing, however, sometimes shifting to new ways of doing things can be bumpy (case in point: the shift from Community of Practice to Professional Learning Opportunity)”

“My biggest challenge has been transitioning between foundational learning of the early childhood plan to being able to lead and facilitate our goals”



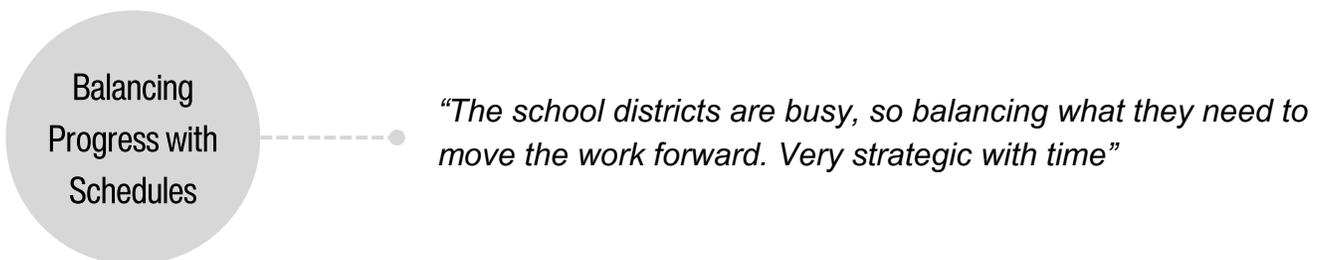
Districts & Institute Collaboration

Greatest Challenges of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: Institute Perspective

Respondents were asked to identify challenges in working with schools within the SECP. Their responses indicated that the biggest obstacles include balancing progress with school schedules, overcoming communication issues and misunderstandings, and managing the influence of various partners when working with districts.

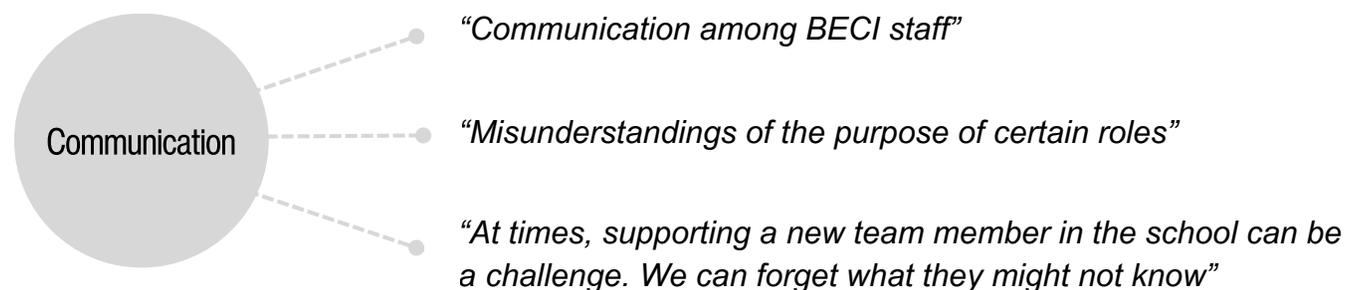
(1) Balancing Progress with Demanding Schedules

One of the biggest challenges identified by Institute staff was related to ensuring that early childhood initiatives move forward while respecting the demanding schedules of school districts. Institute staff reported that the challenge lies in aligning early childhood priorities with the existing workload of educators and administrators, ensuring that support is both effective and realistic within the constraints of district schedules.



(2) Communication and Misunderstanding

Staff members identified communication as a weakness, both internally with Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI) staff and externally with districts. Some respondents highlighted that internal coordination may sometimes create barriers to effective support. Additionally, misunderstandings about roles create further challenges. Respondents pointed out that new team members in schools may struggle with onboarding and understanding their responsibilities.



Districts & Institute Collaboration

(3) Navigating Partner Influence

BECI staff reported that navigating the limits of partner influence can be a challenge. Staff noted that, ultimately, they function as partners rather than decision-makers in school districts. This can create challenges when district decisions do not always align with best practices recommended by early childhood experts.

Navigating
Partner
Influence

“That we are ultimately always their partner and therefore if they make decisions that seem counterproductive or less strategic than we would prefer, we cannot force decisions around staffing or practice”



Districts & Institute Collaboration

What Improvements Can Be Made to the SECP?: District Perspective

Stronger Onboarding for New Staff

“Strong onboarding to new school staff in positions that impact families”

“Clarity on how to better support new staff that are a part of the EC plan (Family Facilitator/Home Visitor)”

Greater Flexibility for Families

“Flexibility in the model to allow families to dictate services they do and do not want to experience”

“Having better resources for families that speak different languages”

Improved Alignment Between Programs

“Connect Birth-PreK programs and data with Kindergarten-3rd grade programs and data”

Simplified and Accessible Training for Early Childhood Educators

“Trainings for early childhood that are more simply and easy to follow”

Structural Changes in General Education Preschool and Special Education Supports

“We NEED BECI in our schools because other leadership we work with don’t see issues in having general education rooms that have 60%+ special needs population”

Greater Awareness and Engagement Among School Leaders

“More involvement—I’d like our principals to know what it is. I think if they were asked what it was, they’d look at you with a blank stare. Not sure they are even aware there is a plan”

More Collaboration Opportunities Across Districts

“Collaborative conversations about what other schools as hub districts are doing”

Increased Resource Availability and Communication about Existing Resources

“Start building resources we can tap into around the domains. If that is in the works...communicate it and then keep doing it”

Districts & Institute Collaboration

What Improvements Can Be Made to the SECP?: Institute Perspective

Varying Range of Voices for Decision-Making and Implementation

“I would like to continue to expand the amount of voices that are included in decision making and ongoing work and making sure it is being built into the overfall fabric of how the district/building operate versus tied to a ‘team’ that is operationalizing the work”

Improving Internal Processes for Smooth Implementation

“I think the shifts we have currently made in the internal workings of the SECP team have been improvements. Projects and operationalize the processes of the SAH model are allowing for the model to be developed with efficacy”



Districts & Institute Collaboration

Summary of Qualitative Findings

The SECP continues to be valued by Institute and district stakeholders. District respondents identified collaboration, communication, trust, and professional support as strengths of their partnership with Buffett Institute staff. Many described the Institute as an integral part of their district rather than an external consultant, praising staff for their accessibility and responsiveness. District respondents identified the greatest accomplishments of the SECP to be continued program development, district-Institute collaboration, enhanced professional learning, and advocacy for early childhood.

However, challenges remain, particularly around time constraints, alignment with district priorities, communication gaps, and implementation barriers. Educators and administrators struggle to balance SECP commitments with existing workloads, and some respondents noted difficulties in fully integrating SECP efforts into district improvement plans. Limited training opportunities for early childhood educators and a lack of consistency in communication across stakeholders were also cited as areas for improvement.

Regarding collaboration with Institute staff, most respondents shared positive experiences, though some reported challenges related to clarity of expectations, scheduling conflicts, and structural alignment between district operations and SECP initiatives. Some expressed a need for more visibility and awareness of SECP within their schools and districts. Suggested improvements included stronger onboarding for new staff, better alignment between Birth-PreK and K-3 programs, simplified training opportunities, increased resource availability, and reduced meeting frequency to ease scheduling burdens. Greater engagement from school leaders was also recommended to ensure SECP is fully integrated into district priorities.

From the perspective of Buffett Institute staff, the SECP's greatest accomplishments include systemic impact, long-term change, and improved role clarity within districts. Staff emphasized the plan's growing integration into district operations and the development of strong partnerships. Challenges, such as balancing early childhood priorities with district workloads, internal and external communication gaps, and navigating differences in implementation approaches were noted. Moving forward, enhancing communication, improving alignment with district structures, and ensuring ongoing collaboration across all stakeholders will be critical to sustaining and expanding SECP's impact.

Customized Assistance Programming

In Spring 2025, BECI partnered with Bellevue Public Schools and DC West Community Schools to support strategic initiatives aligned with their District 2.0 goals. In partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, BECI provided programmatic support and technical assistance to enhance early learning transitions, educator wellness, and family-school partnerships. This summary highlights findings from three district-led initiatives supported by BECI: the Smart Start Backpack Program, the Educator Wellness and Child Needs Survey, and the Family Liaison Survey with Spanish-speaking families.

SMART START Backpack Program (DC West Community Schools)

Goal

Support the transition to kindergarten by promoting positive parent–child interactions and foundational skill development through take-home activity kits.

Program Activities

- Materials: Families received take-home backpacks that included developmentally appropriate items.
- Participation: Families used the materials at home for one week and completed a survey and/or interview to determine program feasibility.

Key Findings

- 92% of families found the materials easy to use
- 71% said it fit well into their routine.
- Most families liked hands-on activities like the Nature Scavenger and a bridge-building kit.
- Top challenges included time constraints (50%) and unclear instructions (21%).
- Caregivers suggested clearer instructions, seasonal timing adjustments, and theme expansion for future backpacks.

The activities were simple enough... if we had 10, 15, half an hour, we could do them."

- Parent Participant

"It allowed them to just be creative... I like that creative kind of open play aspect of it."

- Parent Participant



Customized Assistance Programming

Educator Wellness and Child Needs (Bellevue Public Schools)

Goal

Assess preschool educator wellbeing and understand perceived child development priorities to align supports.

Method

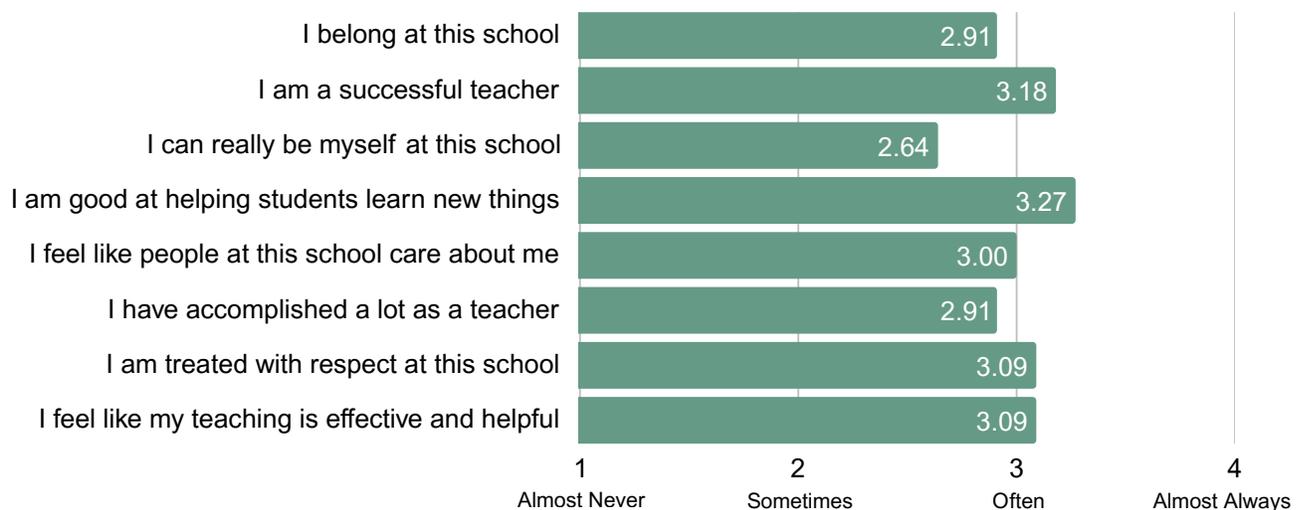
- A survey was distributed to Bellevue Public Schools preschool educators (n=11) to assess their mental health, physical/emotional wellbeing, professional support, and perceptions of child needs.

Key Findings

- Most preschool teachers reported wellbeing scores similar to other adults in the general population. However, survey scores identified the greatest needs were needing to support energy, fatigue, and physical pain.
- Teachers generally felt confident in their teaching skills but were slightly less likely to feel strongly connected to their school community.
- All teachers said social-emotional and communication skills were the most important areas of development for young children. Many said they wished they had more time to focus on helping children build these skills.

Future Programmatic Activities

- To support teacher wellbeing, wellness resources have been created and will be shared with educators in August, October, and February.
- To help children continue building social-emotional skills at home, classrooms will receive social-emotional learning kits to share with parents during the 2025-2026 academic year.



Customized Assistance Programming

Family Support for Spanish Speaking Families (Bellevue Public Schools)

Goal

Understand Spanish-speaking families' experiences with school communication, support services, and engagement within Bellevue Public Schools.

Method

- A survey was distributed to Bellevue Public Schools Spanish-speaking families (n=20) to better understand how they engage with and receive information from their child's elementary school.

Key Findings

- Families primarily received school information via email and in-person staff conversations
- One-third of respondents reported experiencing translation challenges when obtaining school information
- Half of the respondents cited work as a barrier to event attendance
- Lack of bilingual staff was a recurring concern among respondents
- When asked about the type of programming they wish they had, the most common responses included:
 - To better understand how to support their child's learning at home
 - More support in communicating with school staff
 - More support to find parenting classes or workshops
 - Help finding community resources such as housing, food, and medical resources

“Me gustaría que hubiera personal bilingüe en la escuela de mi hijo, porque tengo miedo no entender toda la información que me puedan mandar.” [I would like to have bilingual staff at my son's school, because I'm afraid I won't understand all the information they might send me.]

- Survey Participant

“A mí lo que me gustaría es que siempre este disponible un intérprete que hable español para poder participar en la educación de mi hijo.” [What I would like is for a Spanish-speaking interpreter to always be available so I can participate in my son's education.]

- Survey Participant



Definitions & References

Definitions

ASQ: The Ages & Stages Questionnaires are screening tools designed to help caregivers and professionals monitor young children’s development in various areas like communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, personal–social skills, and social-emotional behaviors.

ChildPlus: The database used by the Institute to track participant engagement across programmatic activities.

earlyReading Assessment™: A norm-referenced screening test designed to identify reading problems.

FastBridge: An assessment tool designed to identify students’ academic and social-emotional behavior needs

MTSS: Multi-tiered systems of support is a framework used by schools to identify immediate intervention for students with academic and behavioral needs.

MAP Assessment: A child assessment tool utilized by districts to measure achievement and growth in K-12 math, reading, language usage, and science.

NAESP Survey: The National Association of Elementary School Principals survey is designed to assess various competencies focused on advocacy and support for elementary-level principals.

PD: Professional Development

Responsive Classroom: A student-centered approach to teaching and discipline to create safe and engaging classroom communities.

School as Hub: A school identified by its district due to unique risk factors. The school serves as a “hub” for complex learning systems, connecting children and families to resources within and beyond school walls.

SECP: Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan

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Stronger communities. Brighter futures.

learning
community
DOUGLAS
SARPY

2022-2023 EVALUATION REPORT



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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.

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).

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

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.

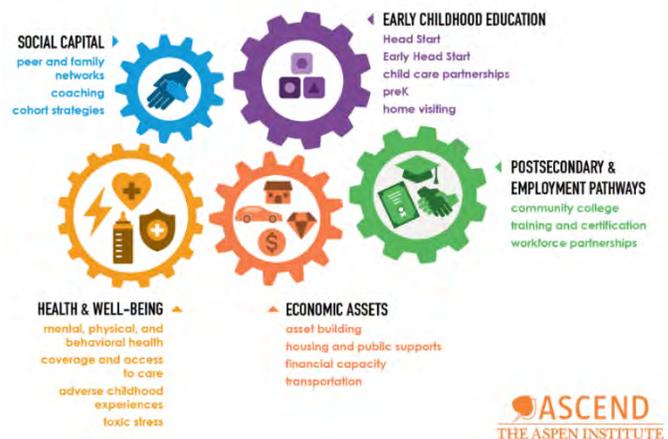
elementary schools influence the strength of ongoing preschool effects, researchers have found that the level of challenge provided by kindergarten teachers matters for later outcomes (Johnson & Jackson, 2017).

COACHING SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES. 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 regard 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 everyone’s needs and situations (Bradshaw et al., 2013).

2GEN APPROACH

The Learning Community uses a two-generation (2Gen) approach in designing early childhood and family engagement programs at each of the centers, Family Learning at the 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 can 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. This program is supported in one district.
- **Extended Learning** provides additional direct instruction for children to prevent summer learning loss and improve their chances of success. Extended Learning programs were supported in four districts and with one community agency.
- **Instructional Coaching** allows teachers the opportunity to work with a district-level coach to reflect on teaching strategies and enhance instructional practices. Instructional coaching was implemented in five districts.

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 provided back to programs in a variety of formats as part of a continuous improvement process to provide feedback on current programming and status and to inform future practice.

Based upon the evaluation questions, multiple methods were used to describe and measure the quality of implementation, nature of programming, and outcomes demonstrated by the programs funded by the Learning Community (LC). The findings 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. How were programs implemented? 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?

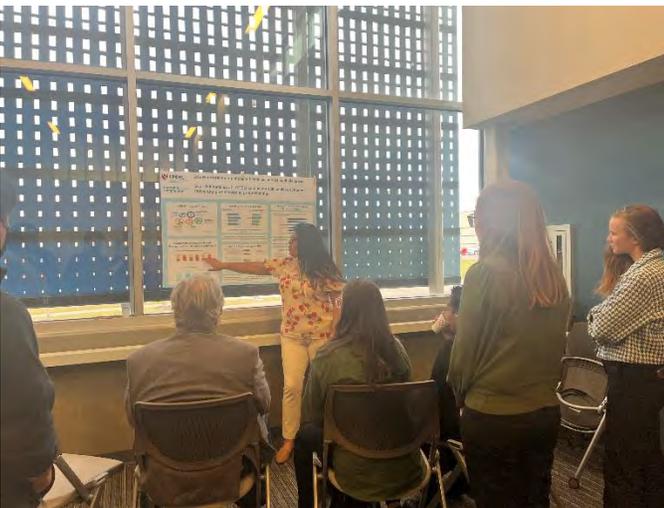
CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES. What were the outcomes related to student academic achievement and school attendance? To what extent were parents engaged in their child's learning? Did parents gain skills and confidence to increase their engagement with school?

COMMUNITY PRACTICES AND USE OF DATA. How did programs use their data? What changes occurred because 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. Where appropriate, 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. It should be noted that none of these programs occur in isolation – they are either also connected to other community resources and agencies and/or the school districts in which the families reside. Causal inferences should not be made with the data.



Early Childhood and Family Engagement

learning
community
center
OF NORTH OMAHA



The Learning Community Center of North Omaha provides innovative and demonstrative programming to improve educational outcomes for students and families. 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 two primary programs: intensive early childhood partnership and Parent University. Descriptions of each program and evaluation findings are summarized in this section.



Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

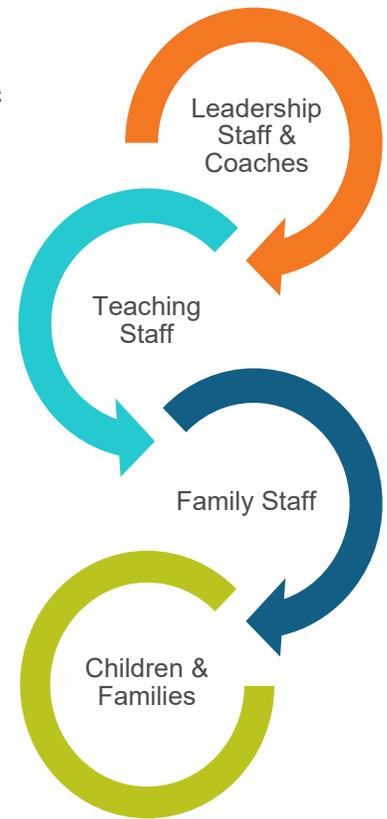
STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Intensive Early Childhood (IEC) 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). In 2018, the intensive early childhood partnership expanded to Minne Lusa (3 classrooms) and Skinner (4 classrooms).

INTENSIVE TEACHING TEAMS. Intensive early childhood teams, consisting of teachers, leadership and family support staff, implement a combination of services and supports. The leadership team includes the principal, an early childhood coordinator, 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. Using an inclusive model, these professionals work together to foster a supportive environment that promotes strong relationships among staff, students, and families.

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., *Teaching Strategies: Coaching With Fidelity*). During one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools include classroom videotapes and photographs. Instructional coaches work to build teacher confidence, increase their active problem-solving skills and attain goals set during their reflective sessions. During these one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools included coaching notes guided by the TS Fidelity Tool and the OPS district "look fors" within the buildings they supported.

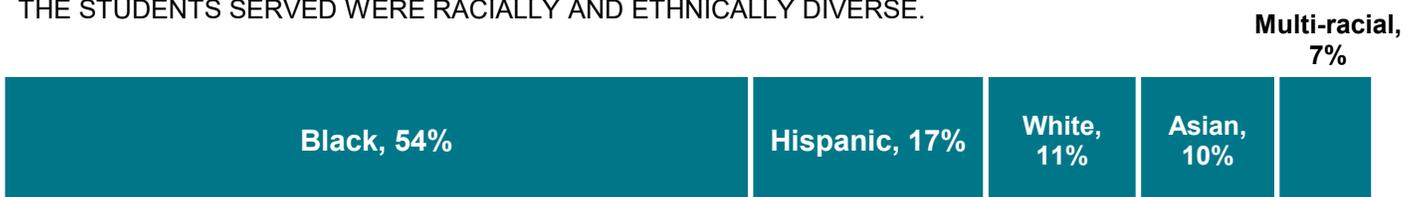
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The teaching teams benefit from 11 days of additional professional development (PD) through the school year. Six of those eleven professional development days are facilitated in each school's Early Childhood Professional Learning Community (i.e., PLC). The PLC framework establishes a collaborative, problem solving approach in review of child data and in team learning to identify strategies to improve student performance. Five of the eleven PD days are full day sessions that extend knowledge of the curriculum, Creative Curriculum, child development best practices, strategies that benefit all students including special instruction, and how to utilize the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. In addition, one PD session focused on how trauma has informed the experiences of the students and how it impacts their performance in school. The PD component is required for teachers at Kellom and Conestoga and elective for teachers at the expanded schools.



DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2022-2023, the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership enrolled 322 Pre-K students across six schools and 20 classrooms who participated in the evaluation. The Intensive Early Childhood Partnership served a racially and ethnically diverse population of children. The majority (54%) of the students are black and 17% identify as Hispanic. The smallest group is Native American, with two students. There were more males (57%) than females (43%) enrolled in the Pre-K classes. **Over one-third (38%) of students were identified for special education services and had an individualized education plan (IEP).** Less than 10% were considered English Learners.

THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.



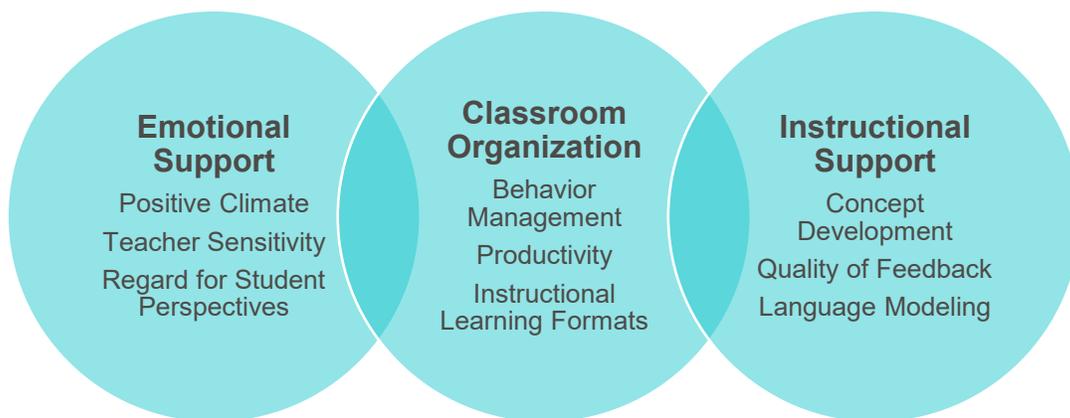
N=304

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) was used to evaluate the quality of 16 intensive early childhood preschool classrooms. Results from this assessment are 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 gains in school readiness, including the areas of executive functioning and early literacy (Vitiello, Bassock, Hamre, Player, & Williford, 2018).

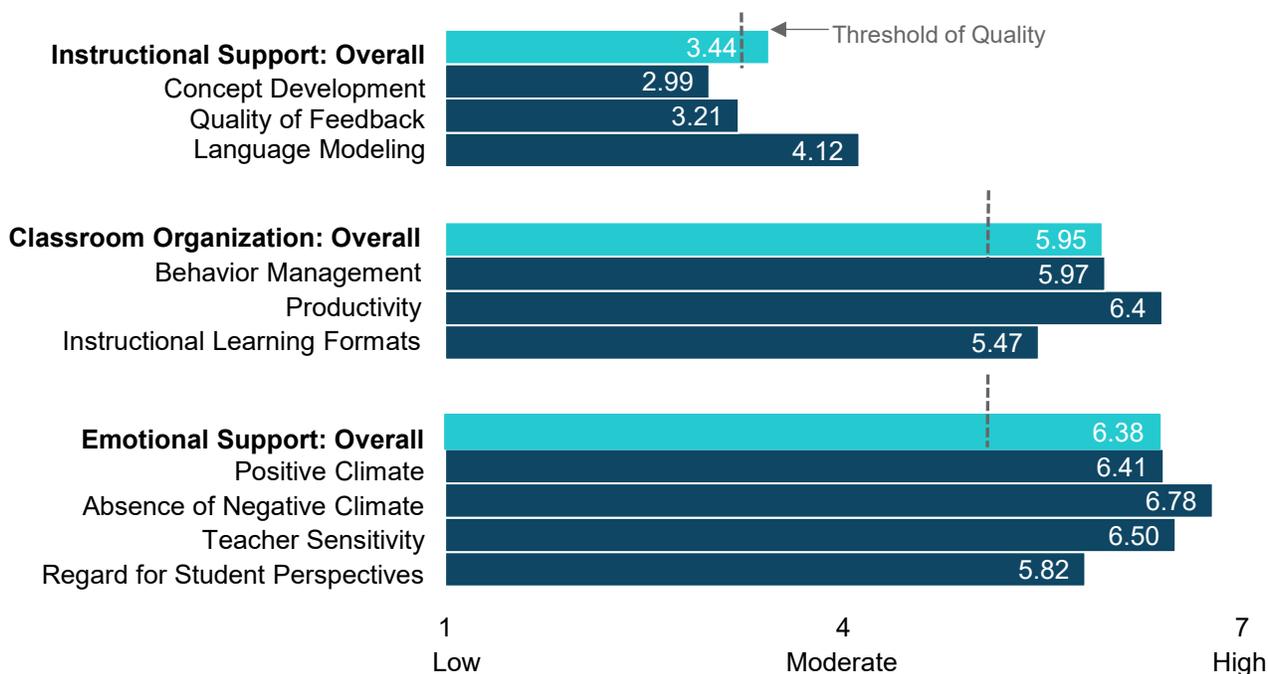


FINDINGS. The scores for the preschool classrooms exceeded research reported thresholds necessary to influence student achievement. The following figure provides the overall scores for each domain and the dimension scores that are related to each overall score. On average, classrooms met the threshold of quality across all three domains. Dimensions that did not meet the threshold to impact student achievement were Concept Development and Quality of Feedback both within the Instructional Support Domain. Classroom Organization and Emotional Support were in the high-quality range. Instructional Support was in the moderate range.

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

Language Modeling improved the most from 2021-2022.

n=16



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).

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

METHOD. The following areas were assessed in the fall and spring:

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS [DEVEREUX EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT (DECA)]. This teacher-completed 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 all schools with a total of 288 students assessed.

VOCABULARY SKILLS [PEABODY PICTURE VOCABULARY TEST–IV (PPVT-IV)]. The PPVT-IV measures students’ vocabulary skills. The PPVT-IV, administered by external evaluators, was completed at all six schools with a total of 276 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, administered by external evaluators, was completed at four schools with a total of 199 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 online assessment, administered by external evaluators, was completed with 107 children from two schools.

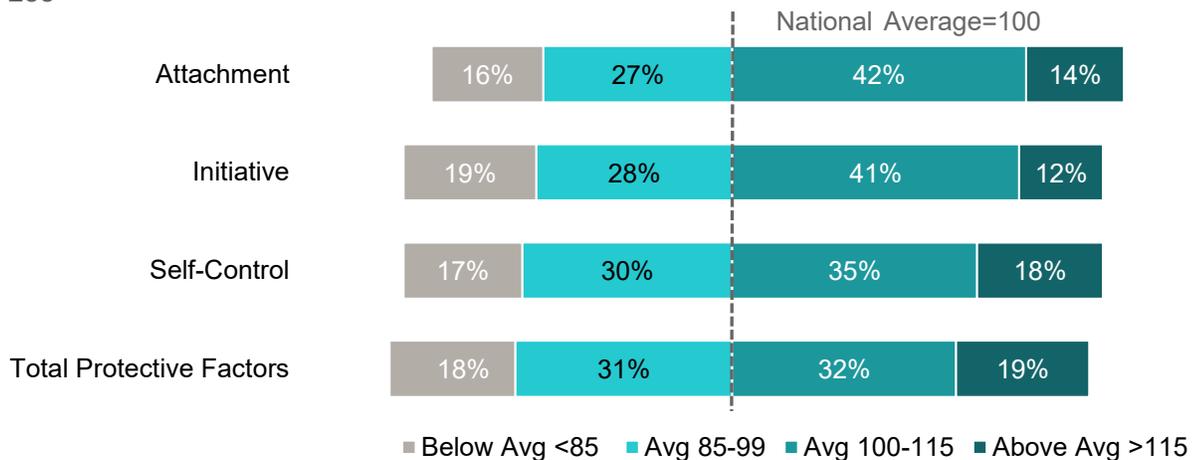
FINDINGS

Social-emotional

The descriptive analyses found that most students scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: Total Protective Factors (82%), Attachment (84%), Initiative (81%) and Self-Control (83%). Over half of the students demonstrated social-emotional skills at or above the national average which is a score of 100.

OVERALL, HALF THE STUDENTS SCORED AT THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OR ABOVE ACROSS ALL AREAS BY SPRING.

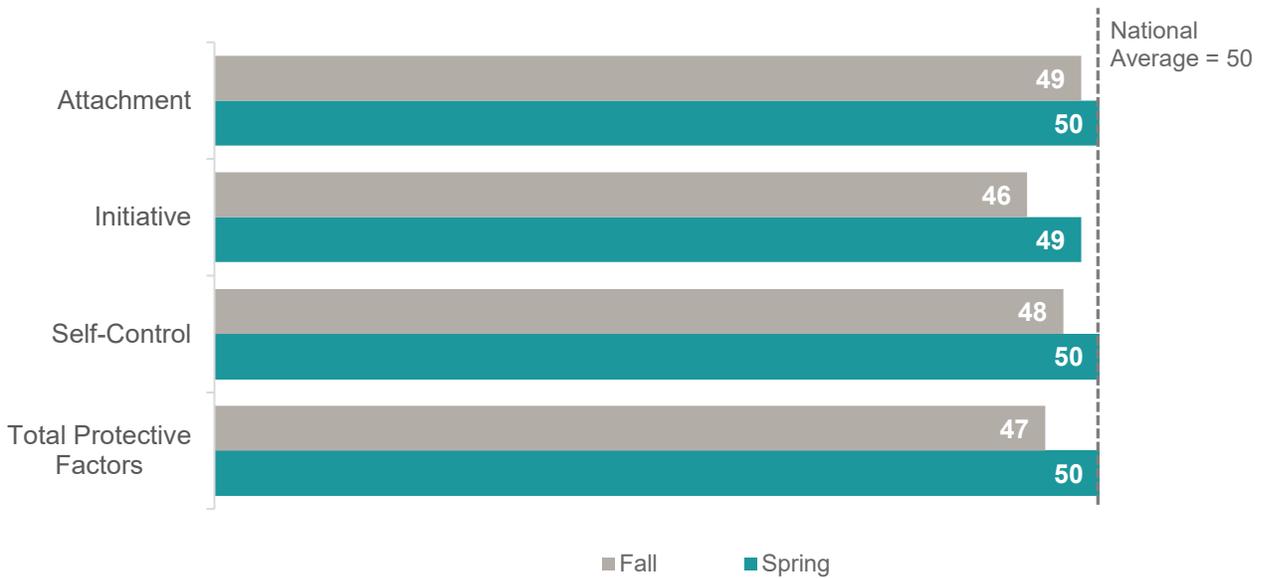
n=288



A comparison of social-emotional results at fall and spring is reported in the following graph, to show how skills changed over time.

ON AVERAGE, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS INCREASED OVER TIME.

By spring, average scores were at or above the national average across all areas except Initiative. n=281



Paired t-test analyses were completed to determine if there were significant changes over time. Significant increases were found across all areas of the social-emotional assessment.

Attachment: [t(280)= -3.61; $p < .01$, $d = 0.209$] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

Initiative: [t(280)= -7.397; $p < .001$, $d = 0.412$] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Self-Control: [t(280)= -4.153; $p < .001$, $d = 0.215$] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

Total Protective Factors: [t(280)= -6.091; $p < .001$, $d = 0.330$] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.



The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. In fall and spring, 21% of the students scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three to five-year old children. A paired t-test analysis did not find that the change over time was significant.

Did student factors impact social-emotional scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students’ social-emotional outcomes. Significant differences were found for total protective factors, attachment, initiative, self-control, and behavior concerns.

Total Protective Factors: Girls (m=52.80), Boys (m=47.42)
(t,(286)=4.57; p<.01].

Attachment: Girls (m=53.03), Boys (m=48.32)
[t((286)=4.05; p<.01].

Initiative: Girls (m=51.59), Boys (m=46.87)
(t(286)=4.04, p<.01.

Self-Control: Girls (m=52.37, Boys (m=47.85)
(t(286)=3.57, p<.01.

Behavior Concerns: (m=50.44), Boys (m=53.16)
(t(286)=3.514. p<.01.

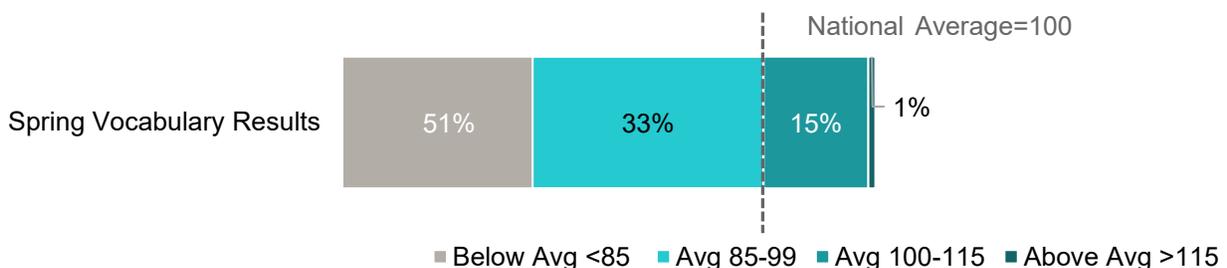
Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills. Boys had significantly more behavior concern scores.

Vocabulary

The descriptive analyses found that most students (51%) scored within the below average range in the spring.

BY SPRING, FEWER THAN 20% OF STUDENTS SCORED AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

Notably, over half of the students scored in the below average range. n=304

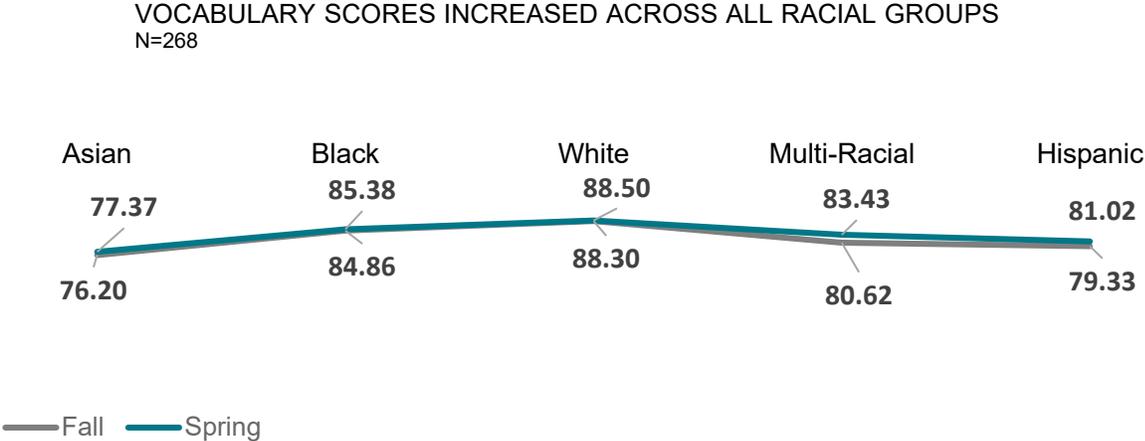


Average standard scores increased from fall (83.48) to spring (84.52). A paired t-test analysis found that the change from fall to spring was significant, $[t(264) = -1.797; p < .05, d = 0.110]$ with the effect size suggesting small change.

Did student factors impact vocabulary scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' vocabulary outcomes. An independent sample t-test was conducted and determine that girls (M=86.23) scored significantly higher than boys (82.36) on the spring assessment., $t(274) = 2.145, p < .05$.

RACE/ETHNICITY. Of interest was whether there were any differences between student social-emotional scores over time based on race and/or ethnicity. All racial groups experienced growth from fall to spring. Scores across all groups are in the below average to low average range. This test does not consider if the student's first language is something other than English.

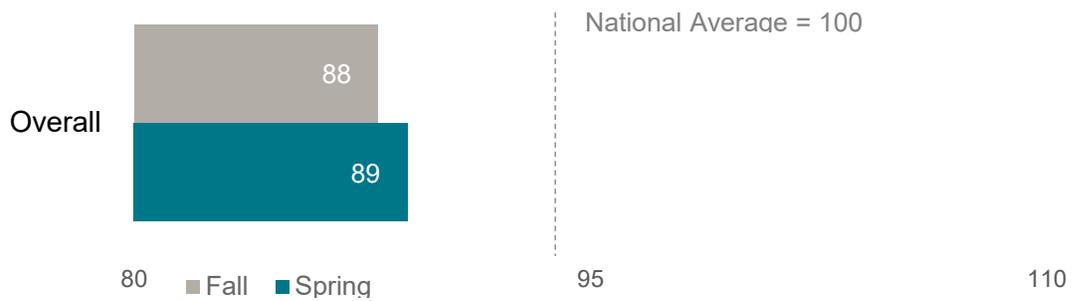


School Readiness Skills

School readiness skills showed modest increases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 88 to 89 remaining in the low end of the average range.

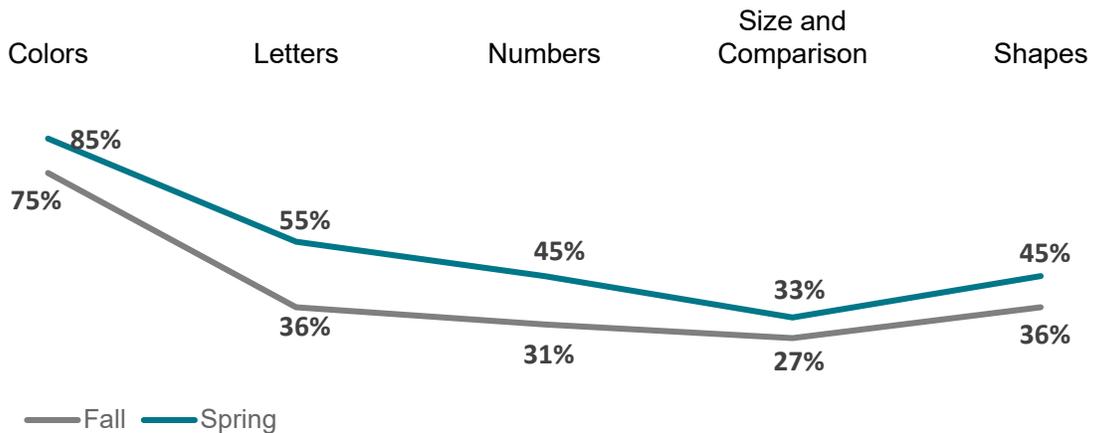
The results of a paired t-test analysis found that the changes were significant $[t(173) = -2.275, p < .05, d = 0.172]$ with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

STUDENTS' SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS SHOWED A SMALL INCREASE FROM FALL TO SPRING. N=174



When examining individual subtests, the percentage of mastery increased across all areas. Students started the year with strong mastery of colors and increased that mastery to 85%. The area with the lowest percentage of mastery was Size and Comparison. Students started the year at 27% mastery and ended with 33% mastery. The Size and Comparison subtest assesses students' understanding of location words, comparison concepts, and directional concepts. These are higher order cognitive skills than other areas of the tool.

THE PERCENTAGE OF MASTERY INCREASED IN EACH SUBTEST. N=179



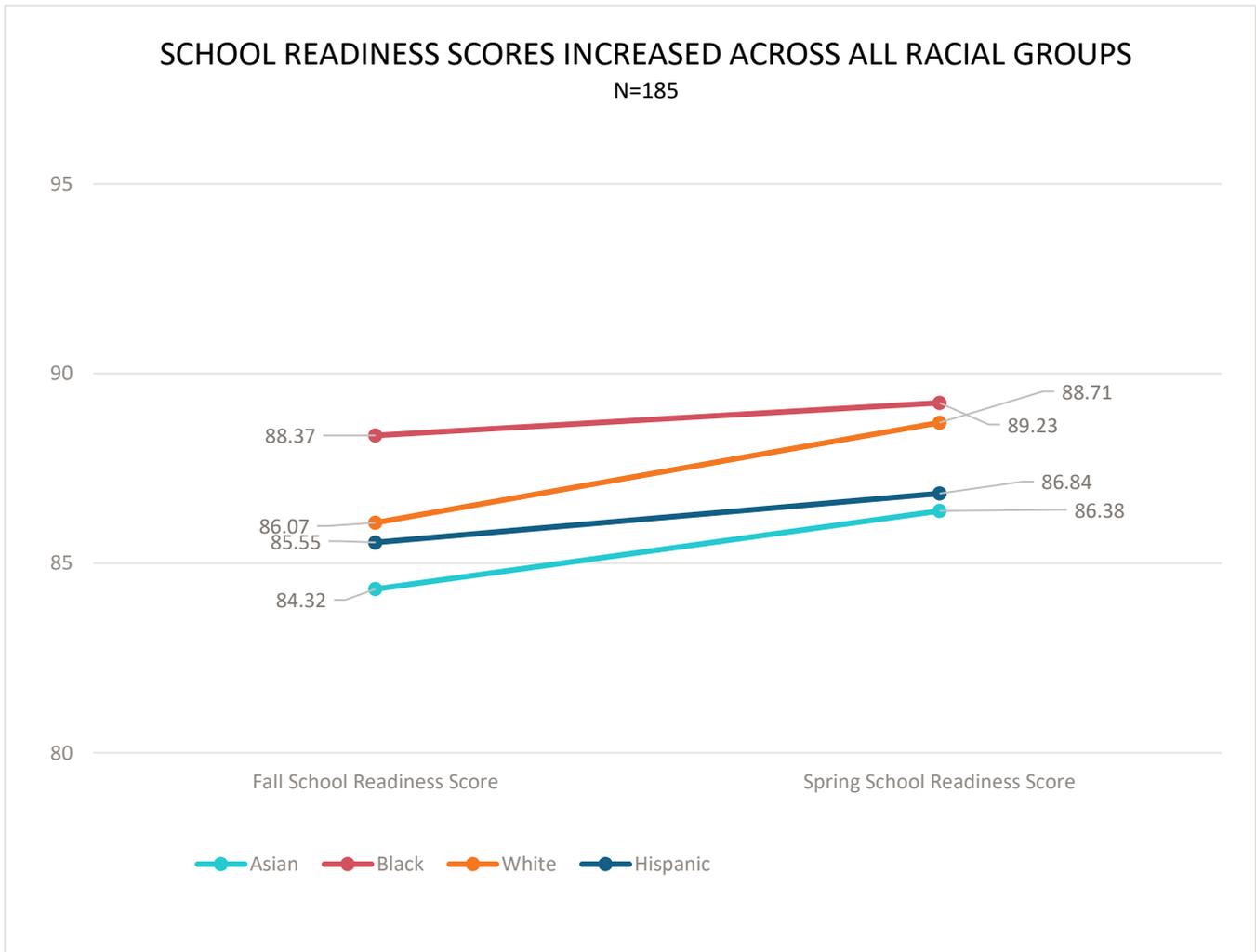
Did student factors impact school readiness scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' school readiness outcomes. Independent sample t-tests indicated no significant difference between boys and girls at any time point. While girls had a slightly higher growth score (.30 standard score points) the difference was negligible.

IEP STATUS. Students receiving special education services make up nearly 40% of the students in the IEC classrooms. Therefore, it is important to disaggregate the data to measure the impact

on their development. On the school readiness scale, students with an IEP had a mean score within the average range (M=85) and had an average growth of two standard score points. Independent samples t-tests indicated that while students without an IEP scored significantly higher in the spring $t(183) = 2.04, p < .05$, there was not a significant difference in growth rates.

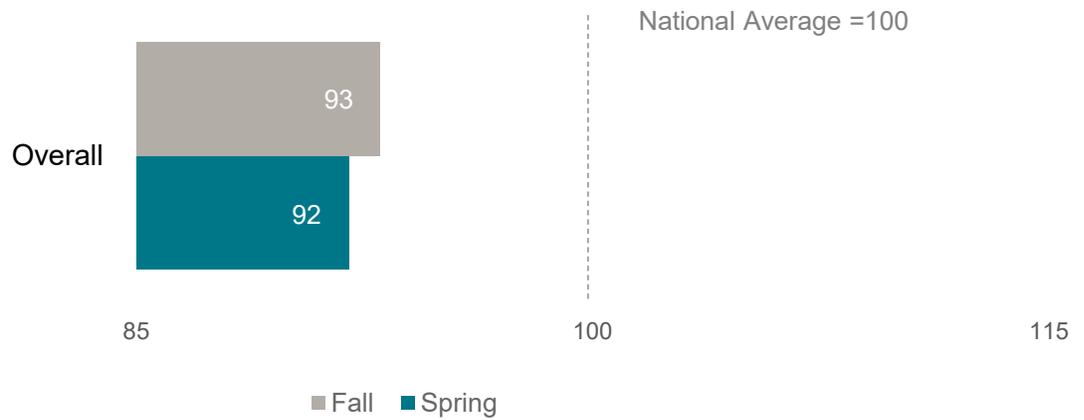
RACE/ETHNICITY. Of interest was whether there were any differences between student school readiness scores over time based on race and/or ethnicity. Only racial groups with at least 10 students are reported in the chart. No significant differences were found between groups.



Executive Functioning Skills

Students' executive functioning skills showed modest decreases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores decreased from 93 to 92. The results of a paired t-test analysis found that the changes were not significant.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SHOWED MODEST DECREASES FROM FALL TO SPRING.
N=100



Did student factors impact executive functioning scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' executive functioning outcomes. No significant differences were found based on gender.



Parent University

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

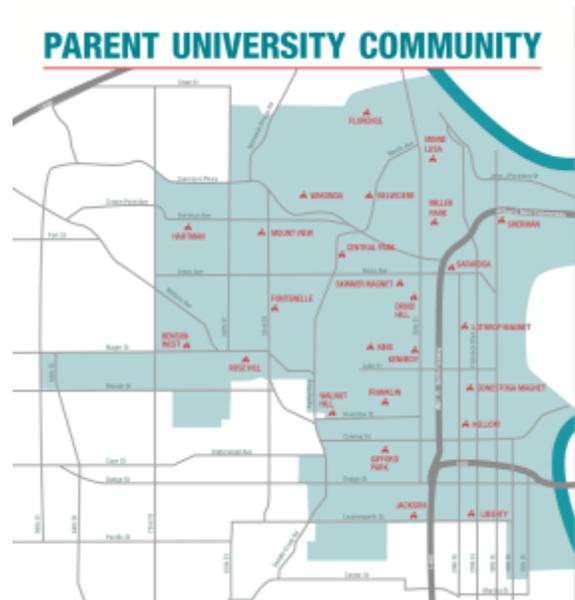
Parent University is a comprehensive, two-generational family engagement program based on research and best practices that began in February 2015 at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha. A two-generational approach allows the program to focus on the whole family while creating opportunities for addressing needs of both children and the adults in their lives simultaneously. In 2019, the partnership expanded to additional (18) schools in North Omaha. 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 with a child six years or younger who reside in school attendance areas of the 24 elementary schools reflected (see map).

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 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.

EDUCATIONAL NAVIGATORS. Educational Navigators (ENs) 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. The ENs are the primary point of contact for the participants at Parent University. In addition to monthly home visits, the navigators and liaisons 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.

Improvements to the program have been made since the last report. Changes included implementing new communication tools such as Remind to facilitate effective communication with our participants and adopting Microsoft Bookings, which allows participants to select their preferred meeting times with Educational Navigators. In preparation for transportation needs, ENs have received training in van driving to ensure safe transportation for participants using a newly acquired van. To better support participants with children on the autism spectrum, ENs have



undergone additional training to deepen their understanding of Autism and provide more informed assistance.

The Educational Navigators have actively contributed to the overall program by organizing and participating in various events. They played a pivotal role in planning and executing the Summer Literacy event, which provided engaging literacy activities for our Parent University participants. Furthermore, the ENs worked closely with the Connections partners to facilitate connections between participants and therapists, ensuring they received the necessary support.

HOME VISITATIONS & GOAL SETTING. Growing Great Kids® curriculum is utilized during home visitations as appropriate. 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. Parents select to attend a variety of Parent University courses in the center or virtually based on the family needs. Courses fit into four primary majors which were developed based on identified family needs.

LIBRARY AND LITERACY. The circulation of library materials empowered families as individuals renewed laptops over 75 times, borrowed over 35 books, and explored other resources. The OPL representative aided parents outside of their designated ESL and GED sessions.

Additionally, the OPL representative conducts bi-weekly visits to six North Omaha Schools, to deliver engaging Storytime sessions. Collaborating closely with 2 Early Childhood facilitators and 18 Pre-K teachers, this partnership ensures that each visit is a blend of education and engagement while promoting Parent University's mission.

Finally, the OPL librarian helped facilitate Prime-Time Preschool Program. She assumes the role of a literary conductor, orchestrating Storytime, critical thinking sessions, and center activities for children. The library was involved in the 2022 Literacy Event for 150 participants with bilingual storybook walks and two Storytime sessions.

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. Through courses such as Common Sense Parenting (CSP) for School Success course, parents have gained essential tools to navigate their children's behaviors and build stronger parent-child relationships.

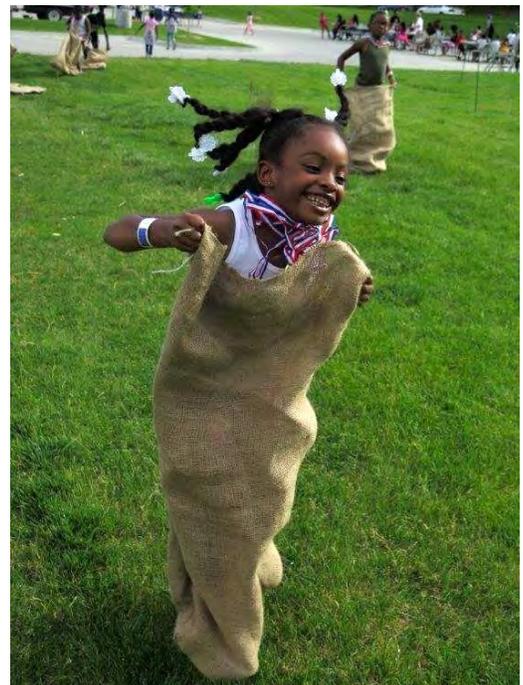
SKILLS AND WELLNESS. Parent University partner organizations provide courses to strengthen family self-sufficiency in areas like adult basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL), and employment skills. A collaboration with Project Harmony, facilitated by a generous grant from the Omaha Community Foundation, has enabled the center to offer mental health services to six families. Through a combination of on-site sessions at LCCNO and the

utilization of Telehealth, crucial support was provided to families, promoting their well-being and resilience.

SCHOOL SUCCESS. To become full partners in their child’s education, courses and workshops emphasize the importance of the parents’ roles as teachers, responsibilities, and engagement opportunities. Bilingual programming has empowered Spanish-speaking children to develop confidence in their English language abilities, while the Catch Them Being Good courses have reinforced positive behaviors and nurtured a culture of kindness and recognition.

LEADERSHIP. Courses empower parents to take on more active roles in their child’s school and their community. Courses teach parents their leadership styles and helped them identify their strengths.

While parents attend courses at the center free childcare is provided. Parent University offers year-round child learning activities for the children focusing on the domains of early childhood development. Over the course of the past year, the childcare room has undergone significant changes. The environment was transformed into a more secure and positive space by introducing engaging activities that focus on reading, art, music, movement, math, science, and writing. Regular story time sessions with our librarian have been implemented during the day. Child Learning Specialists have been instrumental in teaching math and literacy skills, using fun activities to focus on numbers, letters, and different seasons. While working with the children, our Child Learning Specialists have become integral members of the Parent University team, actively participating in team meetings and family engagement events to strengthen relationships with families and helping EN and programming better understand the needs and development of the children in the program.



DEMOGRAPHICS

A total 99 families were enrolled in Parent University all of whom participated in the comprehensive program. The families had 259 children of which 135 were within the target age range (birth through Grade 3) for the program. Families represented various languages such as English, Karen, Kirundi, Arabic, Somali, Nepali, and Spanish with 43% indicating that English was their first language and another 39% indicating Spanish. Most of the parents identified as White (47%) or Black (43%) with 44% of the families identifying as Hispanic.

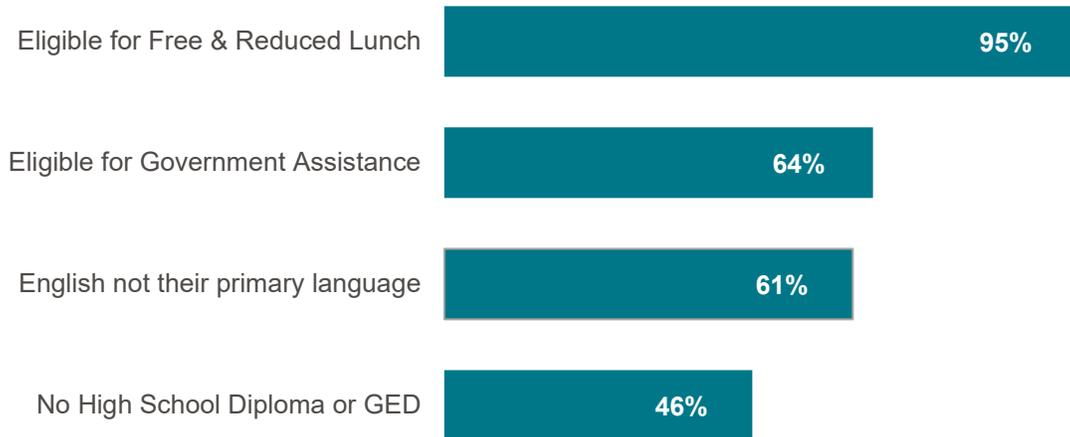
Fifty-four percent of parents completed high school. Of this group, 10% had some college, 4% had an associate’s degree, 9% had a bachelor’s degree and 2% had a master’s degree. Of the parents not completing high school, 23% had some high school, 21% had an 8th grade or less education and 1% had no formal education.

Most parents (95%) have children who qualify for Free and/or Reduced lunch. Sixty-four percent of families received additional government assistance (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, TANF, and Title XX).

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 HAVE MULTIPLE OBSTACLES THAT ARE ADDRESSED THROUGH 2GEN PROGRAMMING AND OTHER RESOURCES.

N=99



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

Families wanting additional support were provided more frequent home visitation meetings. The family works with their educational navigator or family liaisons to set goals and determine how best to achieve them.

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.

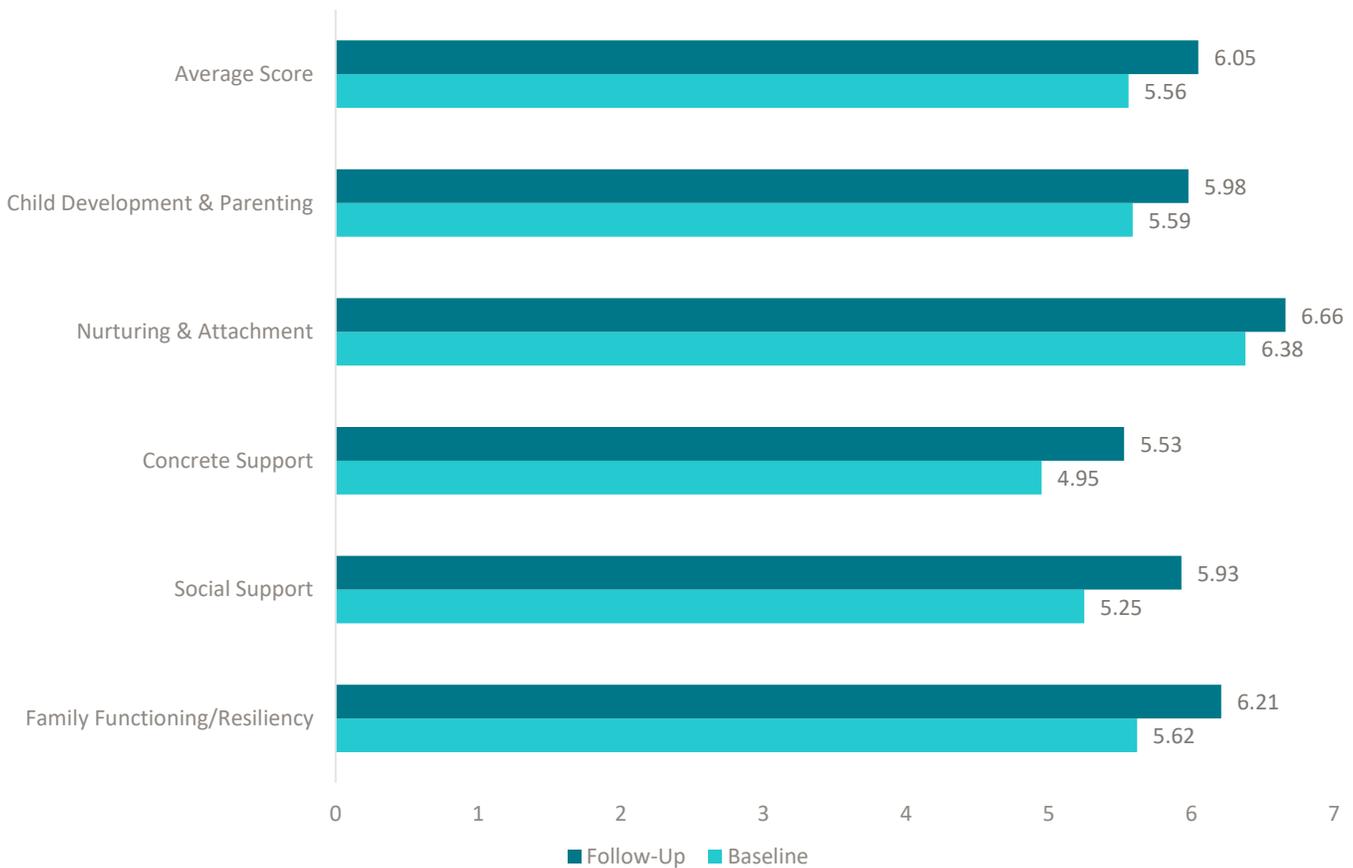
METHOD. The adoption of a strengths-based prevention model embracing protective factors is considered an important approach to prevent child abuse (Langford, J., & Harper-Browne, C., in press). In order to assess family protective factors, participants completed the FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (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. The PFS is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating strong protective factors.

FINDINGS. The results found that parents’ nurturing and attachment skills and family functioning and resiliency were the highest rated areas. Protective factors scores across all areas of the tool were in the strong range. Paired t-test analyses were completed to determine if there were significant changes over time. No significant improvements were found in four of the five protective factors scales:

The following graph shows average scores on the PFS at baseline and follow-up. This graph represents all families at baseline (N=99) and those with a follow-up survey (N=27).

FAMILIES IMPROVED THEIR PROTECTIVE FACTORS AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

Scores indicate families enter the program with a number of strengths.



PARENT SUCCESS STORIES. One participant had a goal of becoming a better parent. Through the guidance and resources provided by our program, particularly the Common-Sense Parenting class, she has gained a new perspective on parenting and has made significant strides in improving her parenting skills.

Another participant, who joined our program in May, has noticed a positive change in her child's behavior. She credited the resources and interventions offered by her Educational Navigator, such as Ready Rosie, Conscious Discipline, and breathing techniques for calming down, her child's behavior has significantly improved.

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.

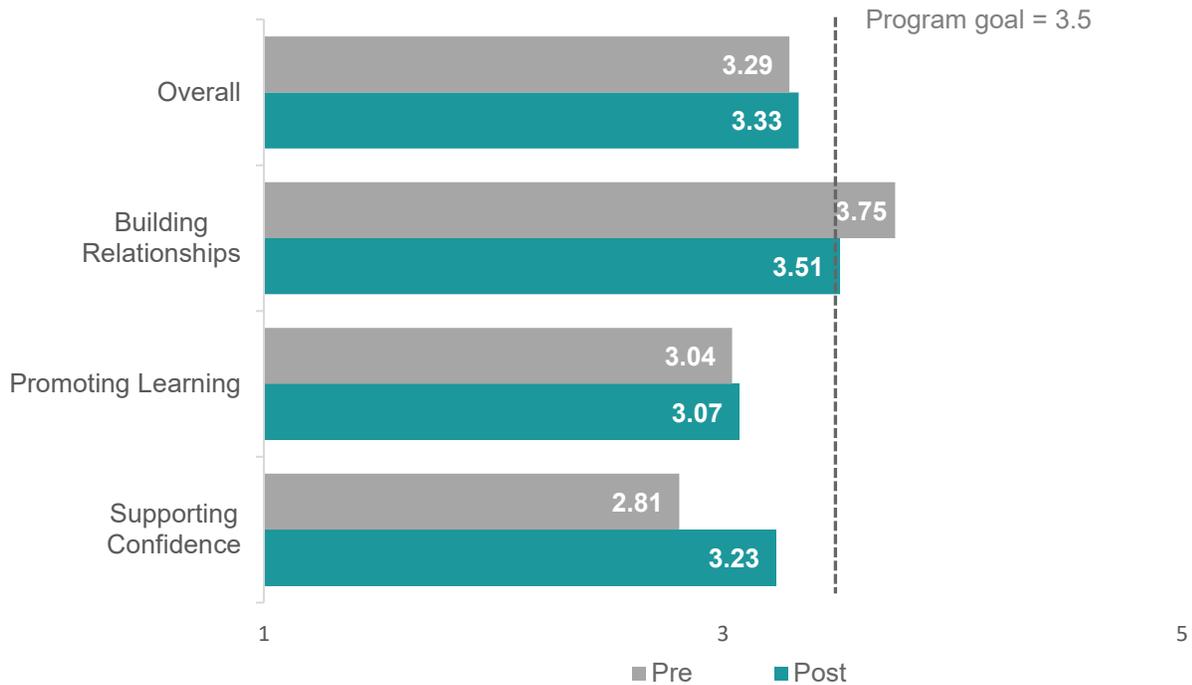
FINDINGS. A total of 14 families enrolled in Parent University had the parent-child interaction assessment at least two points in time. By post, over 60% of parents met the program goal in Building Relationships.

- 36% met goal Overall**
- 64% met goal in Building Relationships**
- 21% met goal in Promoting Learning**
- 33% met goal in Supporting Confidence**

The following graph shows average KIPS results for Parent University families at pre and post.

ON AVERAGE, PARENT UNIVERSITY PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.

n=14



Results of paired samples t-tests did not show significant change over time in any of the areas, likely due to the small sample size of parents with both pre and post scores. It is anticipated there

will be more data for the next report as an additional 43 families had their initial assessment during year.

COURSE PARTICIPATION

Program staff tracked parents' participation in the 21 opportunities that were offered this past year. Activities aligned with four primary components within Parent University

Across the 21 activities, 255 participants (duplicated count) were enrolled. Other than the one-time parent engagement opportunities, the largest enrollments were for the WCA Family Safety Course (22 participants) and Supporting Your Child's Social-Emotional Development (30 participants).

For activities with more than one session, the completion rate was 97% - much higher than the completion rate for the last year.

How did Parent University benefit parents' own education?

Parent University offers English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Educational Diploma (GED) courses. In the 2022-2023 program year, Metropolitan Community College facilitated ESL and GED classes using their ESL and GED instructors to come to the North Omaha site and teach Parent University participants. A total of 38 parents participated in one of these two options, ESL (30) and GED (9).

Participant outcomes for ESL and GED courses offered to English language learners are measured using the CASAS® which is a nationally recognized assessment for English Learners and the ABEL for GED participants.

In the ESL courses 27 students had the CASAS® assessment and 14 had at least one assessment at two points in time. Reading and listening skills ranged from beginning literacy indicating the limited ability to express immediate needs and to understand basic learned phrases to high intermediate skills that include the ability to fill out basic forms and to work in entry-level jobs that include simple oral and written communication. 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. At ESL Level 4, participants can understand simple everyday conversations and have basic routine social interactions. They can follow simple directions are recognizing new words and phrases. 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.

In Listening, 29% had a least one level of growth and at the 2nd assessment 12/14 scored at a level 4 or above. In Reading, 36% had a least one level of growth and 10/14 scored at a level 4 or above. In the GED courses, eight students had the ABEL assessment of math and reading skills, with seven having the assessment as two points in time. Three students gained at least one level in mathematics and two students gained at least one level in reading.

SUCCESS STORIES. A success story for the GED track is one participant who successfully completed two of her official GED tests over the past year. This accomplishment demonstrates her commitment to personal growth and educational advancement.

Another participant who joined the program to improve her English language skills, has shown exceptional dedication. Her commitment has not only led to her own progress in learning English but has also motivated other parents to join the program to work on their language skills.

Finally, one more participant has shown remarkable growth in her ESL proficiency. With a 6-point increase in listening and speaking and an impressive 11-point increase in reading and writing, her progress is compelling.

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

Parent University sponsored one session of the Omaha Bridges Out of Poverty, Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting-By World. This course helps enhance participants' financial, emotional, and social resources by exploring the impact of poverty on their lives. The goal is to support parents in strengthening valuable relationships and securing living-wage job. 100% of the parents enrolled (10/10) completed the 11-week course.

Two additional financial literacy courses were held at Parent University:

- How Money Works - Gain concepts & principles that participants can apply to obtain a lifestyle of health and financial success. This four-week session had 8/9 participants complete the course.
- Financial Survival During Crisis: A 6-week session to guide participant understanding of ways to lower your monthly expenses through comparison shopping, negotiating prices with vendors, budgeting, identifying needs versus wants and learning to save money by couponing and shopping frugally.

What did parents think about participating in Parent University?

FOCUS GROUPS. Focus groups were conducted in 2022-2023 to allow participants the opportunity to relay their experiences with the program, share success stories and provide input on possible improvements to the program. Questions were asked about the participants' overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with program components (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes), and ideas for improvements to the program. Focus groups were conducted with participants and staff members.

RESULTS. Focus groups sessions gathered input from 21 participants who participated in ESL classes, Parent University courses and the GED classes. At least one session was offered in Spanish to capture the perspective of more families.

Participants noted multiple benefits of attending Parent University. Participants discussed the benefits of the different courses offered, the English classes and relationship with the educational navigators as benefiting themselves and their families. Parent University has helped

with parenting, changing relationships, access to mental health and behavioral supports, English skills, and finding resources.

“This is the ONLY POSITIVE PLACE I had when I was transitioning from street life to where I am now. I don’t know what I would be doing now had I not come here. I couldn’t even write a sentence back then and now because of here I have my GED.”

Navigators have been instrumental in helping families find resources and handle challenging situations. Participants talked about building good relationships with their navigators, how they go above and beyond to provide supports, and how they have been instrumental in finding resources. Several participants mentioned the need to hire an additional Spanish speaking navigator as currently only one navigator is in that role, and it limits the amount of support she can provide.

GED classes are seen as a positive and participants appreciated the support from the staff. *“They always answer our questions, and they always encourage us to keep on going, even though if our tests are not that good, they always give the positive encouragement.”*

English skills have improved. Participants were encouraged by the improvement in their English skills and reported feeling increasingly confident in using them. Some mentioned not needing to depend on interpreters when at the doctors or when speaking to school staff. Having their Pre-K and younger students attend the child care on site has helped their children to develop their English skills and increased their independence levels. Parents stated that both would help their students in entering kindergarten.

“Before, I did not know how to say anything. Now, I do know how to speak because I am coming to class, the teacher helps me. Before, I was not reading, but now I am reading a little bit. It is different now.”

Parents continue to have multiple stressors and challenges to handle. Financial challenges were most frequently mentioned. Participants discussed increased prices and inflation as being incredibly challenging and impacting all parts of their lives including housing, employment, and stress level. Parents of children with special needs and/or challenging behavior faced additional challenges in finding care, working with the school systems, and finding effective parenting tools. However, even with the challenges, many identified their navigator as a source of support for finding potential resources and solutions.

Communication could be improved. Participants expressed disappointment over the lack of communication around classes, turnover of navigators, and tickets to special events. They would like to see increased communication and for the communication to be more in advance of special events and changes to programming. It was particularly stressful when navigators changed, and participants were unclear about who their new navigator would be. At times, participants were unclear about the roles of those associated with the Learning Community, program offerings, and who to contact.

Suggestions for improvements were shared. One suggestion was to deliver class content in Spanish more often, so the classes are more effective. Participants expressed concerns with interpretation at times. Participants would like to have an increased variety of classes and for the classes to be held even if a small number enrolls.

“We need more classes. I know numbers can be small sometimes and they will cancel the class, but for those 3-4 people who do sign up they are signing up because that is something they are needing in their life right then. So, isn’t 3-4 better than zero?”

Ideas for additional classes included: CPR classes, citizenship, housing, a job skills program leading to employment, and a basic living skills class.

Other suggestions included allowing other members of the community the opportunity to take classes even if they were not parents, to provide ESL classes for younger adults, provide afternoon classes, and hire other languages for navigators.

Suggestions have been shared with the Parent University leadership team who have been actively working to incorporate changes based on participant feedback.



STUDENT OUTCOMES

In the 2022-2023 program year, the evaluation of student outcomes for the children whose parents are enrolled in Parent University includes three strategies:

1. English language development and social-emotional outcomes are measured through parent-completed assessments for children ages 4 months to 5 years of age.
2. Pre-K outcomes are measured through in-person assessments completed by MMI evaluators and teacher-completed surveys in the six IEC preschool programs.

PARENTS IN PARENT UNIVERSITY: CHILDREN'S (AGES 4 MONTHS TO 11 YEARS) ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL OUTCOMES

METHOD. Parent University families were invited to complete assessments of their children's language development and social-emotional skills in the spring of 2023. The following tools were used:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS [DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN – 2ND EDITION (DAYC-2)]. The DAYC-2 measures children's English language receptive and expressive language skills. Parents completed the assessment for children aged 16 months to 5 years.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS [DEVEREUX EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT (DECA)]. Parents completed the DECA questionnaire to assess young students' social-emotional development in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior as well as total protective factors overall. The DECA is available in Spanish and English. The DECA was completed for 54 children, ages 4 months to 5 years.

FINDINGS.

English Language Skills

Parents completed English language assessments for children whose home language is English or who are in an English-based childcare environment. The language assessment is normed on a diverse cross section of children, particularly in social-economic status. A total of 48 children had the assessment in the spring of 2023. The descriptive analyses found that 45% of the children were at or above the national average in receptive language and most children (57%) were at or above the national average in expressive language.

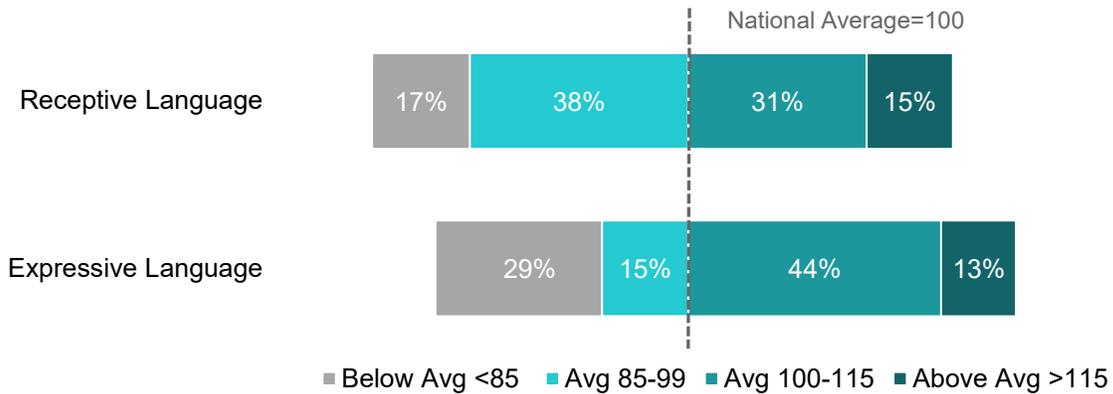
These are strong positive outcomes. By contrast, the children with parents enrolled in Parent University qualify for free & reduced lunch at a much higher rate than the general population, which is an indicator of low income. The fact that approximately half the children score at or above the national average is a compelling finding.

Approximately half of the children demonstrate language skills that meet or exceed the national average.

Approximately one quarter (29%) of the children scored in the below average range in expressive language. This indicates that higher percentages than the normed sample are at the below average level. In a typical distribution, approximately 15% of the children would score in the below average range.

57% OF THE CHILDREN HAD EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

Just under half the children (45%) were at the national average in receptive language. n=48



Social-Emotional

Parents whose primary language was English or Spanish, completed a survey about their children’s social-emotional skills with a total of 54 being completed.

The descriptive analyses found high percentages of children scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: total protective factors (78%), attachment (72%), initiative (74%) and self-control (71%). The majority demonstrated social-emotional skills above the national average, which is a score of 100, in the area of initiative (54%).

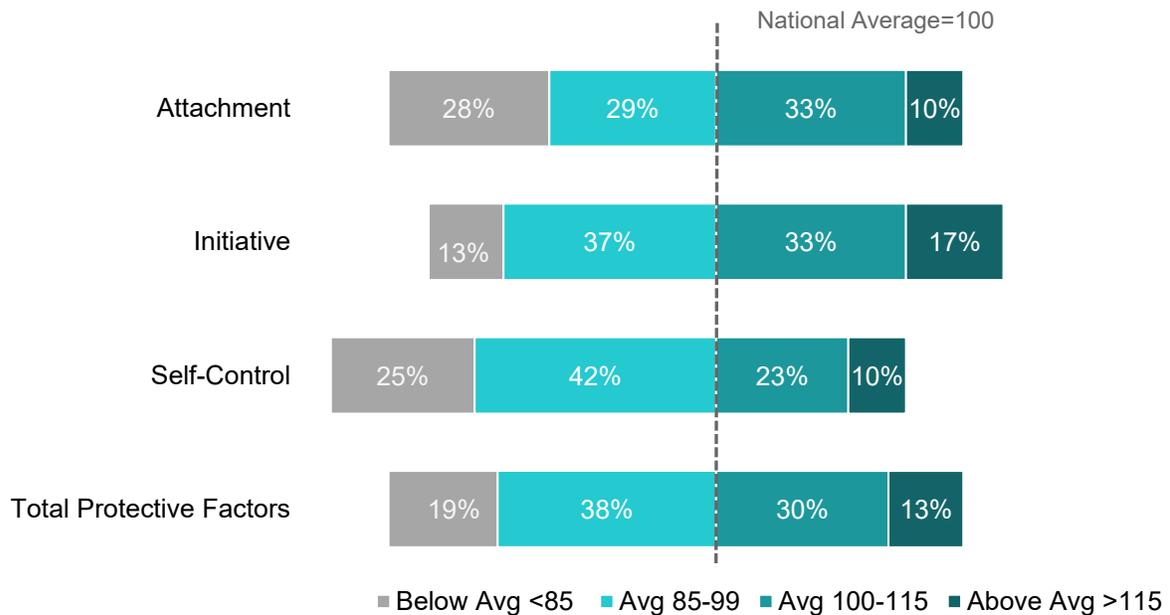
Majority of students were in the average range across all social-emotional areas.

Like all standardized assessments, the social-emotional assessment is normed on a diverse cross-section of children. The sample of children with parents enrolled in Parent University has high percentages who qualify for free & reduced lunch, which is an indicator of low income. The fact that most of the children scored in the average range or above across all areas is promising.

However, the children scored in the below average range at a rate that is approximately equal to or higher than the national sample. In the area of self-control, 25% scored in the below average range and in attachment 28% scored in the below average range. In the normed sample 15% score in the below average range.

STUDENTS SHOWED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN INITIATIVE WITH 76% MEETING OR EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

n=54



The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. At the time of the assessment, 43% of the children scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three to five-year old children.



Family Learning

learning
community
center
OF SOUTH OMAHA

Learning Community Center of South Omaha

The Learning Community Center of South Omaha is a comprehensive, center-based initiative created using national models and best practices from the two-generational approach. The program originated in 2012 as a collaborative effort between the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and OneWorld Community Health Centers. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha was nationally recognized by the White House as a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education and is a 2GEN network partner through Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

Each family in the program has the opportunity to attend classes or programming an average of seven hours per week during the academic school year and throughout the summer. Families participate in all three of the program's primary components:

- Education for Parents of Young Children
- Early Childhood Education
- Interactive Parent/Child Activities

EDUCATION FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Since a parent's level of educational attainment is a strong predictor of a child's academic success, all parents at the center enroll in an English as a Second Language or a GED cohort for six hours a week.

English for Parents: As parents learn English, they become more confident talking to teachers and asking questions about their child's progress, as well as communicating with the broader community. In addition to fundamental language skills, an English for Parents class will teach parents how to use computers to access school information, role-play parent/teacher conferences, and utilize children's books as learning tools. Participants also take field trips to the Omaha Public Library (OPL) and take part in OPL's Summer Reading Program.

GED: In partnership with Metro Community College, the program offers GED classes, and a bilingual ESL instructor provides in-class language supports to parents as needed. The goal of the classes is to help parents increase their educational level and better their family's economic security through more stable and lucrative jobs or new educational pathways only open to GED graduates. GED classes also help parents guide their children on their academic journey (homework help, role modeling, academic language and concepts, etc.).

Along with ESL or GED, parent participants receive:

Parenting Classes and Workshops: Parenting classes and family-focused workshops strengthen and support parents, who are the first and most important teachers for their children. Parents learn practical strategies to support child development and education. Program staff and community organizations provide a wide variety of offerings, including Circle of Security®, Love

and Logic®, domestic violence prevention, financial literacy, and nutritious cooking. All workshops teach skills and techniques to foster learning and wellbeing at home.

Sample Parent Classes and Workshops
Circle of Security® (program staff)
Pyramid Model for Parents (program staff)
Digital Literacy 101 (Metro Community College)
Baby and Me in Q’anjob’al language (ESU #3 Trainer + LCCSO Navigator)
Cooking Matters® (Whispering Roots)
Love and Logic® (program staff)

Educational & Social Assistance Navigation Services: The center employs navigators who develop authentic relationships with parent participants and serve as their advocates. Every parent in the program is assigned an **Educational Navigator**, who conducts home visits with family at least once a month to help connect them with the public school system and provide new insights into child development and learning strategies. Navigators use a research-based home visiting/parenting curriculum, Growing Great Kids®, which ensures effective individualized education and support. **Social Assistance Navigators** assist families who are in crisis or have challenging social or economic needs. These navigators connect parent participants with many community resources, such as pantries, mental health services, and homeless shelters.

# of personal visits by educational navigator	# of home visits by educational navigator	# of parent/child interactions by educational navigator	Note
1690	1570	879	In-person visits: <u>1570</u> were at the participant’s home.

Workforce Development: Since research shows children, whose parents have higher-wage jobs have better educational outcomes; workforce development classes are offered onsite in collaboration with Metropolitan Community College. Parents learn workforce readiness skills such as resume-building, interview skills, and job search methods and receive certificates in customer service, workforce ethics proficiency, and the National Career Readiness Certificate. A Career Skills Coach also offers individual career coaching or assistance connecting to continued education.

Digital Literacy: Thanks to generous private donors, each parent enrolled in the program is loaned a computer. Since 2020, digital literacy was added into all English for Parents classes, and

parents in the program have become proficient in using Zoom, email, search engines, and Burlington English and gained skills such as using a mouse, copying and pasting, and typing. Additionally, Metropolitan Community College offers computer certificates to parents who take onsite courses that include the following topics: Basic Computer Skills, Internet Basics, Using Email, and Windows.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

While parents attend classes, the Learning Community Center of South Omaha offers year-round learning activities for young children, from newborn to age five. The primary focus is on building social, emotional, and executive functioning skills as well as cognitive concepts to support school readiness. The program partners with many organizations, including Farm to School (The Big Garden), Story Time (Omaha Public Library), and performing arts sessions (Opera Omaha).

When staff or parents identify children with delayed development or challenging behaviors, the program connects these children and their families to programs such as Omaha Public Schools Early Intervention or KidSquad at Child Saving Institute. That way, young children receive interventions before they enter the public school system. The program also encourages families to enroll children who qualify in early childhood programs through Omaha Public Schools.

Since 2021, the Learning Community Center of South Omaha has partnered with home and center-based childcare providers working in the South Omaha community. Culturally appropriate, bilingual trainings are offered at the center throughout the year along with monthly coaching in order to support providers who want to improve childcare quality.

INTERACTIVE PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES

Interactive parent/child activities are offered to families enrolled in the program to promote supportive and responsive parent/child relationships and interactions, which are the building blocks for healthy brain development. Interactive parent/child activities allow parents opportunities to practice new parenting strategies while learning together with their children. Examples of interactive parent/child activities include field trips, special events, or family summer camps with themes such as STEM learning, music, art, or literacy. Other partners bring enrichment programs to the center, including Prime Time Family Reading Time® (Humanities Nebraska), College Prep for Families (UNO Service-Learning Academy) and String Sprouts® (Omaha Conservatory of Music).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Learning Community Center of South Omaha provided training and/or coaching for 44 South Omaha childcare providers in 2022-2023. After learning about the lack of bilingual trainers and coaches in the field, several members of the LCCSO team trained to become State of Nebraska-certified trainers and coaches in early childhood development. Two free training sessions were held at the center on the Early Learning Guidelines. In partnership with the Nebraska Children and

Family Foundation, Rooted in Relationships provided bimonthly training, monthly coaching, and collaboration opportunities for 15 childcare providers in the program.

GRADUATION

A parent/child graduation celebrating 98 families was held in April 2023. At the graduation ceremony, 59 parents received one- or two- year participation certificates, 32 parents graduated from the ESL track, and 7 graduated from the GED track.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2022-2023, the Family Learning Program served 299 parents and 767 children (494 target students, birth to 6). Of the families served, 261 were enrolled in the comprehensive program while 38 families participated in the auxiliary program. Additionally, 31 spouses/partners of primary participants took part in some pieces of the programming. A total of 286 children were served through Child Learning at the center with 89% of families either currently or previously needing childcare.

Ninety-three percent of families reported qualifying for free/reduced lunch with 76% of earning less than \$50,000 annually. While Spanish is primarily the first language of most participants, other languages included English, K'iche', Mam, and Q'anjobal. Forty percent of participants had an education level of 8th grade or less upon program entry.

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 formative in nature. The tools selected for the evaluation often have a dual purpose to provide outcome results and to inform the team as part of a continuous improvement process.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS. Focus groups were conducted in 2022-2023 to allow participants the opportunity to relay their experiences with the program, share success stories and provide input on possible improvements to the program. Questions were asked about the participants' overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with program components (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes), and ideas for improvements to the program. Focus groups were conducted with participants and staff members.

FOCUS GROUPS

Summary of Annual Spring Focus Groups

The following is a summary of focus group findings conducted at Learning Community South in the spring of 2023. Focus groups explored people's experiences with English language classes, parenting workshops, relationships with Educational Navigators, on-site childcare, and partnerships with connecting agencies. In all, six in-person focus groups were conducted with 67 participants. To participate in the focus groups, participants must meet a minimum of 6 months of enrollment in the program.

Qualitative analysis revealed six overarching strengths of the programs offered, as well as several suggestions for future improvement.

Theme 1: Participants continue to report a high level of satisfaction with English classes.

Across focus groups, participants reported satisfaction with on-site English classes, as well as satisfaction with their teachers. Participants appreciated the ability to converse with one another and enjoyed the interactive experiences, such as games to learn the English language. Teachers were described as patient and supportive. Participants also appreciated the work of their teachers.

Participation in English classes has resulted in increased confidence to speak English outside of the classroom.

Participants felt more comfortable communicating with physicians and teachers in English. One individual noticed personal advancement due to the number of words she now recognizes at the grocery store.

“I love seeing the effort the teacher uses to teach us. They motivate us to keep learning. If our teacher really makes an effort, then I think we should all really try too.”

Suggestions for future instruction included more interaction and dynamic games. Participants shared concerns about rote memorization and preferred more interactive teaching styles. Several participants also requested more time spent on pronunciation of words and grammar. Participants continue to desire more accessibility to classes, such as classes offered in the evenings or on weekends. Some participants felt the program should be offered to families who do not have young children to serve a wider population.

Participants in one focus group agreed there should be additional ways to measure English language skills before assigning classes (e.g., writing, reading, conversation skills, etc.). One individual noted that the ability to read a sentence is different from the ability to comprehend what is being said and felt that classes should also address reading comprehension.

Theme 2: Families have benefited from parenting classes and parenting workshops.

Participants had the opportunity to take the following classes during the past year: Nebraska Circle of Security Parenting, Love and Logic, Domestic Violence, String Sprouts, Cooking, Prime Time, and Puente al Éxito. There was unanimous agreement that all classes were beneficial to parents and children.

Quotes from participants about classes are provided below:

Nebraska Circle of Security Parenting: “The Circle of Security class helped me a lot with my child. For example, on how kids feel comfortable with us and how to take care of them, and when something happens, they feel comfortable to come back to us. Like having an attachment...a beautiful connection can be formed between them and us.”

Love and Logic: “Before, I did not understand how to raise my daughter with love and affection. Because before, I did not know how to give them love and affection. I didn’t think about hugging them. When they get hurt, I can be there to protect them. Before, I didn’t think about that, and being in those classes, I see that it is important to give them 5-10 minutes a day. Give them joy or a hug before leaving the house or coming home.”

String Sprouts: “I have participated in all of the classes, and the violin was my favorite. I recommend it! It helps not just with learning music, but also reading.”

Prime Time Family Reading: One participant wished there were more than six sessions. Another shared, “I attended Prime Time with my three-year-old. It helped my child to like books. Now he sees a book and shows interest. I learned how to use these books with my child, based on his age level.”

Domestic Violence: “I learned to love and respect myself as a woman. To learn that just because I am a woman, does not mean I cannot do certain things.”

Puente al Éxito: “Very good...My son never really talked about what he was going to study, but when we did this program, my son started to say, ‘I want to study this...’ and ‘I want to go to University.’”

It should be noted that a Workforce Development class has also been offered to primary participants. Of the those who attended this class, participants learned the importance of professional dress attire in the workplace. Some participants shared that the class required accessing different web pages, and their lack of experience with computers made the class more challenging.

Theme 3: Computer classes helped novice users learn how to use the computer.

Several participants shared that they did not know how to use a computer prior to attending classes at the center, e.g., “I’ve never had an opportunity to use the computer before in my life...I’m learning little by little, and the center has helped with that.” Participants reported learning new concepts, such as virus protection, computer security, and monitoring children’s devices through parental controls. Basic concepts, such as typing and Microsoft Word, were also taught in classes offered at the center.

Suggestions for future technology skills included how to make posters or advertising media. One participant requested a “Technology Skills 2.0” course, going beyond the basics to more advanced skills. Participants requested more training with scanning, sharing photos, and apps specific to their children’s school, e.g., Dojo, an app used by teachers to monitor student behavior, and Infinite Campus, a portal with students’ grades accessible for parents.

One emerging topic was the concept that the ability to take a laptop home from the center is connected to attendance in classes. There were many participants who were not aware of the attendance requirement and were uncertain about why they did not get a device to take home.

Theme 4: The companionship of the Educational Navigators continues to be a strength of the program.

Among the positive character traits used to describe the educational navigator, the term “friend” was most consistently used. Educational Navigators were also described as attentive, helpful, professional, and respectful. Participants see the Educational Navigator as a valuable resource to help them with concepts varying from scheduling doctor visits to guidance with parenting skills.

One participant explained she has had several Educational Navigators, and all have been excellent. She further shared how they have helped her with mental health, finding resources, providing guidance, and an ear to listen. Participants observed turnover amongst the Educational Navigator team. Many noticed the frequent changes in assignments and described frustration in starting to become familiar with an individual, and then the individual would leave.

Suggestions for the Educational Navigator component include having afternoon visits so that spouses can join the visit. Another participant requested more focus on older children, e.g., “I would like to see more activities that involve both of my children, not just my youngest child.” Participants also prefer home visits to be scheduled in advance rather than being set up on short notice.

“She makes me feel comfortable and the one thing I like is that she observes my child. She would take brochures and explain information about my child’s needs. Any doubts or questions, the navigator would look for information and would help.”

Theme 5: Participants continue to report an increase in confidence in communicating with their child’s school because of ELL classes.

Better communication with teachers and the ability to call the school to report absences were a few of the improvements in communication noted by participants. *“I can understand better when they send home information about what is going on at my child’s school.” “I was very scared to talk to people who only spoke English. Not only in the schools but in the clinics or hospitals, too. Before, I needed a translator, but now I feel more comfortable...” “My children said, ‘Wow, Mom! You don’t need a translator anymore!’”*

Theme 6: Parents reported a high level of satisfaction with skills taught in the early childhood center.

Across focus groups, parents were happy with the instruction provided to their children in the early childhood center. Children are taught school readiness skills, such as letters, numbers, color recognition, and fine motor skills. The early childhood center also helps with behaviors and socialization, e.g., “My eight-month-old did not want to stay with the childcare. Three days a week, she would cry. Teachers encouraged me to continue coming. Now my daughter is almost two, and she walks right in! Very shocking.” Another parent shared, “Prior to the center, my son did not speak. Six months ago, we started attending the center, and in two weeks, he turned into a parrot! He speaks clearly now.”

Suggestions for the center include more supervision with increased teaching staff. Parents would also like more staff supervision during outdoor play. Suggested new skills for the center include teaching music, cooking, and crafting.

The final focus group question centered on the overall well-being of the participants since the pandemic. Some participants reported financial stress due to inflation, but they stated the diapers donated by the Learning Community have helped a great deal. The overall level of stress has improved because of the ability to leave the house. Overall, the increase in socialization has led to decreased stress.

LCCSO STAFF FOCUS GROUPS OUTCOMES

In August of 2023, the Munroe-Meyer evaluation team conducted a focus group assessment with staff at Learning Community Center South. Staff were comprised of ELL teachers, Educational Navigators, childcare professionals, and front desk staff. Staff participated in focus groups to discover their perceptions about the successes and challenges within the program. Two in-person focus groups were conducted, one in Spanish and one in English, with a total of 12 participants.

Key results and findings

Families are the focus of Learning Community South. Participants in both focus groups described the program as community and family-oriented, e.g., “We all have a similar goal of wanting to help families.” One participant shared that the program meets and addresses family needs. Several staff noted lots of support between staff and families.

Leadership’s openness to new programs and partnerships was also appreciated. Additionally, the center was described as a “good work environment” and a “united and helpful team.”

When asked to share challenges in their role at Learning Community Center South, several staff mentioned the lack of physical building space. This sentiment was supported by staff noting the crowded childcare classrooms.

This evaluation period presented more challenges detailed by the Learning Community Center staff. Staff reported feeling tired and overwhelmed. Several staff reported that understaffing has resulted in a higher caseload for Educational Navigators. Educational Navigators reported feeling over capacity and stressed and are often told they need to increase numbers when there are not sufficient staff available to meet the needs of additional families.

Staff expressed a desire to take part in the decision-making process. Communication is present, but staff do not feel encouraged to make suggestions or share their ideas with lead staff.

Suggestions included having a child psychologist to help early childhood teachers support children with undiagnosed behaviors in the classroom. Classroom educators for both adults and young children would like more time for lesson planning. The ability to work from home in the summer was also requested.

When asked to describe the level of support regarding training, resources, and team meetings, staff appreciated regular check-ins with the administration. They also felt supported by attending monthly meetings and various trainings that have been offered.

Staff were asked to identify the most beneficial changes within their department in the past year. Benefits included making diaper donations a long-term monthly program, implementing a therapy program at the center, and updating information for orientation.

Successes from the past year include adding a Community Navigator, e.g., “Adding new navigator roles has been very beneficial. They can focus on helping families outside of the program.”

Additional successes include creating a system to collect student attendance data, as well as offering parenting and workforce classes. Through the workforce classes, parents are learning the needed skills to acquire a job. Educators have also enjoyed seeing the growth in the children that they work with. Continuing to build trust with families also creates strong relationships between staff and families.

Staff were asked to share any participant or child anecdotes from the past year. Participants believe the parenting classes help to give parents a voice. The platform helps build a community to share personal struggles and help one another. Staff also share in the success of adult learners who now have jobs at a bank or as a nurse because of attending the Learning Community program. Further, watching participants graduate with their GED is a great accomplishment to be a part of. One participant who received their GED decided to continue their education and received a scholarship to Metropolitan Community College.

Successes within the childcare were also reported, e.g., “Children who come here the very first day are very scared, and later they don’t want to leave. They learn to sing songs, letters, and colors. It’s very beautiful.” “Returning children who are now starting middle school or high school come back to the center and tell childcare staff, ‘I remember you! You were my teacher!’”

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INCREASED

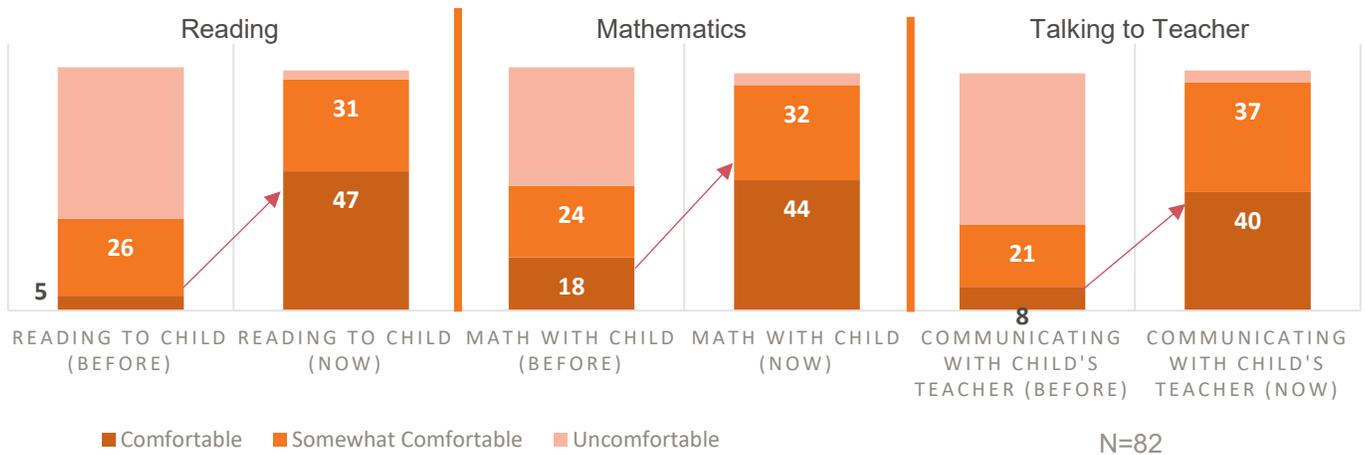
As part of the focus groups, parents reflected on their levels of comfort about engaging with aspects of their children’s education prior to starting the program and how they compared to now after participating in the programming. A total of 82 parents participated in the groups.

The current results are consistent with the past several years of evaluation data. Parents feel increasingly comfortable engaging in school efforts including reading to their child in English, working on mathematics and communicating with the teacher.



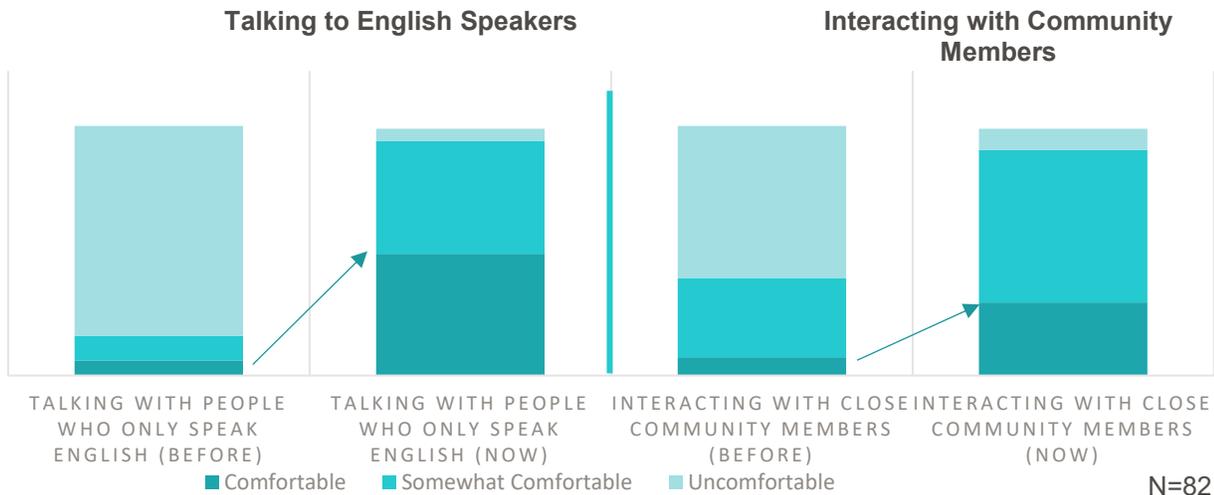
The percent of participants feeling at least somewhat comfortable reading to their child increased from 38% to 95% and from 51% to 93% (+42% increase) for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child's teacher and the school, increasing from 35% to 94% being at least somewhat comfortable.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE INCREASED ACROSS ALL SCHOOL AREAS.



In addition to school engagement items, participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. In both scenarios, participants indicated increased levels of feeling comfortable communicating with English speakers with over 90% feeling at least somewhat comfortable after being the program for at least six months. 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.

CONFIDENCE IN USING ENGLISH SKILLS INCREASED AFTER ATTENDING PROGRAMMING FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS.



PARENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

METHOD. English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS®. CASAS® was used for multiple 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 by Munroe-Meyer Institute's program evaluators.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FINDINGS. A total of 260 CASAS® assessments were administered in 2022-2023 with 50 participants receiving more than one administration. The assessment is administered after every 60-90 hours of instruction. **Paired samples t-tests revealed significant growth from pre to post test for both Reading, $t(43)=1.803, p<.05$, and for Listening, $t(37)=1.76, p<.05$.** By the 2nd assessment most participants (75%) were at Level 4 or above for Reading while 12% were at Level 4 or above for Listening.

The levels of the CASAS® indicate increasing level of skills and comfort in being able to listen, understand, and read English. 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. At ESL Level 4, participants can understand simple everyday conversations and have basic routine social interactions. They can follow simple directions are recognizing new words and phrases. 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 of CASAS® results were provided to the participants and ESL teachers at the centers. Teachers used these scores to group students and 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.

Success Story

Before starting our program, one participant took English as a Second Language classes at Metropolitan Community College, but she had to stop due to a lack of childcare. She learned about our program through another participant. When she arrived at our center, she realized this program was more than English classes and childcare, and she immediately engaged in all the components.

During home visits, the participant learned how to support her daughters' emotions and learned about empathy in children. Her daughters are very kind, and she can tell how they express their sympathy for other people. Despite not knowing English fluently, her daughter tried to help interpret for one of her friends at school.

"I want my daughters to have the opportunity to learn new things since I didn't have the same opportunities. It is also an example for them to see me study and work hard to do the same."

PARENTING PRACTICES

Video observations of parents and their children were submitted to the evaluation team. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) was used to provide feedback to parents and help navigators determine which skills to focus on with parents. As part of the continuous improvement process, educational navigators receive a written report with scores and recommendations to use with families.

METHOD. 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 interacting 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.

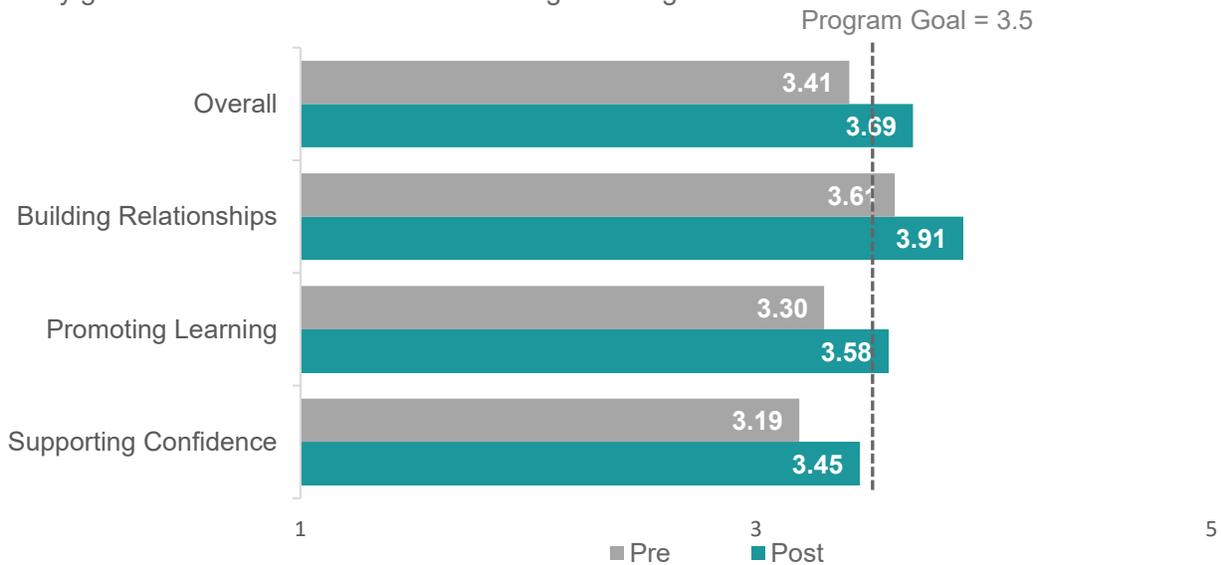
FINDINGS. A total of 70 families enrolled in LCCSO had the parent-child interaction assessment at least two points in time with another 120 families having an initial assessment during the same period. By post, most parents met the program goal in three of the four areas.

- 63% met goal Overall**
- 73% met goal in Building Relationships**
- 57% met goal in Promoting Learning**
- 41% met goal in Supporting Confidence**

The following graph shows average KIPS results for LCCSO families at pre and post.

ON AVERAGE, LCCSO PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN EVERY AREA EXCEPT SUPPORTING CONFIDENCE.

They grew the most in the area of Promoting Learning. n=70



A paired samples t-test analysis found that parents' skills increased significantly over time across all subscales and overall.

Overall: [t(69)= -3.339; $p < .001$, $d = 0.6845$] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Building Relationships: [t(69)= -2.721; $p < .01$, $d = 0.7906$] with the effect size suggesting large meaningful change.

Promoting Learning: [t(69)= -2.970; $p < .01$, $d = 0.7780$] with the effect size suggesting large meaningful change.

Supporting Confidence: [t(42)= -2.456; $p < .01$, $d = 0.7036$] with the effect size suggesting large meaningful change.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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

FINDINGS. The following is a list of additional work certificates and the numbers of certificates awarded in each category.

1. National Career Readiness (11)
2. Work Ethics Proficiency (17)
3. North Star Computer Readiness Certifications (161)

Additionally, 37 participants enrolled in two GED cohorts in partnership with Metro Community College. **Of those participants, five earned their GED.** Fifty-six percent in cohort 1 and 52% of cohort two demonstrated measurable skills gains (3-4 grade level increase).

Success Story

A recent success includes one participant's story, who recently graduated from the GED program and wanted to continue his studies at Metropolitan Community College to pursue an Electrical Apprenticeship. Since May of this year, LCCSO began looking for resources to help him pay for his studies. He was recently awarded the True Potential Scholarship, which will help him pay for his tuition and fees at any community college in Nebraska.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE NAVIGATION SERVICES

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.

Simple referrals:

A participant may seek assistance from a social assistance navigator (SAN) when he or she needs help connecting to another agency or filling out paperwork. Once a referral is received, SAN has 48 hours to attempt contact with the participant and assess the level of support the participant may need. Some participants can navigate community resources once directed to the agency. Other participants may encounter other barriers, such as transportation, a language barrier, or feeling insecure about how to proceed. If other barriers are presented, SAN will assist participants with problem-solving strategies and identify the steps to remove barriers. The goal is to empower participants so that they may feel comfortable addressing similar situations in the future.

Complex Referrals:

A complex referral implies a participant has multiple needs to be addressed, for example: seeking financial assistance for rent, utilities, or medical bills, while also needing support to identify a low-cost behavioral health agency. Once a referral is received, SAN has 24 hours to attempt contact with the participant and assess the level of urgency to address the need. Participants under the complex referral will collaborate with SAN to identify the current support group, what the client has attempted in the past when presented with a similar situation and what services may be available in the community to address their needs. Once the goals are established, the participant is empowered to choose which item he or she may want to address first. A complex referral varies in the length of time it will be open. In the process, SAN provides educational resources such as budgeting information and coping skills the participant can attempt as their situation resolves.

FINDINGS. There were **298 family referrals made to the social assistance navigator**. Of those, 220 were simple referrals, 26 were complex referrals, and 52 were preventive assessments. Simple referrals are those in which families may need short-term assistance such as help with paperwork, referrals to other resources (food bank, energy assistance, etc.). **Of the simple referrals, 83% were discharged successfully.**

Complex referrals are those requiring longer engagement, additional support, and involve goal setting with families. Service plans were developed with families who chose to engage to establish goals. By the end of the year, of the families enrolled, **38% were able to close their case successfully while 19% were still in progress**, 27% disengaged in services, and 12% declined services. The remaining families (4%) deferred engaging with the navigator.

Based on Social Assistance 2022-2023 Report, **there was a 50% increase in number of successfully discharged simple referrals**. An 18% increase of number of successfully completed goals in complex cases. The SAN team doubled the number of preventative assessments completed. Overall, successfully discharged complex cases showed positive trends towards self-sufficiency in all subsections of the Self-Sufficiency Matrix, including subscales of Education/Vocation, Family, Social Supports, Living Situation, Medical, Behavioral Health, Legal and Safety. Additionally, successfully discharged complex cases showed overall positive trends towards lower total difficulties score and higher pro-social score from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Including, lower overall scores in emotional problems, conduct problems and peer problems. Nine out of 10 successfully discharged complex cases showed decreased stress level upon discharge, 1 reported maintaining the same stress level.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

METHOD. Families were invited to participate in assessments of their children's executive functioning and academic skills in the spring of 2023. The following tools were used:

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 was administered in English or Spanish by an evaluator from MMI.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

BATERÍA IV WOODCOCK-MUÑOZ. The Bateria IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measure cognitive abilities, achievement, and comparative oral language abilities. Four subscales were utilized in the evaluation: Test 1 Identificación de letras y palabras (Letter-Word Identification), Test 2 Problemas aplicados (Applied Problems), Test 4 Comprensión de textos (Passage Comprehension), Test 5 Cálculo (Calculation). This assessment was administered in Spanish by an evaluator from MMI on children ages 3 and 4.

To assess the academic outcomes of the school-age 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.

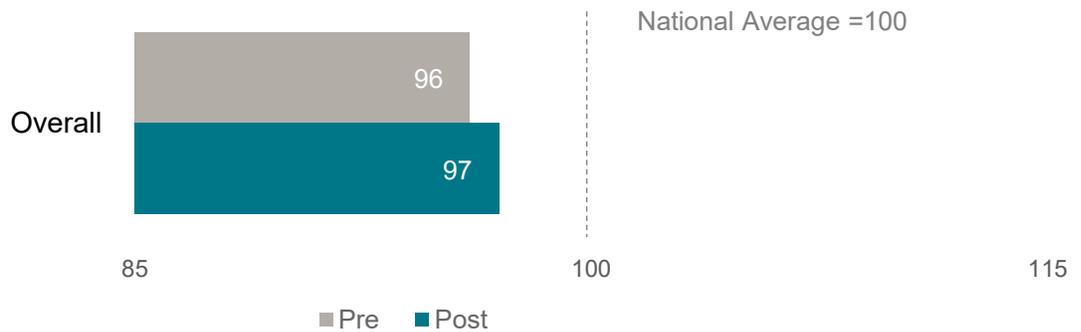
FINDINGS

Executive Functioning

Sixty children were assessed with 48 children having both pre and post assessments. The descriptive analyses found that 96% of the children demonstrated average executive functioning skills. Average scores were 96.36 (pre) and 96.84(post). The national average is a score of 100. A paired samples t-test analysis indicated the growth from pre to post was not significant. However, **96% of the students scored in the average range.**

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS DEMONSTRATED SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT FROM PRE TO POST.

96% scored in the average range. N=45



Academic Skills

FOR THIRD YEAR, STUDENTS SCORED THE HIGHEST IN MATH CONCEPTS AND APPLICATIONS.

Two areas are in the average range for the first time in 3 years.. n=26



Twenty-six children were administered math and literacy assessments during the spring of 2023. Scores indicated average skills for one mathematics (SS=91) and one literacy assessment (SS=89). Each of the four subscales average scores were higher than last year as in 2021-2022 none of the subscales were in the average range.

ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

School Attendance data was obtained from Omaha Public Schools on the school-age students of parents participating in the LCCSO program. Those students attend 25 different schools in the district. For those students with parents attending programming **58% missed fewer than 10 days of school**. For K-5 students (n=114), the average of missed days was slightly higher (M=9.84)

than for students (n=25) in grades 6 and above (M=9.38). The goal for students across the district is to miss fewer than 10 days.

SCHOOL AGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

For those students with parents attending the program, academic achievement data were obtained from the district. For purposes of analysis only data for grades K-5 are reported. The sample size for grades 6 and above was too small to be meaningful.

MAP NWEA® data for fall and spring are shown below.

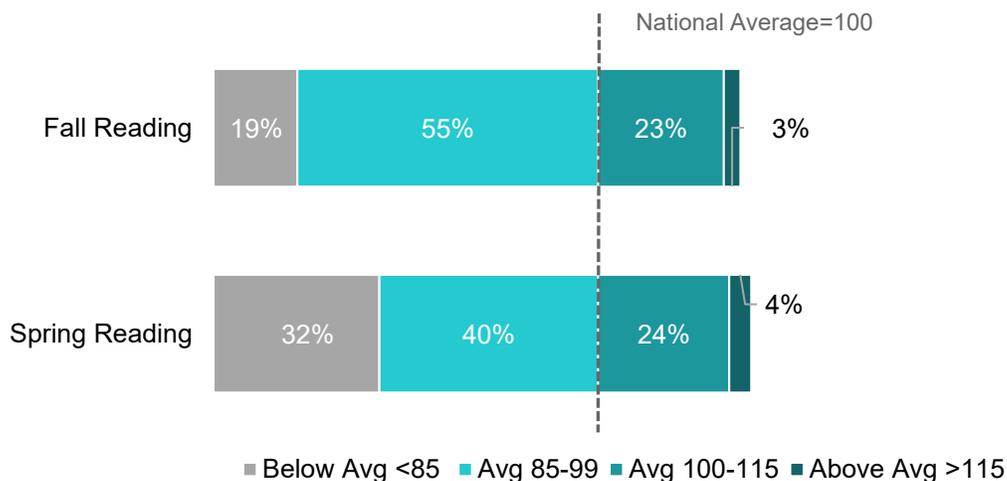
OVER 75% OF STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE IN MATH ACROSS BOTH TIME POINTS.

More students scored above the national average in the spring. n=112



MORE STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR READING IN THE FALL THAN SPRING.

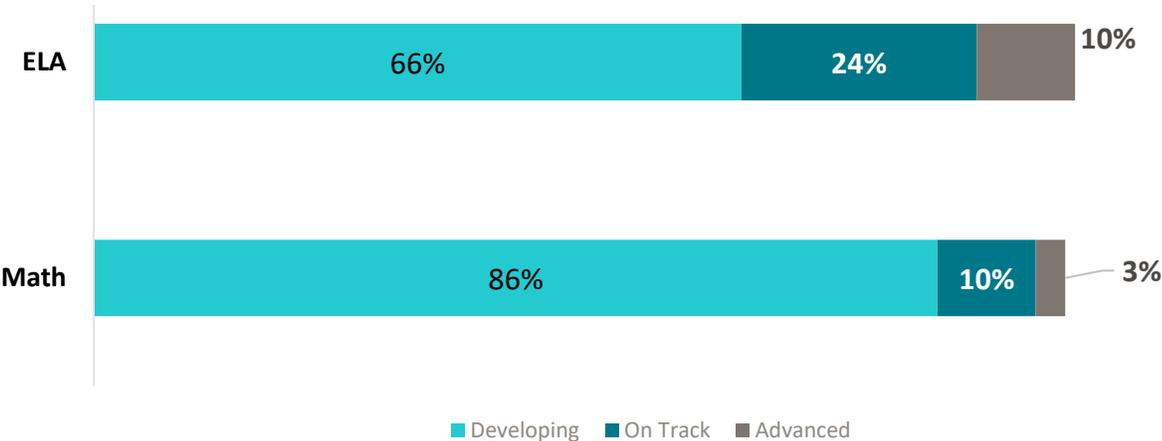
By spring more students scored above the national average. n=112



Students' scores were stronger in mathematics with 75% of students scoring in the average range at both fall and spring. For reading, more students scored in the below average range in the spring than in the fall. These scores are based on the national averages.

NSCAS proficiency levels were reported for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for 3rd-5th grade students (N=29). Unlike MAP data, more students (34%) scored in the proficient range for ELA than for math (13% proficient). Proficiency rates for Omaha Public Schools for grades 3-5 are slightly higher ranging from 37%-42% proficient for ELA and from 33-39% for mathematics. For English Learner, 3rd-5th grade students, proficiency rates ranged from 25-30% for mathematics and 26-32% for ELA. **Students with parents in the program had higher rates of proficiency in ELA and lower rates in math when compared to district data.**

MORE STUDENTS SCORED IN THE PROFICIENT RANGE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS THAN FOR MATH.
N=29



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: USE OF DATA

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha focuses on using data gathered for the evaluation on an ongoing basis. The evaluation team from MMI and the management team at LCCSO engage in multiple feedback loops to improve programming and make informed decisions. KIPS and CASAS assessments provide valuable information for the family navigators and English teachers to use in their interactions with families and students. Student data on from the executive function and achievement assessments were shared both with program staff and with families. Focus group reports were shared with the management team to provide additional feedback from both participants and staff. These data aid in program improvements and decisions.

SUMMARY

The LCCSO program has demonstrated a pattern of improved participant and child level outcomes highlighting the impact of a 2GEN approach.

School District Initiatives



District Initiatives

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.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

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 the five participating 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 Diane Sweeney's and Jim Knight's coaching frameworks 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 leading building professional learning, observations, modeling, individual student problem solving, data analysis and utilization, teacher feedback, and guidance with new curriculum. Instructional Coaches served 118 teachers and approximately 1,919 students.

RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Instructional Coach serves all elementary schools in the district, focusing on teachers that are in their first three years of teaching. A focus on supporting teachers with classroom management, instructional practice, and onboarding of new curriculum is emphasized during collaboration. The instructional coach also assists with the New Teacher Mentoring Program. During 2022-2023, 28 teachers and 1700 students were part of the coaching model.

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Millard Public Schools implemented instructional coaching at two buildings during 2022-2023. Two instructional coaches served 43 teachers and 838 students across two elementary buildings.

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Instructional literacy coaches focused on literacy instruction, foundational skills, comprehension, and vocabulary in kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. Coaches received professional development every month on best instructional practices for teaching English Language Arts. Approximately 70 teachers and 1,500 students were impacted during the school year.

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Cognitive coaching served as the base for the Instructional Coaching provided to four 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. Seventy-five classroom teachers (46 non-tenured) and 1,350 students were impacted by Instructional Coaching.

PARTICIPANTS

In 2022-2023, 334 teachers and 7,307 students were impacted by Learning Community funded Instructional Coaches. All schools funded by the Learning Community for Instructional Coaching were elementary buildings.

OUTCOMES

COACH AND TEACHER FEEDBACK ON INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

METHOD. A combination of teacher surveys and instructional coach surveys were used to gather information on how both teachers and coaches perceived the instructional coaching programs across the five districts. Data are reported in aggregate, not by individual district.

FINDINGS

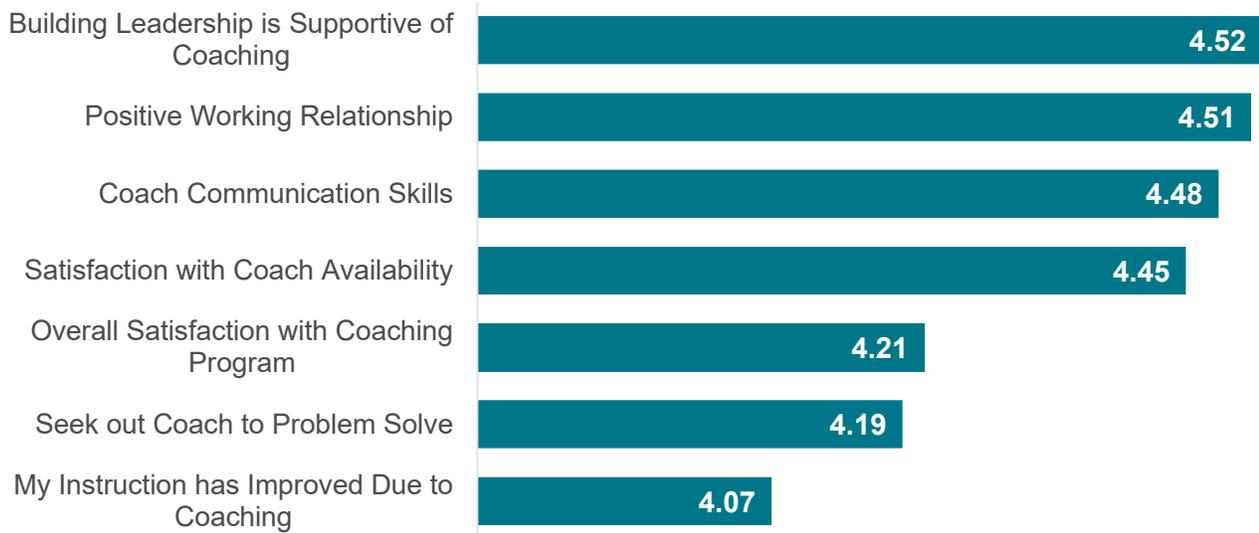
TEACHER SURVEY

A total of 197 teachers across five districts completed the teacher survey. Most teachers completing the survey had at least 10 years of experience (52%) compared to 29% with 4-10 years of teaching experience and 19% in their first three years of teaching. When asked about the frequency of coaching support, 65% of teachers reported working with a coach at least twice per month.

Teachers rated survey items on a 5-point scale (*1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree*). Teachers valued the relationship with their coach, felt supported by their district and had strong overall satisfaction with the coaching program. **Overall, 82% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received from their district's instructional coaches.**



COACHING WAS SUPPORTED BY DISTRICTS AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP.
 82% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching program at their site. n=197



Teachers were asked to rate the utility of each coaching strategy.

Coaching Strategy	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
Coaching/Feedback	6.74%	6.74%	10.67%	21.91%	53.93%
Co-Teaching	19.46%	7.38%	6.71%	22.15%	44.30%
Data Analysis	4.60%	7.47%	13.22%	22.99%	51.72%
Lesson Planning	12.20%	6.71%	13.41%	18.90%	48.78%
Modeling Lesson and/or Strategies	13.61%	4.14%	11.24%	24.26%	46.75%
Observations (Live or Videotaped)	18.88%	6.99%	10.49%	17.48%	46.15%
Professional Development	6.38%	6.38%	12.23%	26.60%	48.40%
Small Group/Differentiated Instruction	9.64%	4.22%	12.05%	19.28%	54.82%

Successes

Teachers felt valued and supported by their coaches. Relationships were key in teachers working with and feeling supported by their coach. Several new teachers commented on how imperative it was to have the guidance and expertise of the coach.

“She has gone above and beyond to help me in any way I've needed help and with any questions I've had. If she did not know the answer off the top of her head, she did her research and found the answer for me.”

“As a 1st year teacher, I don't think I would have been nearly as successful if it was not for the coach.”

Coaches were viewed as a resource and a collaborative partner in helping to improve instructional practices and student achievement.

“We worked together to analyze student data so that we can be very purposeful in our planning and determine if our teaching strategies have been successful. According to our data, our efforts have been successful and student engagement and learning has increased. We have seen reading and math scores improve as a result of our efforts.”

“She is always willing to help me problem-solve, she eagerly worked through the Wilson Reading System, and she supported me through my observation cycle so I could be the strongest teacher possible.”

Teachers viewed coaches as passionate about instruction and students. The teachers found the coaches to be a support system not only for themselves but for the students. They felt their time and interactions were valued by the coach and coaches were as invested in student success as they were. Having a strong teacher-coach relationship allowed them to problem-solve and view student challenges in a positive, collaborative manner.

“Often, the solution involves the coach actually providing a direct intervention which she conducts with professionalism and kindness. The students LOVE their time with her, and the teachers appreciate her desire to strengthen our school.”

“Having the ability to work with, co-teach, and brainstorm with our coach has been a major benefit to staff and students. I'd feel lost without her.”

Challenges

Teachers shared frustrations with the numbers of students in their classrooms and the need for interventionists to work directly with students. Some felt coaches would be better utilized in the capacity of direct support to students than as a coach. Others voiced concerns that the coach was often a substitute administrator and therefore not available as a coach or interventionist.

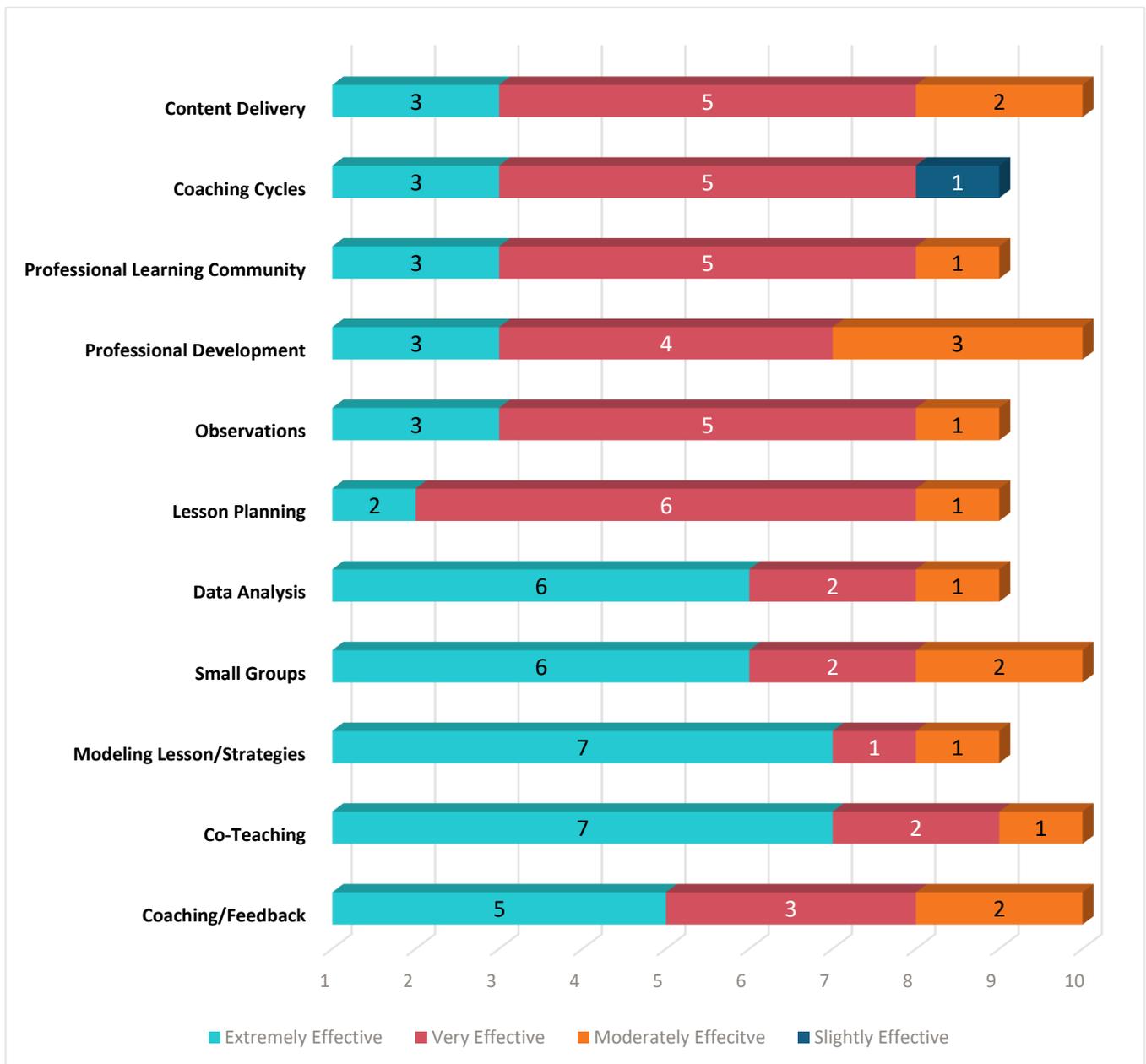
“We need more people working with kids to help them get caught up on skills and learn to read with comprehension. Teachers can only do so much in a day. We need Interventionists for kids!”

“Would like to see her be utilized more as a coach than as an additional admin.”

“When we have 28 kids in a classroom with such wide abilities, the best use of this position and the money spent for it, would be actually working with the students to help with the academic gaps we see.”

Instructional Coach Feedback

Ten coaches representing four districts provided feedback through an online survey. Of the 10 coaches, 9 of them had less than 5 years of experience as a coach and 4 provided supports to more than 20 teachers in a year. Coaches were asked about the effectiveness of several coaching activities. Of the activities, all but one activity (coaching cycles) were rated to be at least moderately effective.



Successes

Coaches were asked to share 2-3 success of their coaching year. Many highlighted the relationships built with teachers as being not only a success of the year but also key to providing effective coaching. Others highlighted working with teacher on implementation of new curricula or pilot materials as a success. Finally, several highlighted the use of data in a collaborative manner with the teachers as a success of the year.

Success Story

“I was able to help three primary educators restructure how they taught small group reading. Together, we utilized multiple coaching strategies to improve the teachers' instructions. I modeled a small group lesson using the LETRs lesson plan template. Then, we lesson-planned together, took a video of the teacher teaching, gathered baseline data, and considered how we could change instruction. Throughout the next two months, we worked together to alter instruction and differentiate for students' needs. Throughout the process, we watched students grow exponentially and reflected on how they could continue to grow their practice. It was exciting to see the educators' and students' growth throughout the process.”

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Nebraska State Assessment Scores are reported by districts participating in the Instructional Coaching program. District averages are the average proficiency rates by grade level across each building in a district receiving instructional coaching. While some schools serve 6th grade not all do, therefore, proficiency rates are reported for 3rd-5th grades only. Free/Reduced price averages are included as the schools with instructional coaching ranged from 44-94% students participating in free/reduced price meals.

District NSCAS scores (3rd – 5th grades)

NSCAS English Language Arts Percent Proficient

Grade 3	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	50%	62%
Free/Reduced Lunch	33%	48%
District A (52% FRL)	54%	66%
District B (77% FRL)	32%	67%
District C (77% FRL)	41%	56%
District D (59% FRL)	38%	53%
District E (58% FRL)	32%	51%
Grade 4	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	53%	55%
Free/Reduced Lunch	35%	40%

District A	53%	65%
District B	42%	51%
District C	45%	48%
District D	42%	41%
District E	42%	45%

Grade 5	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	47%	57%
Free/Reduced Lunch	31%	41%
District A	57%	58%
District B	35%	53%
District C	40%	37%
District D	37%	53%
District E	37%	45%

**NSCAS Mathematics
Percent Proficient**

Grade 3	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	50%	58%
Free/Reduced Lunch	32%	42%
District A	49%	60%
District B	21%	49%
District C	28%	50%
District D	38%	53%
District E	32%	54%

Grade 4	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	46%	58%
Free/Reduced Lunch	28%	42%
District A	41%	61%
District B	24%	48%
District C	25%	41%
District D	26%	45%
District E	41%	56%

Grade 5	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	49%	65%
Free/Reduced Lunch	31%	49%
District A	53%	64%
District B	29%	42%

District C	29%	39%
District D	37%	54%
District E	49%	65%

The statewide assessment scores increased across both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics for all but two grade levels in two different districts. Students scored indicate higher rates of proficiency than the average proficiency for the FRL state average and are close to the overall state averages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Instructional Coaches are instrumental in building teacher capacity and supporting teacher instructional growth. To examine more direct effects of coaching, a dosage analysis with ongoing student assessments could be conducted. The statewide assessment is broad and may not capture both the adjustments and growth that occur during a school year.



Extended Learning

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Extended Learning programs provide additional direct instruction for students with smaller teacher to student ratios and a focus on specific skills identified by district assessments. Summer programming is designed to prevent learning loss so that students are better prepared for academic success as they enter the next school year. Extended learning programs are funded in three districts and one community agency.

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. The summer extended learning program consisted of 12 days, 3 hours each day. Students scoring below the 25th percentile are provided targeted instruction in the areas of ELA and mathematics. Weekly communication and resources are shared with families about their child's progress. The goal of the program is to help students maintain their academic skills over the summer break.

COMPLETELY KIDS. Students in this school year before and after school program were served at Field Club elementary. Completely KIDS focuses on building the social-emotional and academic skills of the students in our programs. Through hands-on project-based learning curriculum, the students learn while doing and stay engaged in the activities. In 2022, 101 students were served in the before school program and 153 after school, 91% were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

ELKHORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Jump Start to Reading provided students at-risk for reading failure 12 days of intense reading intervention. The goal of the program is to reduce summer reading loss. The program pulled from multiple curricula (Wonderworks, SRA, CLOSE readers/text-dependent analysis, 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 43 students participated with 19% qualifying for free reduced lunch. Jump Start to Reading serves students who have completed Kindergarten, First, and Second grades.

SPRINGFIELD-PLATTEVIEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. This school year the students verified for this program received 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. All students who need support in all grade levels are considered, but there is a focus on students in the intermediate grade range. This year 15 participants across 2 elementary buildings participated in the intervention.

PARTICIPANTS

Two hundred and three students in Grades K-5 were served through extended learning programming across four sites.

OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Sixty-seven parents completed the program satisfaction 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 ($M=4.62$) with the extended learning programs. Parents rated staff as being excellent ($M=4.62$), believed their child would be more successful the following year in school, and felt their child enjoyed the program.

EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS MET EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS.

90% of parents feel their child will be more successful in school.



N=67

Parents were asked to provide one to two examples of things the program could better and 1-2 examples of positives about the programming.

Multiple parents mentioned overall satisfaction with the program. Parents loved the smaller student-teacher ratios, small group instruction and the improvement made by their children. Many parents mentioned they felt their child would be more confident for the next school year. A few improvements were noted by parents including more communication on student progress and different hours.

“AWESOME program. The student-teacher ratios are amazing. My kids really grew as readers. I wish the program was longer! They loved it more than regular summer school.”

“Loved the small groups instruction. It was very successful as my son is deaf and learns better in smaller groups.”

- Parents of Students

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student data was submitted by the districts and/or programs. All the districts used MAP data to track student progress.

District A students **on average increased their percentile rank by over 3 points** from an average percentile rank of 41 in the spring of 2023 to an average percentile rank of 44 in the fall of 2023. For reference a percentile rank of 50 is equal to a standard score of 100.

District B had **most students meet their growth goal for language arts (62%)** while 31% met their growth goal in math. At the post test, 74% scored in the average range or above for reading and 75% were at or above the average range in mathematics.

District C had **50% of intervention students meet or exceed the district growth goal for mathematics** with 17% scoring at or above the district achievement goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

Continue to examine the impact of targeted intervention programs at the district level.

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.

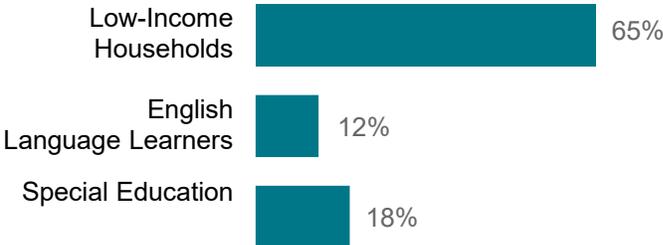
Programming focuses on pre-academic skills, social-emotional-behavioral readiness and orienting students to the processes and procedures of the school. The program includes a strong family engagement component such as home visits. It also utilizes certified teachers for part or all of their staffing. The program ran for three weeks and was a full-day program.



DEMOGRAPHICS

In the summer of 2023, Jump Start to Kindergarten was implemented in one district. A total of 89 kindergarten students were served. The program was implemented in-person and individual child assessments were collected. 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.

STUDENTS FROM HIGH RISK POPULATIONS WERE SERVED DURING THE JUMP START PROGRAM.



n=89

Jump Start to Kindergarten served 10 classrooms in 5 schools across the participating district. The program served more females (53%) than males (47%). The majority of children served were five years of age.

SOME RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS WERE SERVED.
 There were 21% of students who were Hispanic.



OUTCOMES

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

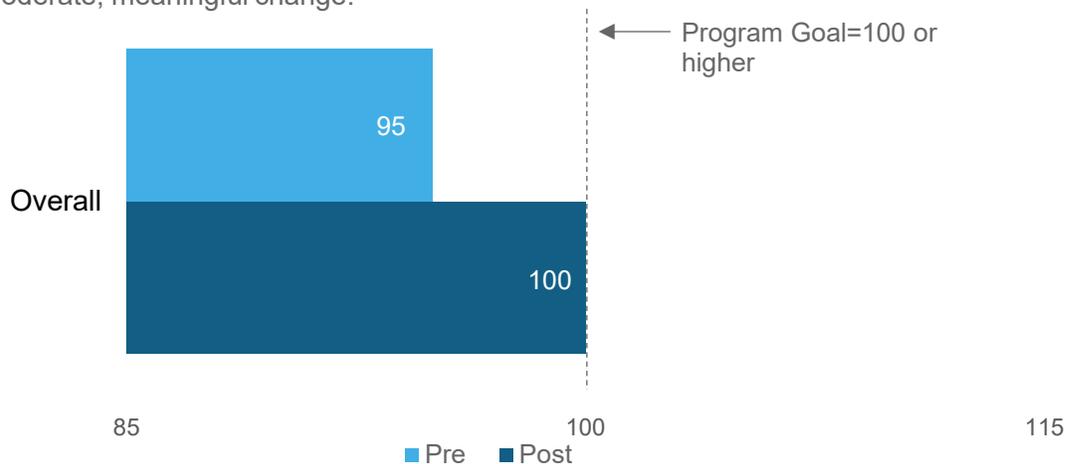
Did the students’ executive functioning skills change over time?

METHOD. In recent years the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Blair & Razza, 2007). Executive functioning is defined as a student’s ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler’s ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et. al., 2013). The Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS), is an online assessment for children two and older.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For the 2023 summer, pre-post comparisons were made using a paired-samples t-test. The results found that overall, the students made significant gains in the area of executive functioning over the course of the program [$t(68) = -6.368; p < .001, d = 0.77$] suggesting moderate, meaningful change.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVERALL.
 Effect size suggests moderate, meaningful change.



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

PARENT SATISFACTION

What did parents report about the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program?

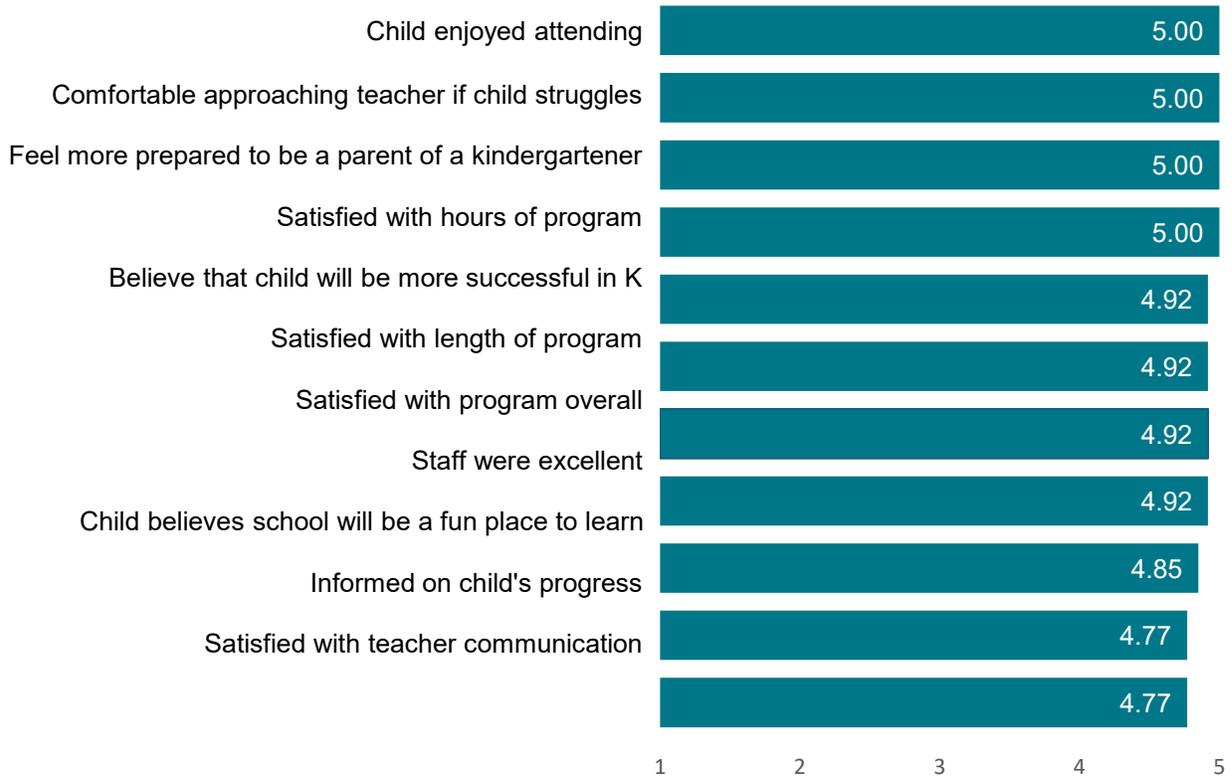
METHOD. Parents provided feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program. Using a collaborative process across all districts and agencies, a master parent survey was developed. Districts or agencies were then able to choose which sections they would use for their program. Parent survey data was received from the participating district. Parent survey results are displayed in the following tables (N=13).

FAMILY SATISFACTION RESULTS

Families reported high overall satisfaction in all areas, including believing that the staff were excellent, the approachability of teachers, and teacher communication. They also reported high levels of satisfaction on such items as their child enjoyed attending the program, parent felt comfortable approaching teacher if child struggles, parent felt more prepared to be a parent of a kindergartener and being satisfied with hours of the program (5.00). The lowest level of satisfaction was for parents feeling informed about child's progress and satisfied with teacher communication (4.77).



PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS.



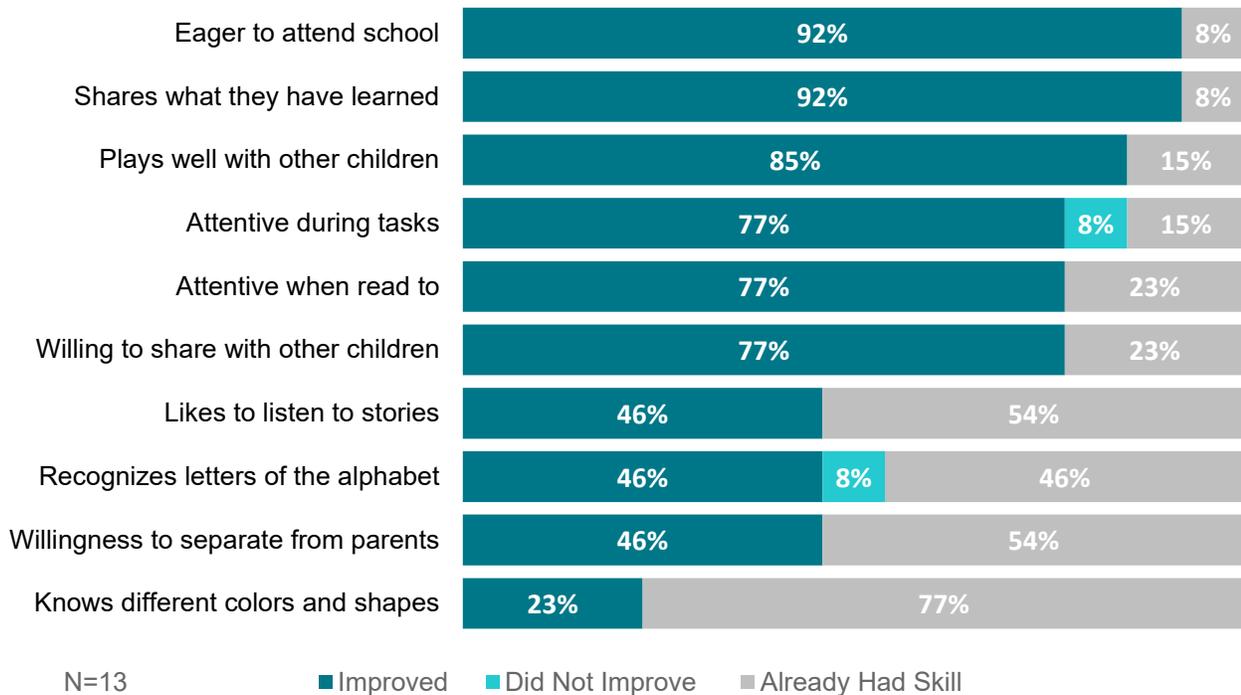
N=13

PARENT RATING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

How did parents rate their students' readiness for school?

Parents were also surveyed about their perceptions of how the program impacted their child. Over half of respondents reported that their child improved in the following areas: eagerness to attend school, sharing what they learned, plays well with other children, attentiveness during tasks, attentive when read to, and willingness to share with other children. Some areas where the majority of students already possessed the skills included: knows different colors and shapes, likes to listen to stories, and willingness to separate from parents. Attentiveness during tasks and recognizes letters of the alphabet “did not improve” (8%).

PARENTS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILDREN WERE EAGER TO ATTEND SCHOOL BY THE COMPLETION OF THE JUMP START PROGRAM.



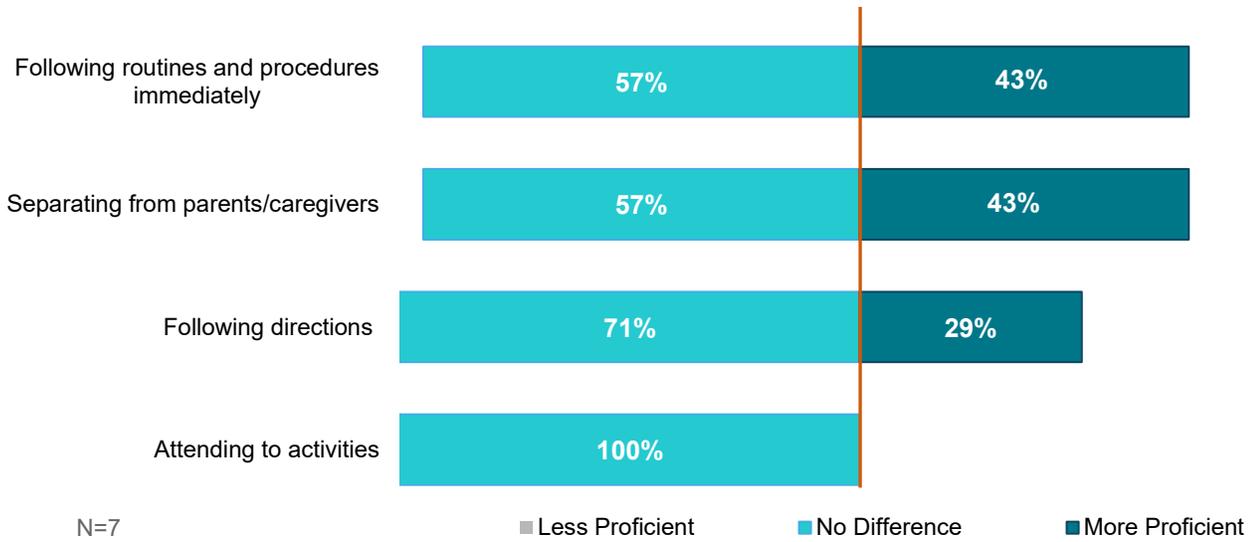
What did teachers report about students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. In the fall of 2023, all kindergarten teachers who had 2023 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 seven teachers that were surveyed, four taught Jump Start to Kindergarten this year.

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. No teachers reported that students that attended the program were less proficient than their peers. Attending to activities had the lowest percent of more proficient (0%).

NEARLY HALF (43%) OF THE STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM WERE RATED MORE PROFICIENT THAN THEIR PEERS WHO DID NOT ATTEND THE PROGRAM IN THE AREA OF FOLLOWING ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES IMMEDIATELY AND SEPARATING FROM PARENTS/CAREGIVERS.



LEARNING COMMUNITY ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

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

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- 322 Pre-K students were enrolled across 6 sites.
- Majority represent diverse racial and ethnic populations.
- 38% were identified for special education services. n=77
- Classroom quality was above the thresholds of quality and in the top 10% of Head Start programs.
- Over half of the students scored at the national average or above for social-emotional skills by spring.
- Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills than boys.
- Significant improvements from fall to spring occurred for vocabulary, school readiness, and social-emotional skills.

PARENT UNIVERSITY

- 99 families were enrolled with majority representing low income (95% qualify for FRL) & culturally diverse populations with over half indicating a language other than English as their primary/first language.
- Enrolled parents had 259 children of which 135 were within the targeted age range.
- 54% of parents completed high school and 64% of families received additional government assistance.
- Parents participated in 21 different course/activities which focused on parenting, school success, leadership, and life skills with a 97% completion rate.
- Parents entered the program with several strengths.
- 64% of parents met the goal for Building Relationships.
- Participants noted multiple benefits to Parent University participation including improved English, access to necessary resources and increased social capital.
- Approximately half of the children of parents enrolled demonstrated language skills that meet or exceed the national average.
- Majority of children were in the average range across all social-emotional areas with strengths found in initiative.

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA: FAMILY LEARNING

FAMILY LEARNING

- 299 parents were enrolled.
- 494 0-6 years old children; 767 total children.
- 93% reported qualifying for FRL, 76% earning less than \$50,000 annually.
- 98 families participated in graduation with 32 participants graduating from ESL and 7 from GED.
- Workforce Development participants earned 189 certificates.
- Over 50% of participants made measurable GED gains.
- 37 participants were enrolled in GED classes.
- Participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in English reading and listening skills.

PARENTING OUTCOMES

- Most parents met the program goals in 3 out of 4 areas on the parenting measure with a strength noted in Building Relationships.
- Parent skills improved significantly over time.
- Parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement.
- For parents working with the social assistance navigator, 220 were simple referrals, 26 were complex and 52 were preventative assessments.
- 38% of parents with complex cases and 83% with simple referrals were able to close their cases with the social assistance navigator.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- K-5 students were absent from school on average fewer than 10 days (M=9.84).
- Two areas on the Bateria were in the average range for the 1st time.
- 96% of students scored in the average range for executive functioning.
- Over 75% of students scored in the average range on NWEA-MAP™ mathematics assessment.
- Students with parents in the program had higher rates of proficiency in ELA when compared to district data.

SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

- Approximately 334 teachers, and 7307 students were served across 5 districts.
- 52% of teachers had at least 10 years of experience; 19% were in their first 3 years.
- 82% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received.
- Teachers reported that their instruction improved due to coaching.
- Instructional coaches were viewed as passionate about the success of both teachers and students.

JUMP START

- 89 kindergarten eligible students enrolled in Jump Start across one district.
- 65% represented low-income households and 12% were ELL.
- Parents (100%) were satisfied with the program and saw the most improvement in their child's eagerness to attend school.
- Students' executive functioning skills improved significantly from pre to post.
- Kindergarten teachers consistently reported JS students had skills equal to or more proficient than peers not attending the program.

EXTENDED LEARNING

- 203 students were enrolled in Extended Learning.
- 3 districts and 1 community agency participated.
- Parents were highly satisfied with the program.
- Overall satisfaction with the program was 4.62 on a 5-point scale.
- District data from all three districts indicated effectiveness of the interventions.
- Parents believed the program was academic benefit to their students.

References & Appendix



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APPENDIX A. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Tool	Author	Purpose
Bracken School Readiness Assessment, 3 rd Ed.	Bracken, B. (2007)	The Bracken School Readiness Assessment measure school readiness concepts including colors, letters, shapes and concepts and numbers.
Bateria IV Woodcock-Munoz	Woodcock, Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank (2017)	The Bateria IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measures cognitive, achievement and oral language abilities.
CASAS [®]		THE CASAS [®] provides a measure of a participants English language skills in reading and listening.
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.
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement – 3 rd Edition (KTEA-3)	Kaufman, A.S. & Kaufman, N.L. (2014)	The KTEA-3 measure academic skills for ages 4 50 25 years.
Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS)	Carlson, S.M. & Zelazo, P. (2014)	The MEFS is a digital assessment measuring student’s broad executive function skills.
Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale (PARCA)	Hair, E., Anderson, K., Garrett, S., Kinukawa, A., Lippman, I., & 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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<http://learningcommunityds.org>

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Developmental Disabilities



Stronger communities. Brighter futures.

2023-2024 EVALUATION REPORT





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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) family engagement is critical for a child's success in school, 3) students' early childhood outcomes predict later school success, and 4) coaching adds value to the classroom.

IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY CLASSROOMS

Quality early childhood programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term, positive academic performance (Bustamante et al., 2023; Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 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 teacher involvement, rigor, and exposure to academic content in preschool were linked to children's school readiness (Pianta et al., 2020).

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 (Jeynes, 2022). Partnerships between home and school are especially important for children who are socially and economically disadvantaged (Lang, Jeon & Tebben, 2023). 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).

COACHING SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Coaching teachers in instructional practices has proven to be an effective and feasible professional development method for improving teacher instruction. Meta-analysis indicates that coaching early childhood educators creates positive effects on teacher knowledge and instructional competencies and students' language and literacy, social-emotional development, and academic skills (Yang et al., 2022). Successful coaching combines the methods of observation, feedback, goal setting, and reflection (Elek & Page, 2018). Responsiveness, comfort level, and support are critical aspects of the coaching-teacher relationship (Taylor et al., 2022).



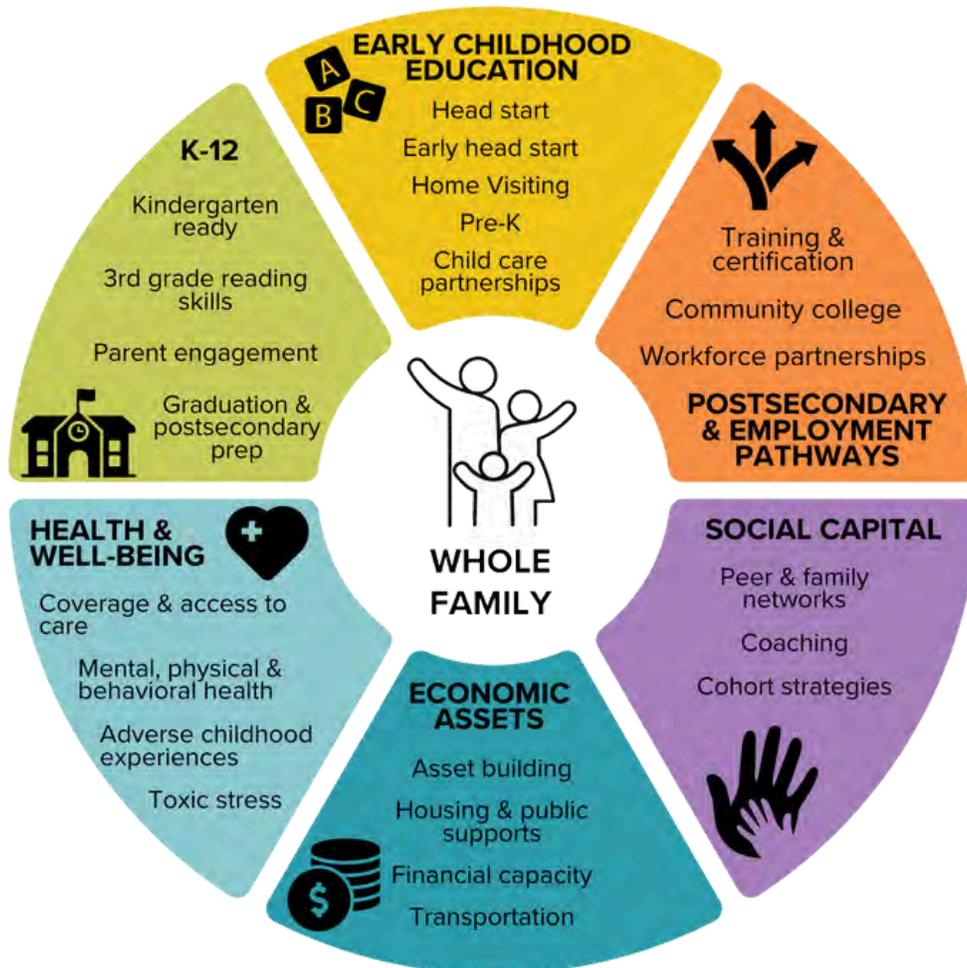
2GEN APPROACH

The Learning Community uses a two-generation (2Gen) approach in designing early childhood and family engagement programs at each of the centers, Family Learning at the 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, 2023). 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 supported programs in nine school districts in 2023-2024. Districts customize programs to meet specific needs, but all can benefit from sharing their successes and lessons learned.

Jumpstart to Kindergarten provides targeted students the opportunity to experience a school setting. Most students have little or no experience in classroom environments. This program is supported in one district.

Extended Learning provides additional direct instruction for children to prevent summer learning loss and improve their chances of success. Extended Learning programs were supported in four districts and with one community agency.

Instructional Coaching allows teachers the opportunity to work with a district-level coach to reflect on teaching strategies and enhance instructional practices. Instructional coaching was implemented in six districts.

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 provided back to programs in a variety of formats as part of a continuous improvement process to provide feedback on current programming and status and to inform future practice. Based upon the evaluation questions, multiple methods were used to describe and measure the quality of implementation, nature of programming, and outcomes demonstrated by the programs funded by the Learning Community (LC). The findings 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. How were programs implemented? Was there variation in implementation and if so, what factors contributed to that variation?

DEMOGRAPHICS. Who accessed and participated in the program or intervention? Are programs serving the intended populations?

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 student academic achievement and school attendance? To what extent were parents engaged in their child’s learning? Did parents gain skills and confidence to increase their engagement with school?

COMMUNITY PRACTICES AND USE OF DATA. How did programs use their data? What changes occurred because 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. Where appropriate, 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. It should be noted that none of these programs occur in isolation—they are either also connected to other community resources and agencies and/or the school districts in which the families reside. Causal inferences should not be made with the data.



Early Childhood and Family Engagement





2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP



PreK students were instructed in high quality classrooms.

CLASS domain scores met the threshold of quality and were in the top 10% of Head Start scores.



PreK students demonstrated significant growth in their social-emotional skills from fall to spring.

Girls demonstrated stronger skills whereas boys had significantly more behavior concerns.



Non-IEP students demonstrated higher skills in vocabulary, social-emotional, school readiness & executive functioning.

However, students with IEPs scored in the average range for executive function skills.



Vocabulary scores indicate a need for improvement.

Girls had significantly higher scores than boys.



Classrooms served a high percentage of students receiving special education services (40%).

The state average for early childhood is 15-16%.

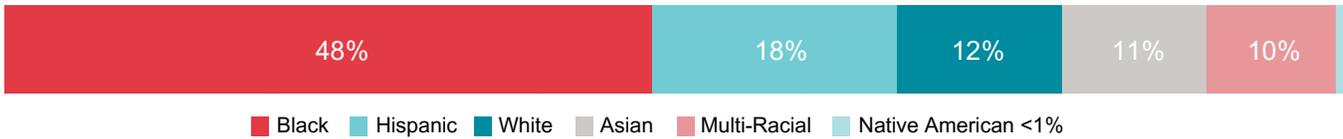
Who We Served

Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

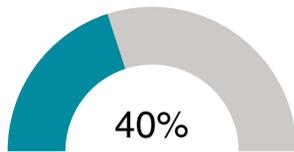


CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

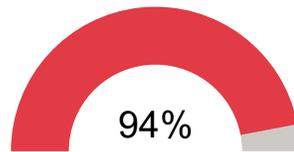
RACE



GENDER



Have an IEP



English is primary language

The IEC partnership supported students in 13 classrooms during the 2023-2024 school year.



The Learning Community Center of North Omaha provides innovative and demonstrative programming to improve educational outcomes for students and families. 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 two primary programs: Intensive Early Childhood Partnership and Parent University. Descriptions of each program and evaluation findings are summarized in this section.

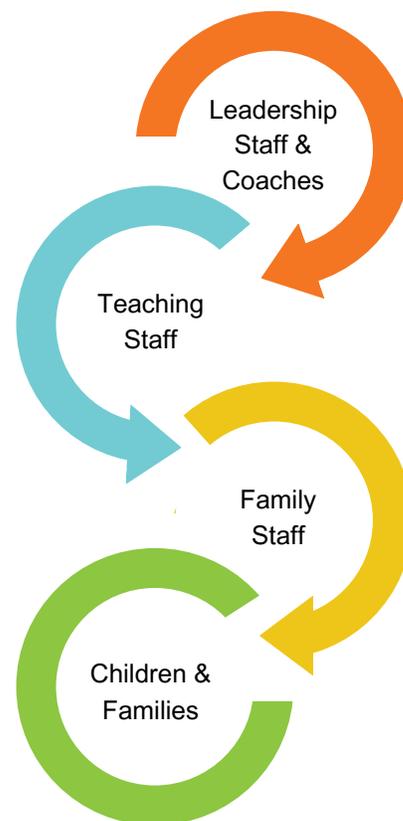


Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Intensive Early Childhood (IEC) 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 and Franklin. In 2018, the intensive early childhood partnership expanded to Minne Lusa and Skinner. The IEC partnership supported students in 13 classrooms during the 2023-2024 school year.

INTENSIVE TEACHING TEAMS. Intensive early childhood teams, consisting of teachers, leadership and family support staff, implemented a combination of services and supports. The leadership team included the principal, an early childhood coordinator, and instructional coaches. Each classroom had a lead early childhood teacher, special education teacher, and paraprofessional staff. Using an inclusive model, these professionals worked with all children and discussed effective teaching strategies using data for continuous improvement. Using an inclusive model, these professionals worked together to foster a supportive environment that promotes strong relationships among staff, students, and families.



REFLECTIVE COACHING. Instructional coaches provided reflective consultation to the teaching staff both inside and outside of the classroom. They used a coaching approach adopted by Omaha Public Schools called Teaching Strategies: Coaching to Fidelity. During one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools included recording lessons on iPads, taking pictures, reviewing student data and student and educator interactions. Instructional coaches worked to build teacher confidence, increase their active problem-solving skills, and attain goals set during their reflective sessions. These one-on-one sessions with educators were guided by the TS Fidelity Tool and FAN (Facilitating Attuned Interactions) model of reflective practice within the buildings they supported.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The teaching teams benefitted from 11 days of additional professional development (PD) through the school year. Six of those eleven professional development days were facilitated in each school's Early Childhood Professional Learning Community (PLC). The PLC framework establishes a collaborative, problem solving approach in review of child data and in team learning to identify strategies to improve student performance. Five of the eleven PD days were full-day sessions that extended knowledge of the curriculum (Creative Curriculum), child development best practices, strategies that benefit all students including special instruction, and how to utilize the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. The PD component was required for teachers at Kellom and Conestoga and elective for teachers at the expanded schools.

Coaching Successes

"I have teachers coming to me and sharing how they had tried something we had talked about and it was working in the classroom or for a particular child."

"The PLCs just run themselves. It is nice for the teachers to come together and collaborate and help each other out. Having that team time and planning."

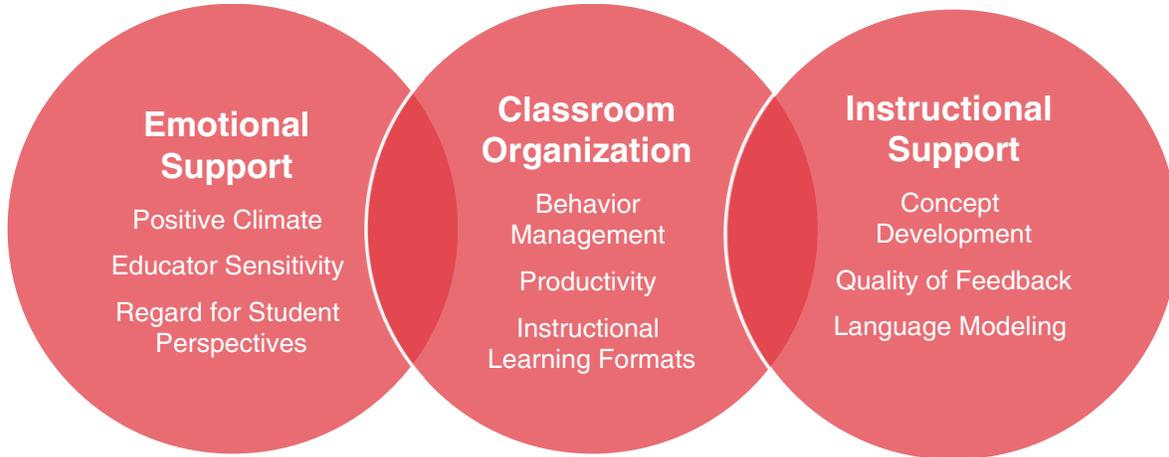


PROGRAM OUTCOMES

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) was used to evaluate the quality of 13 intensive early childhood preschool classrooms. Results from this assessment are shared with the individual teacher and their coach to build on his/her strengths and identify strategies to improve instructional practices. Classrooms were observed in fall 2023 and spring 2024.

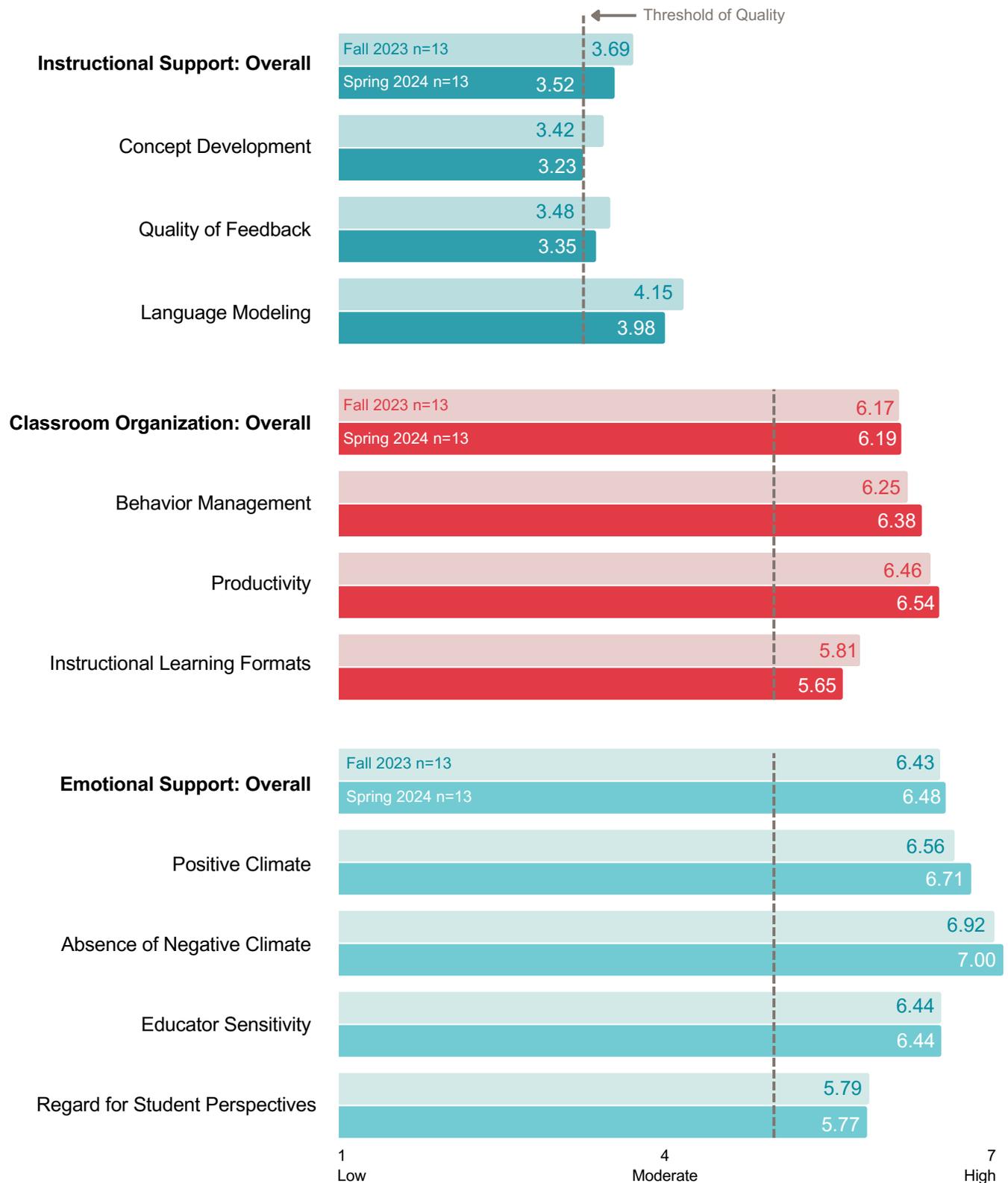
CLASS™ has three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organizational, and Instructional Support. Classrooms are rated on a one to seven scale with one to two indicated low ratings and six to seven indicating high ratings. Nationally, Instructional Support tends to be the domain with the most opportunity for improvement as it challenges teachers to effectively extend language, to model advanced language, and to promote higher-order thinking skills. Research indicates CLASS ratings for Emotional Support and Classroom Organization of 5 or higher and Instructional Support ratings of 3.25 or higher are the minimum threshold necessary to impact student achievement (Burchinal et al., 2010). Preschoolers with teachers who scored higher than average in classroom quality tested higher in language, math, and executive function, indicating that teacher behavior is associated with increased student outcomes (Araujo et al., 2016). In classrooms with consistently high levels of Instructional Support, preschoolers showed significant gains in literacy and language skills compared to those with low-quality Instructional Support (Cash et al., 2019).



FINDINGS. The scores for the preschool classrooms exceeded research reported thresholds necessary to influence student achievement. The following figure provides the overall scores for each domain and the dimension scores that are related to each overall score. On average, classrooms met the threshold of quality across all three domains. All dimensions met the threshold to impact student achievement in fall 2023. Classroom Organization and Emotional Support were in the high-quality range during both observation periods. Instructional Support was in the moderate range. IEC CLASS scores were in the top 10% of Head Start Classrooms (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

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

Concept Development improved the most from 2022-2023. n=13



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). In recent years, the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Benson et al., 2013; Korucu, Litkowski & Schmitt, 2020; Meixner & Laubrock, 2024). Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler’s ability to learn in the classroom (Devlin et al., 2024; Ruffini et al., 2024).

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

METHOD. The following areas were assessed in the fall and spring:

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA): This teacher-completed 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 all schools with a total of 174 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, administered by external evaluators, was completed at four schools with a total of 128 students assessed.

VOCABULARY SKILLS

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 5th Edition (PPVT-5): The PPVT-5 measures students’ vocabulary skills. The PPVT-5, administered by external evaluators, was completed at all six schools with a total of 176 students assessed.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

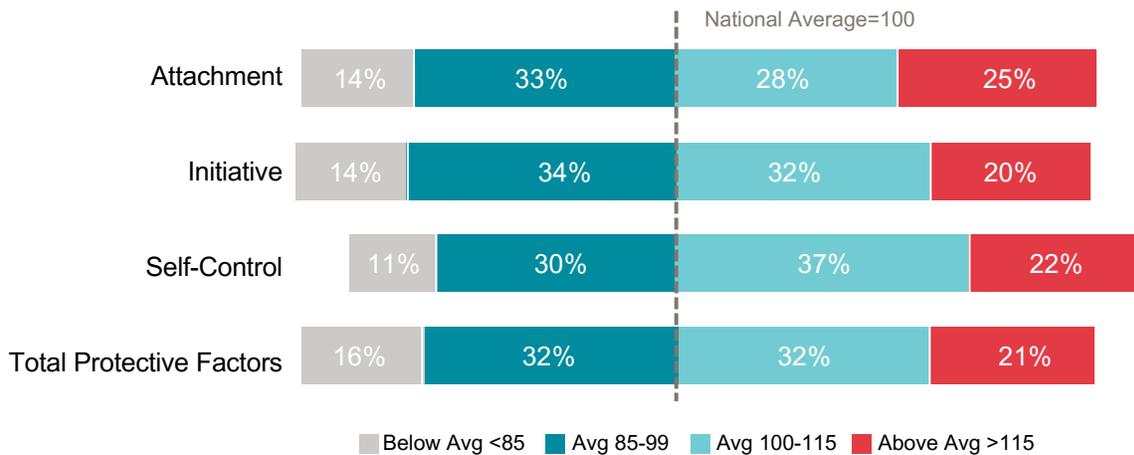
The Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS): Executive functioning is defined as a student’s ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. This digital assessment, administered by external evaluators, was completed with 71 children from two schools.

FINDINGS

Social-emotional

The descriptive analyses found that most students scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: Total Protective Factors (85%), Attachment (86%), Initiative (86%) and Self-Control (88%). Over half of the students demonstrated social-emotional skills at or above the national average, which is a score of 100.

OVERALL, HALF THE STUDENTS SCORED AT THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OR ABOVE ACROSS ALL AREAS BY SPRING. n=174



A comparison of social-emotional results at fall and spring is reported in the following graph, to show how skills changed over time.

ON AVERAGE, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS INCREASED OVER TIME.

By spring, average scores were at or above the national average across all areas. n=173



Paired t-test analyses (n=173) were used to determine if there were significant changes over time. Significant improvements were found across all areas of the social-emotional assessment.

Attachment: [t(173)= 7.63; p<0.01; d=0.58] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Initiative: [t(173)= 8.46; p<0.01;d=0.64] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Self-control: [t(173)=5.16; p<0.01;d=0.39] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

Total protective factors: [t(173)=8.57; p<0.01;d=0.65] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, short attention span, and easily becoming upset. In fall and spring, 22% of the students scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three-to-five-year-old children.

Did student factors impact social-emotional scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in student's social-emotional outcomes. Significant differences were found for total protective factors, attachment, initiative, self-control, and behavior concerns. **Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills, whereas boys had significantly more behavior concerns.**

Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills. Boys had significantly more behavior concern scores.

Total protective factors: Girls (m=53.88), Boys (m=49.16); t(85)=3.29; p≤0.002).

Attachment: Girls (m=54.39), Boys (m=49.98); t(85)=3.19; p≤0.001).

Initiative: Girls (m=52.00), Boys (m=48.98); t(85)=1.95; p=0.05).

Self-control: Girls (m=53.60), Boys (m=48.86); t(85)=3.48; p<0.001).

Behavior concerns: Girls (m=47.80), Boys (m=53.70); t(85)=-4.12; p<0.001).

RACE. Independent t-tests were conducted to determine if there were any differences between student social-emotional outcomes based on race/ethnicity. There were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA at p<=0.05.

IEP STATUS. Students receiving special education services make up nearly 40% of the students in the IEC classrooms. Therefore, it is important to disaggregate the data to measure the impact of their development. Students without IEPs demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills. Students with IEPs had significantly higher behavior concerns.

Total protective factors: No IEP (m=57.67), IEP (m=47.39); $t(69)=7.28$; $p<0.002$).

Attachment: No IEP (m=57.21), IEP(m=48.91); $t(69)=5.69$; $p<0.001$).

Initiative: No IEP (m=57.03), IEP (m=45.93); $t(69)=7.56$; $p<0.001$).

Self-control: No IEP (m=55.66), IEP (m=48.36); $t(69)=5.20$; $p<0.002$).

Behavior concerns: No IEP (m=47.79), IEP (m=53.09); $t(69)=-3.59$; $p<0.001$).

Paired t-tests were conducted to determine if students experienced different changes in social-emotional skills over time based on special education status. There were 70 students with IEPs and 103 without IEPs who had DECA scores in both fall and spring. For standard paired t-test analysis, the number of paired observations is identical, so 70 paired observations from each group were used as the sample size to conduct the analysis.

Total protective factors

No IEP [$t(70)=-5.45$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.65$] With the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

IEP [$t(70)=-5.96$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.711$] With the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Attachment

No IEP [$t(70)=-54.66$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.56$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

IEP [$t(70)=-4.88$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.58$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Initiative

No IEP [$t(70)=-5.54$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.66$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

IEP [$t(70)=-5.52$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.66$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Self-control

No IEP: [$t(70)=-3.56$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.43$] Effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

IEP: [$t(70)=-4.08$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.49$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Behavior concerns

No IEP: No significant changes found.

IEP: [$t(70)=2.77$; $p<0.01$; $d=0.33$] Effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

ON AVERAGE, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS IN CHILDREN RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES INCREASED OVER TIME. n=70

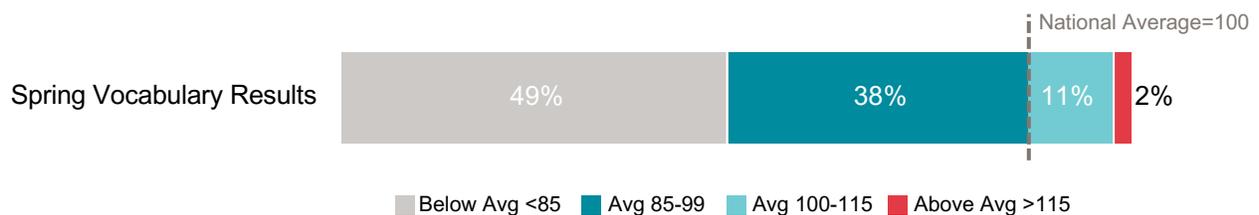


Vocabulary

The descriptive analyses found that half of students scored within the average range in the spring.

BY SPRING, FEWER THAN 15% OF STUDENTS SCORED AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

Almost half of students (49%) scored in the below average range. n=169



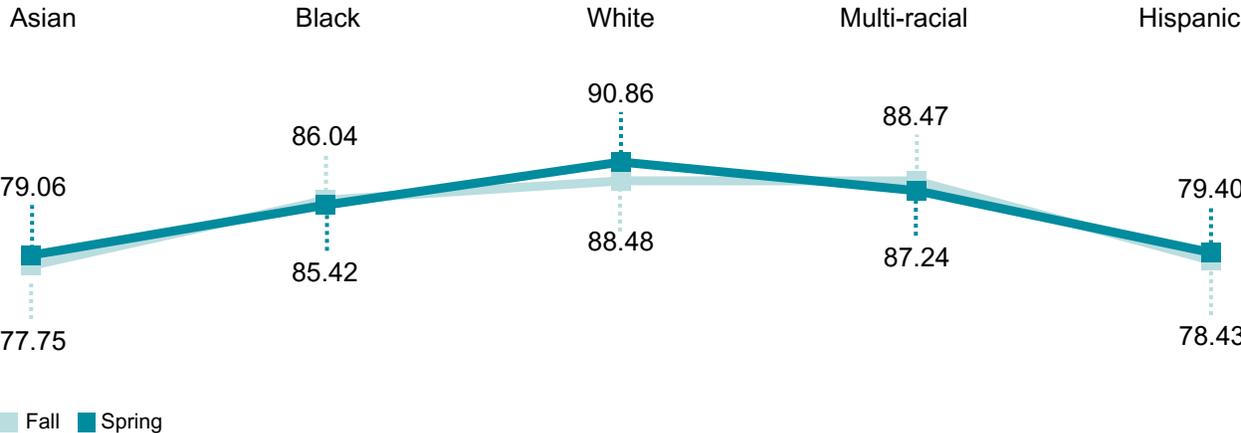
Mean standard scores minimally increased from fall (84.44) to spring (84.77). A paired t-test (n=162) analysis found that the change from fall to spring was not statistically significant.

Did student factors impact vocabulary scores?

GENDER. An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there were any gender differences in students' vocabulary outcomes. Testing determined that girls (m=87.00) scored significantly higher than boys (m=82.18) on the spring assessment [t(79)=2.29, p<0.05].

RACE/ETHNICITY. Scores were analyzed to determine if there were any differences between student vocabulary scores over time based on race and/or ethnicity. Scores for Asian, White, and Hispanic student groups increased, while scores for Black and Multi-racial student groups decreased from fall to spring. Scores across all groups are in the below average to low average range. This test does not consider if the student’s first language is something other than English, and only racial groups with at least 10 students are reported in the chart.

VOCABULARY SCORES INCREASED FOR ASIAN, WHITE, AND HISPANIC RACIAL GROUPS. n=159



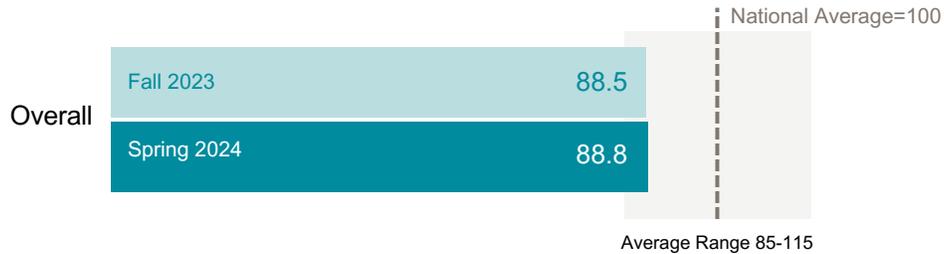
IEP STATUS. Of interest was whether there were any differences in student's vocabulary outcomes based qualification for special education services. An independent sample t-test was conducted and determined that students without IEPs (M=88.05) scored significantly higher than students with IEPs (M=77.46) on the spring assessment [$t(59) = (-) 2.18, p < 0.05$].

Paired t-testing was conducted to see if there were differences in statistical significance based on special education status. On average, vocabulary skills increased for students without an IEP (M_Fall=84.92; M_Spr=87.66) and decreased for students with an IEP (M_Fall=80.03; M_Spr=78.63). No statistical differences over time were found for either group.

School Readiness Skills

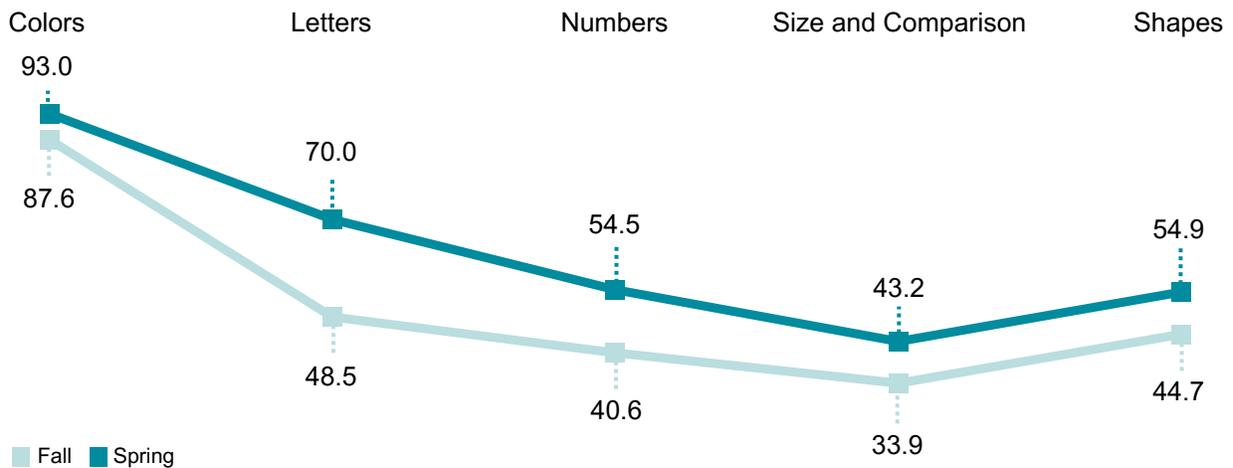
School readiness skills showed slight increases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 88.5 to 88.8, remaining in the low end of the average range. The results from the paired t-test analysis found that the changes were not significant [$t(114)=-0.478$; $p>0.05$].

STUDENTS' SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS SHOWED A SMALL INCREASE FROM FALL TO SPRING. $n=114$



When examining individual subtests, the percentage of mastery increased across all areas. Students started the year with strong mastery of colors and increased that mastery to 93%. The area with the lowest percentage of mastery was Size and Comparison. Students started the year at 34% mastery and ended with 43% mastery. The Size and Comparison subtest assesses students' understanding of location words, comparison concepts, and directional concepts. These are higher order cognitive skills than other areas of the tool.

THE PERCENTAGE OF MASTERY INCREASED IN EACH SUBTEST. $n=114$



Did student factors impact school readiness scores?

RACE/ETHNICITY. Of interest was whether there were any differences between student school readiness scores over time based on race and/or ethnicity. Only racial groups with at least 10 students are reported in the chart. No significant differences were found between the groups.

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' school readiness outcomes. Independent sample t-tests indicated no significant differences between boys and girls (n=55). The girls had a higher mean score (90.25) than the boys (87.30) but the difference was not significant.

IEP STATUS. Students receiving special education services make up nearly 40% of the students in the IEC classrooms. On the school readiness scale, students with an IEP (M_Fall=85.23 and M_Spr=85.03), and students without an IEP (M_Fall=91.03 and M_Spr=90.97) scored within the average range. Paired t-testing found no statistically significant changes over time for either group.

Executive Functioning Skills

Students' executive functioning skills showed slight increases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores increased from 92.5 to 93.0. The results of a paired t-test analysis found that changes were not significant.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SHOWED MODEST INCREASES FROM FALL TO SPRING. n=61



Did student factors impact executive functioning scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' executive functioning outcomes. No significant differences were found based on gender.

IEP STATUS. MEFS data was analyzed to determine if there were any differences in students' executive functioning outcomes based on qualification for special education services. The independent t-test analysis [$t(22) = 3.36, p < 0.01$] showed that students without IEPs (M=96.30) scored significantly higher than students with IEPs (M=88.09) in the spring assessments.

Students with an IEP (M_Fall=86.78 and M_Spr=88.09), and students without an IEP (M_Fall=96.57 and M_Spr=96.30) scored within the average range. Paired t-testing found no statistically significant changes over time for either group.



2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS

PARENT UNIVERSITY



1

Parent University doubled its enrollment from the previous year.

203 parents participated during the year.

2

Participation for Parent University courses was strong.

Completion rate was 94% for courses with more than one session.

3

Participants made gains in English skills and GED courses.

After 40+ hours of instruction, 81% gained at least one level in their reading and/or listening skills.

4

Children's social-emotional skills were in the average range.

Self-control was a strength with 61% meeting or exceeding the national average.

5

School and community engagement increased for families who participated at least 6 months.

100% feel at least somewhat comfortable in communicating with their child's teacher.

6

Language skills need to be improved.

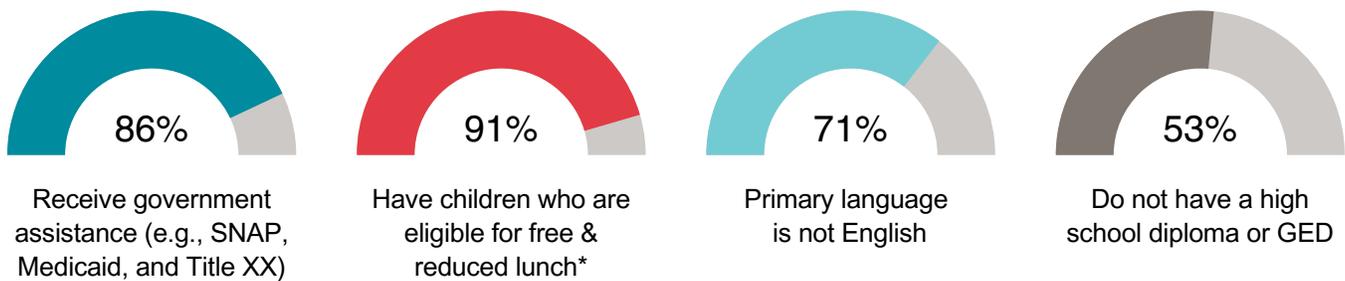
Over 40% of students scored below average on expressive and receptive language skills.

Who We Served

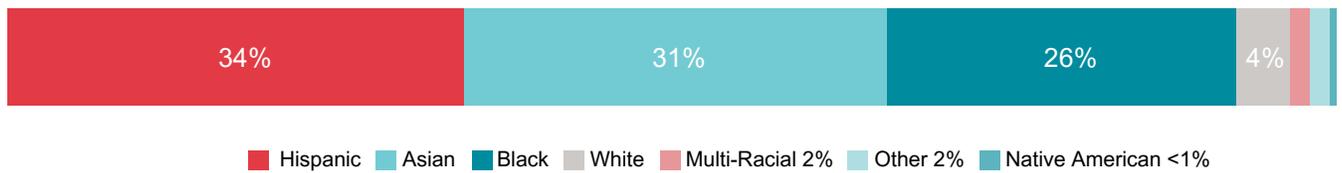
Parent University



PARENT PARTICIPANTS



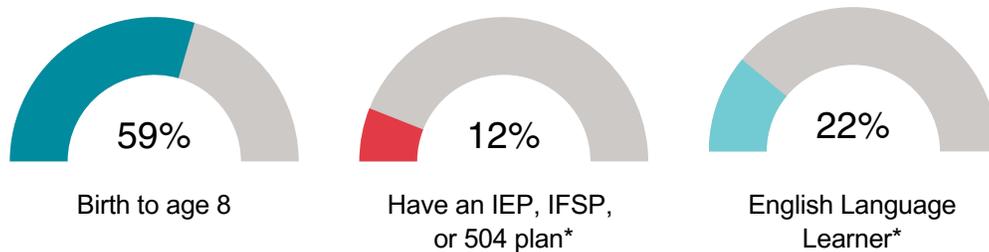
RACE



12 Families reported 12 different primary languages. The most common primary languages were Spanish (35%), English (29%), Karen (26%), and Arabic (2%).

46 Number of parent participants who needed childcare at LCCNO (23%). Six additional participants reported previously using childcare at the center.

CHILD PARTICIPANTS



* Percentages are based on participants who reported data for this category. Students not yet in elementary school do not have an official English Language Learner status.

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. The program aims to collaborate with school districts and community organizations to measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families in poverty. In 2023-2024, Parent University increased the number of parent participants from 99 to 203, and the number of children of participating parents increased from 259 to 545. In total, enrollment increased by 109% during the 2023-2024 reporting period, for a total of 748 individuals participating in Parent University.

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 with a child six years or younger who reside in school attendance areas of 24 elementary schools in North Omaha.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Parent University underwent changes during the 2023-2024 evaluation period, including restructuring the program's overall operation; adopting the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) model to further strengthen the 2GEN approach; increasing community partnerships with local, statewide, and national organizations to enhance best practices; and strengthening relationships with schools to better support children and families.

The Operations Team ensures that families and stakeholders feel welcome. It focuses on running programs efficiently and removing barriers to participation.

The Family Team provides holistic support for all families within the program and ensures that coaching and services help parents better support their children.

The Education Team focuses on delivering high-quality educational offerings at LCCNO, including parenting information and child development strategies.

During the 2023-2024 evaluation period, Parent University adopted the NCFL (National Center for Families Learning) model to support and align with the Aspen 2GEN model. The NCFL model emphasizes strong community partnerships and structured program delivery. Additionally, it fosters empowerment and sustainability by equipping parents with essential skills, helping them become more self-sufficient and better advocates for their children's education.

The four components of family literacy in the NCFL model are Adult Education, Child Education, Parent Time, and Parent and Child Together Time (PACT).

Success Story

The Parent University team helped a parent experiencing chronic homelessness. With the help of the Educational Navigators, this parent successfully found permanent housing for her family, started taking workforce development classes to advance her career, and is now on a path toward a career in healthcare. Also, she can now better support her children through the parenting classes she has taken through the program.

ADULT EDUCATION. Parent University focuses on supporting parenting adults in achieving their own goals related to adult basic education, English language learning, workforce development, children's growth and development, financial literacy, health and wellness, and empowerment. The program incorporates adult education into its programming by offering courses on adult basic education, English language learning, General Education Diploma (GED), and workforce development, which provide parents with the foundational skills necessary to improve their employment prospects and support their children's educational journeys.



Parent University's adult education programs are linked to children's growth and development, emphasizing the interconnectedness of family well-being. In 2023-2024, the program offered classes on child development, effective parenting strategies, and the importance of early childhood education. Topics such as Common Sense Parenting, Mind in the Making, Circle of Security, Catch Them Being Good, and Leading with Love and Strength focused on enhancing parents' skills in nurturing and guiding their children. These parenting classes were offered via local community partnerships such as Boys Town, University of Nebraska at Omaha, ESU3, and Project Harmony.

Outside of the classroom, adult learning continued with the coaching support of the Educational Navigators (EN). Each family in the program spent time with a navigator to create long-term and short-term goals to support the family. ENs checked in with parents monthly to ensure they were working toward their goals and connected them to resources and support. ENs also helped parents sign up for Parent University's classes. During the 2023-2024 report period, all EN underwent training on the Growing Great Kids (GGK) curriculum, executive functioning, CPR, home visiting, and goal-setting.

CHILD EDUCATION. Children's education programming focuses on programs that support academic growth, social-emotional learning, and physical development. During the 2023-2024 reporting period, an average of 58 unique children were served each month, with the number of children in childcare ranging from 1 to 45 when childcare was provided.

In addition to planning and delivering learning opportunities at the program, the child learning team also worked closely with the Educational Navigator to ensure that learning in the class was transferred to the home, and that learning from the home was accommodated in the classroom.

Parent University leveraged its partnerships to provide programming opportunities. Through Project Harmony, Parent University provided group therapy as well as individualized therapy. The program partnered with the University of Nebraska Omaha to help families explore college planning for their children. Through the Omaha Conservatory of Music’s String Sprouts program, children enrolled in the Parent University program learn violin for free. Parent University also piloted after-school homework help for school-age students during the 2023-2024 reporting period.



PARENT TIME. Parent Time offers parenting adults the chance to learn together, fostering their own growth and development. Parent University provided various classes and opportunities for parents to learn together, aligning with the 2GEN and NCFL models. Examples for 2023-2024 included:

The Women’s Trauma Group brings together parents dealing with trauma to learn from and support each other’s growth.

Leading with Love and Strength enables parents to better understand themselves and discover how their strengths can benefit their children.

Mujeres y Valores gathers Spanish-speaking parents to support their development and empower each other.

Parenting classes, such as Circle of Security, teach parents best practices in attachment, allowing them to support their children while learning together.

Media Literacy classes, in partnership with the Omaha Public Library, guide parents in navigating and locating community and library resources.

By bringing parents together to learn and share experiences, Parent Time created a supportive community where parents could empower one another. Through shared learning experiences, parents developed stronger support networks, gained new perspectives, and acquired practical skills that directly benefitted their families. Parent Time promoted a sense of community and shared responsibility among parents, through which parents learned from the collective strength and wisdom within their community, fostering a culture of mutual support and continuous learning.

PARENT AND CHILD TOGETHER TIME

(PACT). Parent and Children Time at Parent University is multigenerational programming, where parenting adults actively engage in learning alongside their children. By participating in educational activities together, families build stronger connections, improve communication, and create a supportive home environment that encourages lifelong learning. This approach aligns with 2GEN model, which emphasizes addressing the needs of both children and their parents to break the cycle of poverty and achieve lasting family success.



Multigenerational programming models positive learning behaviors for children, demonstrating the value of education and continuous self-improvement. When children see their parents actively engaged in learning, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward education and be motivated to pursue their own academic goals. The shared learning experience also allows parents to better understand their children's educational challenges and successes, enabling them to provide more effective support and guidance.

Parent University offered monthly **Family Play Day** and **Family Play Night** events where parents were encouraged to come with their children to learn and play together. Through these events, parents gained insight into their children's experiences in childcare and extended classroom learning to the home. Parent University also provided monthly family engagement activities that invited parents to play and learn with their children. Events in 2023-2024 included:

A movie night that explored social-emotional learning.

A Halloween Boo Bash that promoted literacy and safety.

A Thanksgiving Dinner that taught the science behind agriculture and harvest.

A family picnic that helped parents learn to play with their kids outside.

Events averaged more than 100 participants, offering families opportunities to bond in fun and educational settings. In addition to themed events, participants attended regular Storytime sessions.

Home visitation played a crucial role in supporting parents with PACT. At home visits, Educational Navigators addressed barriers to family stability and provided ongoing coaching to help parents engage with their children's development at home.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Beyond internal programmatic growth, Parent University continues to build partnerships within the community to enhance its ability to support families and children. These collaborations provide comprehensive and holistic support to participants by leveraging the strengths and resources of each partner organization. Partnership examples include:

OMAHA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC (STRING SPROUTS)

Provides **music education** opportunities for participating children.

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

Provides **financial literacy and support**, helping families achieve economic stability.

NEBRASKA GROWING READERS

Distributes more than **4,000 books**, fostering a love of reading and improving literacy among children and parents.

OMAHA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND PROJECT HARMONY

Offers **health information and mental health support** to families.

KEEP OMAHA BEAUTIFUL

Participating parents learn about **rain barrels** and receive actual rain barrels to help **reduce their water bills**.

OMAHA BETTER BIRTH

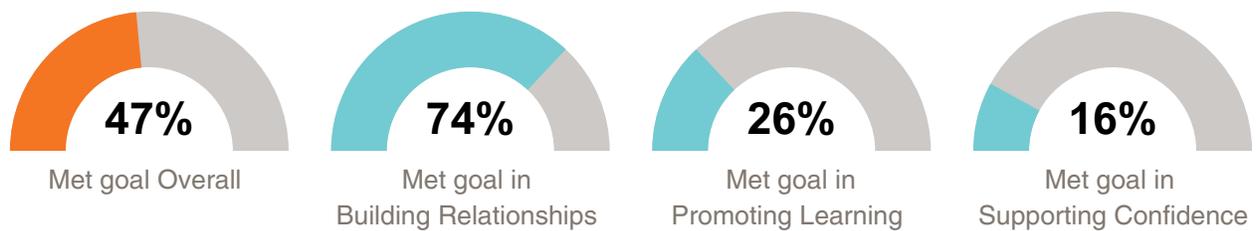
All parents in the program receive **free access to diapers** and informational classes for expectant mothers.

Working with local schools, such as those in the Omaha Public Schools district, allows Parent University to reach more families that can benefit from its programs. As part of its integration efforts, Parent University aligns its educational initiatives with school curricula. Partnerships with organizations like Metropolitan Community College, Heartland Workers Center, and Heartland Workforce Solutions expand capacity to offer ESL, workforce development and GED classes.

Additionally, through its partnership with the Omaha Public Library (OPL), all families are signed up for library cards and participate in Library Literacy Classes twice a month to learn about community resources. Parents also gain direct access to references for their research, printing, and studying needs outside of ESL or GED classes. Parent University also hosted a back-to-school literacy event, which attracted 125 people and facilitated sign-ups for OPL's Summer Reading Program. Through its work with organizations such as NCFL, Parent University has been awarded several grants that will allow it to expand programming.

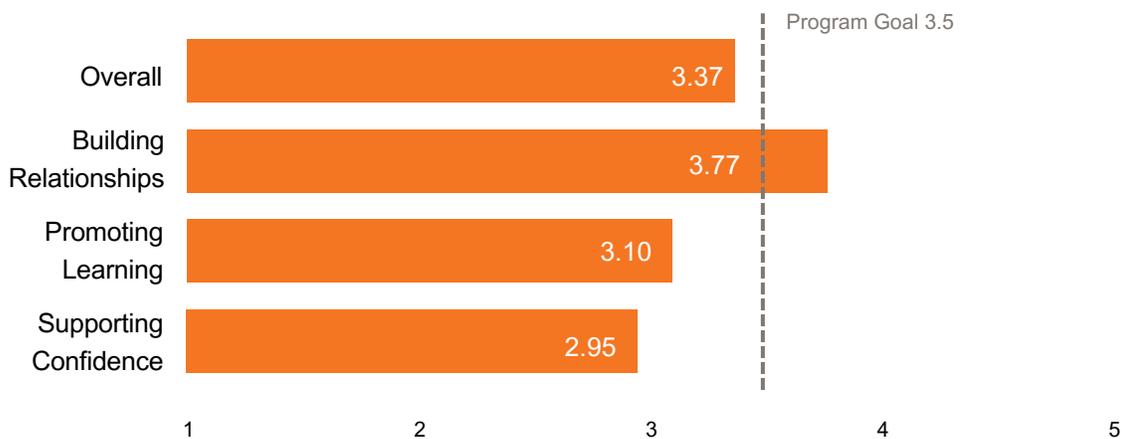
PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale with 5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

FINDINGS. A total of 19 families enrolled in Parent University had the parent-child interaction assessment during the 2023-2024 reporting period. Two families had the assessment at least two times, which was not a large enough sample for pre- and post-analysis. Over 70% of parents met the program goal in Building Relationships during their latest assessment.



The following graph shows average KIPS results for Parent University families during their latest assessments of the 2023-2024 reporting period.

ON AVERAGE, PARENT UNIVERSITY PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS. n=19



COURSE PARTICIPATION

Program staff tracked parents' participation in the 20 opportunities that were offered this past year. Activities aligned with four primary components within Parent University.

# of Activities	Parent University Participants*	Non-Participating Community Members*	Children*	Total Served*
56	705	1714	3308	5727

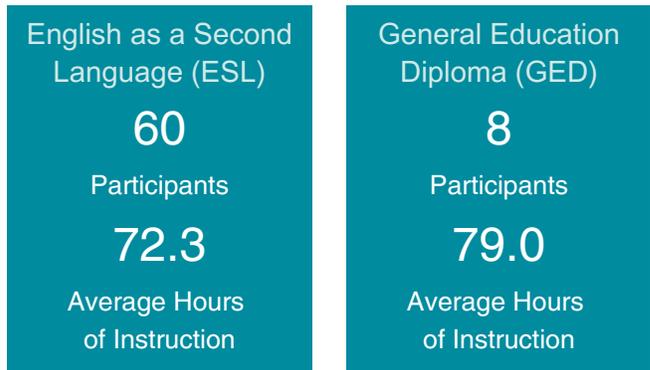
* Duplicated count

Other than the one-time parent engagement opportunities, the largest enrollments were for the Literacy Skills courses (45 total participants) and Rain Barrel Workshop (18 participants). For activities with more than one session, the completion rate was 94%.

How did Parent University benefit parents' own education?

Parent University offers English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Educational Diploma (GED) courses. In the 2023-2024 program year, Metropolitan Community College facilitated ESL and GED classes using their ESL and GED instructors to come to the North Omaha site and teach Parent University participants. A total of 68 parents participated in one of these two options.

In the GED courses, eight students had the ABEL assessment of math and reading skills. Five students (63%) gained at least one level in mathematics and/or reading. Students earned an average of 79.03 course hours.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

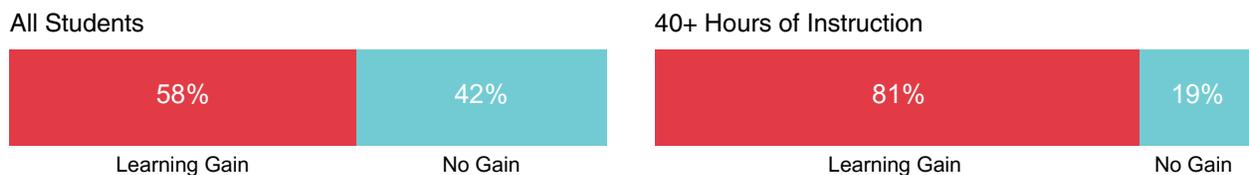
METHOD. English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS®. CASAS® was used for multiple reasons; 1) CASAS® is the nationally recognized assessment for English Learners; 2) It is aligned with the English curriculum used at the center; 3) It provides information that informs classroom instruction; and 4) Participants can easily transition to the GED subtests using the same format. This online assessment was administered by Metropolitan Community College.

The levels of the CASAS® indicate increasing level of skills and comfort in being able to listen, understand, and read English. 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. At ESL Level 4, participants can understand simple everyday conversations and have basic routine social interactions. They can follow simple directions and are recognizing new words and phrases. 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.

FINDINGS. In the ESL courses, 60 students had the CASAS® assessment. Reading and listening skills ranged from beginning literacy to high intermediate skills. Thirty-five students gained at least one level in reading and/or listening.

MORE THAN HALF OF STUDENTS GAINED AT LEAST ONE LEVEL IN READING AND/OR LISTENING.

Most students who received at least 40 hours of instruction demonstrated gains in reading and/or listening. n=61



PARENT FOCUS GROUPS

FINDINGS. The following is a summary of focus group findings conducted at Learning Community Center of North Omaha in the spring of 2024. Focus groups explored participants' experiences with Parent University as an organization, English language classes, parenting workshops, on-site childcare, classes for children, and relationships with Educational Navigators. Three in-person focus groups were conducted with 23 participants.

Parent University benefits both children and parents.

Participants expressed overall satisfaction with classes and resources offered at Parent University. Many participants highlighted the importance of the ESL classes and how they have learned to communicate better with their community and children. One participant shared, "I'm in a lot of classes – English classes – and they've helped me a lot, so I can help support my kids in school. The other classes help me understand them and educate them."

Multiple participants also commented on the benefits of having access to childcare, help with family activities, and access to necessities such as food, water, and diapers. One participant commented, “Regarding my children, having childcare makes it easier. When we have them with us, we can’t focus. The program helps with family activities too. The children have fun. The activities help them be creative. We also get diapers, it’s a great help. I am very thankful for the program.”

Participants expressed varying levels of satisfaction with English language instruction.

Many participants expressed that they were satisfied or mostly satisfied with their English language instruction. Some participants commented on how the classes have been helpful in deepening their understanding of the English language and aiding in their communication with their friends, their customers, and their families.

My English is increased, and the teacher is nice and does a good job explaining.”

Participants also shared that while they have learned a lot in their classes, they have to spend time practicing outside of class and at home. Many participants stated that they practice their English-language skills for 30 to 120 minutes a day using resources such as books, phones, games, and television. Multiple participants reported that they practice speaking to their children in English and learn with their children. One participant explained how picture books have been helping them learn English, saying, “I’ll practice with shorter books. They have drawings and I read what they have. I’ll do five or six of them.”

Multiple participants made comments that indicate the teacher made a significant impact on how satisfied they have been with the English language instruction, e.g., “We have the best ESL teacher in all of Omaha – patient with us – best teacher!” said one participant. While many participants that expressed that they were highly satisfied with English language instruction, there were some that gave insight as to how they would like to see the program change to better help them. One shared that they would like to have another day for English language classes added each week noting, “More class days. I was told before classes were Monday through Friday and now it’s only two days. I would like to add one more day.” A couple of other participants disagreed and added, “Some people don’t even come for their two days.” Other ideas for improvement with English language instruction consisted of asking for more opportunities to practice English and making sure that the class community remained respectful of others trying to learn.

Parent University positively influences participants’ communication and connections.

Participants reported positive outcomes regarding their communication abilities with their children’s schools due to classes, navigators, and Parent University. One participant commented, “Communication has improved. Sometimes, I need an interpreter, and I speak what I can with the teachers. I’ve noticed the teachers feel more comfortable too. I know I need to learn a lot more, but that’s where the interpreter can help.” “Sometimes we can call our child’s school without having to use an interpreter,” shared another participant.



Multiple participants noted how improving communication skills has allowed them to better connect and communicate with their families. One participant recalled, “With my child in kindergarten, he’s receiving books. He brought home four books with a lot of writing. I asked, ‘Do you read them?’ He said, ‘Yes,’ and as we were reading, I was reading it. He was saying it out loud. I can keep up.”

Participants appreciated opportunities made possible through Parent University, access to different resources, and agency partnerships.

Participants reported participating in classes and activities such as the Summer Picnic, Niños Pequeños, Sanando Traumas, Ready Rosie, and Boys Town Parenting Workshops. Participants stated that these resources, partnerships, and classes have positively impacted their ability to speak, understand, and learn English, e.g., “I am learning to improve my English.”

Participants also expressed that activities have benefitted families, with one noting, “I’ve taken COS-P, the Boys Town Parenting Workshop – like three times, Niños Pequeños, and then the one for older children. I loved it. If they offered it again, I’d take it a million times.” Another participant commented, “The classes where we get together are nice because the kids make friends with each other and communicate with other people – they make friendships.”

“[The books] are in English, but that is what I am here for – to learn English. I wouldn’t check out a book in French.”

Most participants reported that their families have been able to take advantage of the center’s on-site library. Most of these participants stated that they use the library to access books, e.g., “Yes, every month a new book for the kids.” One participant reported that they use the library “to get books to improve our literacy.” Most participants reported that they could not find books in their native languages at the center, with one participant giving insight that they wouldn’t read books in their own language anyway. Other participants explained that they would like to know more about how to use computers so they can use the ones they have access to at the center’s library.

Participants were asked about their overall health and well-being related to health, finance, and levels of stress.

Several participants shared that Parent University has positively impacted their emotions, stress levels, and health, e.g., “My stress levels have improved. In Parenting Time, you gain skills. You learn to understand them (our children) better. You become conscious of what you are doing, and they explain to you, so you say to yourself, ‘I didn’t know how to handle this before.’ We learn we don’t have to scare them. We learn that we are meant to console them, be patient, and talk it out with them.”

While participants reported overall stress levels decreasing, some participants commented on how their financial situations can be hard at times. “Not working so not so much money,” explained one participant. One participant noted that their financial situation was manageable, stating, “We have some resources available in the community such as Open Door Mission and Heart Ministry.”

Navigators positively impact participants' experiences.

Overall, participants were highly satisfied with their Educational Navigators. Participants reported that they had a good relationship with their educational navigators and were very comfortable with them, e.g., “They are really nice to us. We like talking to them and could not stop our conversation even when the class resumed.” Another noted, “They are really helpful to us as we speak the same language.” One participant commented on the benefits of having a navigator that works well with children, stating, “It’s excellent, he’s been there when I need him. He has good communication with children. Whenever or whatever I need, he is there to help me.”

Participants appreciated their educational navigators and liaisons. One participant shared, “They will do almost anything for us. They try to help us with anything: reading a letter for us, translating for us, helping call a clinic or hospital for an appointment. They also have helped us find diapers—they have diaper days here, finding information here about Parent University, finding information about different activities that are available.” One participant expressed that adding more navigators would be helpful.

Participants experience barriers to accessing class content and materials.

Several participants commented that requiring technology use in the classes was a barrier, as several participants lacked computer skills. One participant noted, “Classes are really good, but I want the material hands-on and not electronic. Not good with the computer and have bad eyes, so hands-on would be better.” Participants reported that some classes were less effective because class sizes were too small. Other barriers to attendance were caregiving demands (e.g., caring for sick children or taking children to medical appointments).

One participant reported concerns attending classes not offered in their primary language. The participant went on to explain that there have been issues with the interpreters skipping words or not speaking the languages well enough to properly interpret saying, “The girl interpreting might skip words, and the other interpreter didn’t speak it super well.”

“Maybe some basic computer skills teaching before we begin since everything is electronic. It is hard if you don’t understand the computer.”

Final thoughts and other suggestions.

A few participants said they would like to have more times for classes, e.g., “I would have liked to be in some other classes, but they are always on the days that I’m in GED. Some classes in the afternoons I don’t take because my kids have other activities at school or after school, and I have to pick them up.” All but one of the participants stated they prefer to take classes between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m.

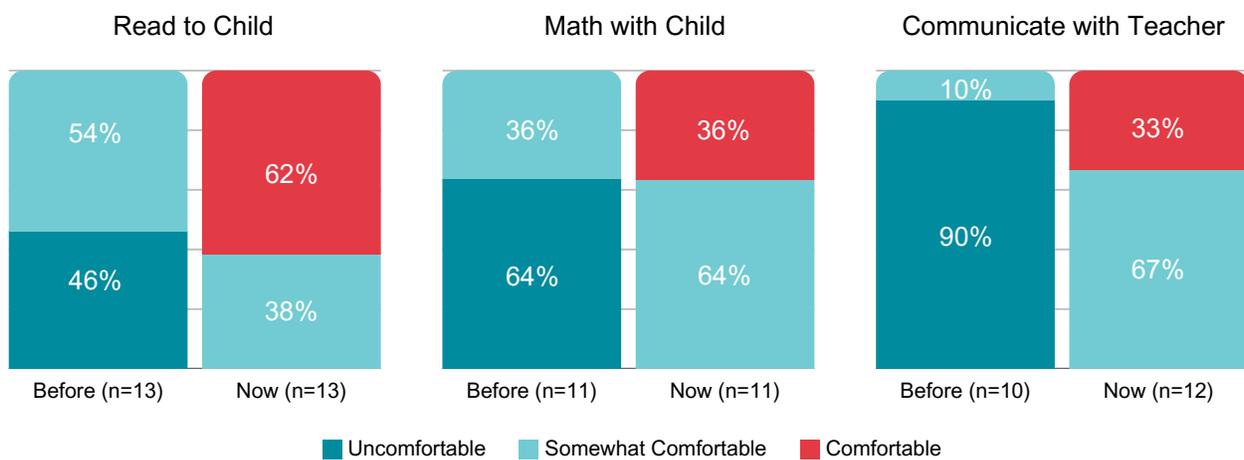
Many of the participants across the focus groups also expressed interest in trying different or new classes, such as First Aid and CPR classes, health classes, parenting classes with an emphasis on appropriate child discipline strategies, CNA classes, basic computer classes taught in home languages, music classes, sewing classes, cooking classes, and beauty classes. Several participants also noted that they would like to have more home visits, help with gaining access to employment agencies, and scholarships for their children.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

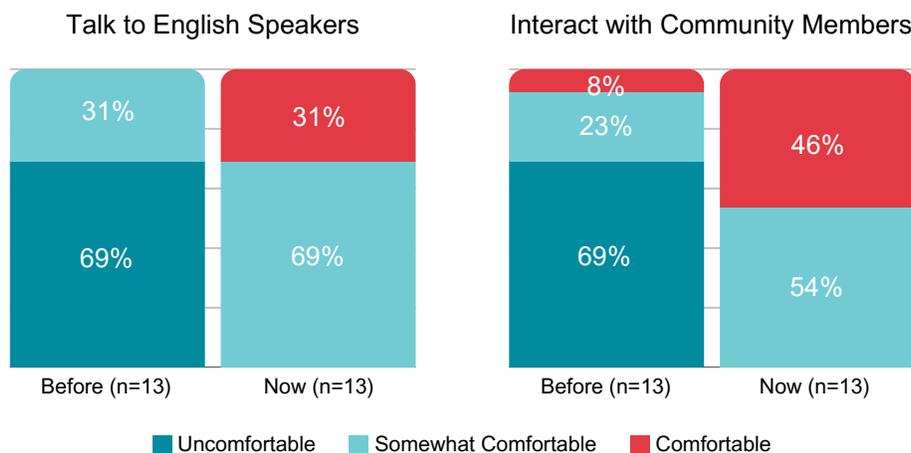
As part of the focus groups, parents reflected on their levels of comfort about engaging with aspects of their children’s education prior to starting the program and how they compared to now after participating in the programming. A total of 13 participants completed the survey.

The percent of participants feeling at least somewhat comfortable reading to their child increased from 54% to 100% and from 36% to 100% for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child’s teacher and the school, increasing from 10% to 100% being at least somewhat comfortable.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE INCREASED ACROSS ALL SCHOOL AREAS.



In addition to school engagement items, participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. In both scenarios, participants indicated increased levels of feeling comfort communicating with English speakers with all respondents feeling at least somewhat comfortable after being the program for at least six months. 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.



STUDENT OUTCOMES

In the 2023-2024 program year, the evaluation of student outcomes for the children whose parents are enrolled in Parent University includes three strategies. **English language development** and **social-emotional outcomes** are measured through parent-completed assessments for children ages four months to five years of age. **Pre-K outcomes** are measured through in-person assessments completed by MMI evaluators and teacher-completed surveys in the six IEC preschool programs.

PARENTS IN PARENT UNIVERSITY: CHILDREN'S (AGES 4 MONTHS TO 11 YEARS) ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL OUTCOMES

METHOD. Parent University families were invited to complete assessments of their children's language development and social-emotional skills in the spring of 2024. The following tools were used:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Developmental Assessment of Young Children – 2nd Edition (DAYC-2): The DAYC-2 measures children's English language receptive and expressive language skills. Parents completed the assessment for children aged 16 months to 5 years.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA): Parents completed the DECA questionnaire to assess young students' social-emotional development in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior as well as total protective factors overall. The DECA is available in Spanish and English. The DECA was completed for 42 children, ages 4 months to 5 years.



FINDINGS

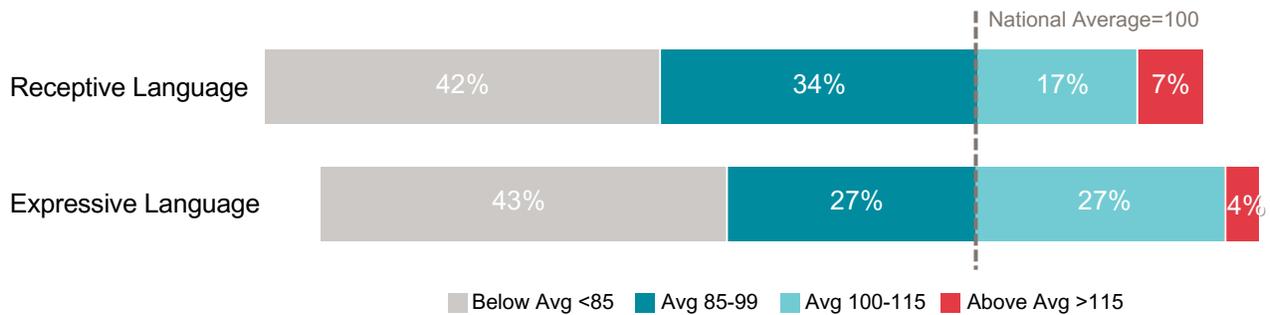
English Language Skills

Parents completed English language assessments for children whose home language is English or who are in an English-based childcare environment. The language assessment is normed on a diverse cross-section of children, particularly in social-economic status. A total of 83 children had the assessment in the spring of 2024. The descriptive analyses found that 24% of the children were at or above the national average in receptive language, and 31% were at or above the national average in expressive language.

Approximately a quarter of the children demonstrate language skills that meet or exceed the national average.

Forty-two percent of the children scored in the below average range in receptive language, and 43% of children scored in the below average range for expressive language. This indicates that higher percentages than the normed sample are at the below average level. In a typical distribution, approximately 15% of the children would score in the below average range.

31% OF THE CHILDREN HAD EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. About a quarter of the children (24%) were at the national average in receptive language. n=83



Social-Emotional

Parents whose primary language was English or Spanish, completed a survey about their children's social-emotional skills with a total of 42 completed.

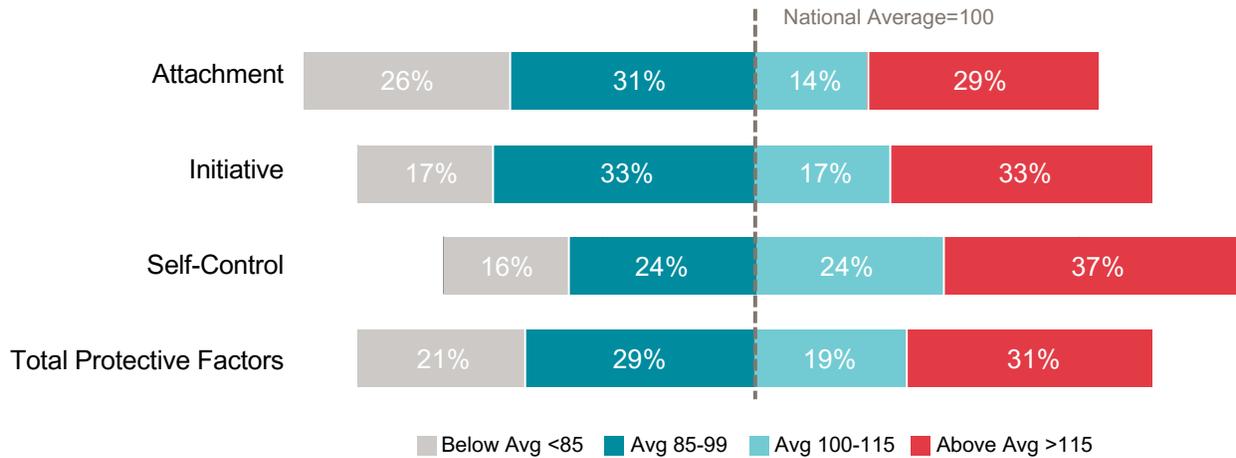
The descriptive analyses found high percentages of children scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: total protective factors (79%), attachment (74%), initiative (83%) and self-control (84%). The majority demonstrated social-emotional skills above the national average, which is a score of 100, in the area of self-control (61%).

The majority of students were in or above the average range across all social-emotional areas.

Like all standardized assessments, the social-emotional assessment is normed on a diverse cross-section of children. The sample of children with parents enrolled in Parent University has high percentages who qualify for free & reduced lunch, which is an indicator of low income. The fact that most of the children scored in the average range or above across all areas is promising.

However, the children scored in the below average range at a rate that is approximately equal to or higher than the normed sample. In the area of attachment, 26% scored in the below average range, and in total protective factors, 21% scored in the below average range. In the normed sample 15% score in the below average range.

STUDENTS SHOWED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN SELF-CONTROL WITH 61% MEETING OR EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. n=42



The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. At the time of the assessment, 43% of the children scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three-to-five-year-old children.

Success Stories

With continuous 1-on-1 support from the child learning specialist working directly with these children, Parent University families were able to see successes such as:

- A child’s DECA scores grew from all typical in the fall to all areas of strength in the spring.
- A child’s DAYC score for receptive language increased, changing from below expectations in the fall to meeting widely held expectations in the spring.

Through classes like Circle of Security and Common Sense Parenting, as well as the direct help and guidance from their educational navigators during home visits, families were able to see successes such as:

- Attachment was an area of concern for a child on the fall DECA. By spring, he scored in the typical range. His score for self-control improved from typical to an area of strength. His DAYC scores also improved in both receptive and expressive language.
- A child’s DECA showed that all social-emotional areas were a concern in the fall. By spring, her DECA showed all areas as strengths. Her DAYC scores also improved from the average range in fall to the above average range in spring.

ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

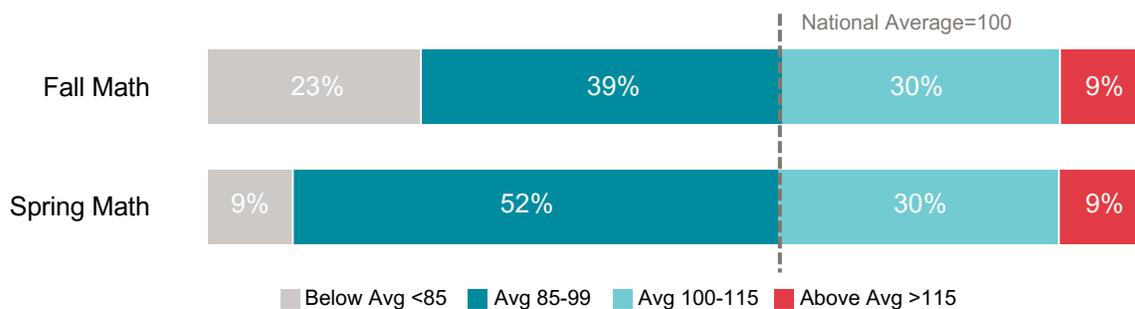
School Attendance data was obtained from Omaha Public Schools on the school-age students of parents participating in Parent University. Those students attend 22 different schools in the district. For those students with parents attending programming, 60% missed fewer than 10 days of school. K-5 students (n=47) missed an average of 14.14 school days. The goal for students across the district is to miss fewer than 10 days.

SCHOOL AGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

For those students with parents attending the program, academic achievement data were obtained from Omaha Public Schools. To assess the academic outcomes of the school-age children whose parents participated in Parent University, the MAP® Growth™ assessment was used. NWEA-MAP® Growth™ provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time.

Data for grades K-5 are reported in the chart below showing MAP NWEA® data for fall and spring. These scores are based on the national averages.

BY SPRING, MORE THAN 90% OF STUDENTS SCORED IN OR ABOVE THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR MATH. The percentage of students scoring above the national average was the same in fall and spring. n=44



MORE K-5 STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR READING IN THE SPRING THAN FALL. Students scoring in the below average range decreased 4% from fall to spring. n=44



Students' scores were stronger in mathematics, with more than 80% of students scoring in the average range in the spring. Across all subjects and testing periods, 39% of students scored above the national average.

learning
community
center
OF SOUTH OMAHA

Family Learning





2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS



339 parents and 830 children were served.
531 children were birth to age 5 with 229 attending the child learning program on site.



96% of the 224 family referrals made to the social assistance navigator were successfully discharged.

On average, these families reported increased levels of self-sufficiency across all domains.



Participants increased parenting skills and decreased parental stress.

Parent stress was reduced significantly after working with navigators to resolve complex issues.



Children scored in the average range in executive functioning.

Nearly all (96%) scored in the average range.



PreK students scored in the average range on pre math and literacy skills.

Two assessments had mean scores in the average range.



School-age children in grades K-5 scored in the average range in math.

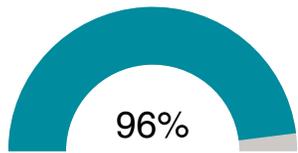
Over 70% of students scored in the average range for math at both the fall and spring checkpoints.

Who We Served

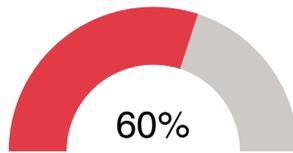
Learning Community Center of South Omaha



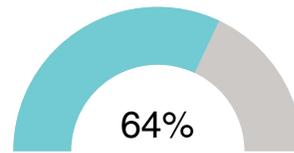
PARENT PARTICIPANTS



Primary language is not English



Do not have a high school diploma or GED



Household income below \$35,000

6 Families reported 6 different primary languages: Spanish (79%), Q'anjob'al (15%), English (4%), K'iche' (2%), Mam (<1%) and Tarasco (<1%).

270 Number of parent participants who needed childcare at LCCSO (80%). Fifteen additional participants reported previously using childcare at the center.

CHILD PARTICIPANTS

531 Number of participating children ages birth to 5 in 2023-2024 (64%).

229 Number of children ages birth to five who attended the Child Learning program in 2023-2024. In addition, 35 school-age children attended.



* Percentages are based on participants who reported data for this category.

Learning Community Center of South Omaha

The Learning Community Center of South Omaha is a comprehensive, center-based initiative created using national models and best practices from the two-generational approach. The program originated in 2012 as a collaborative effort between the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and OneWorld Community Health Centers. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha was nationally recognized by the White House as a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education and is a 2-GEN network partner through Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

Each family in the program is offered classes or programming an average of seven hours per week during the academic school year and throughout the summer. **Families can participate in all three of the program’s primary components:**

Education for Parents of Young Children

Early Childhood Education

Interactive Parent/Child Activities

EDUCATION FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Since a parent’s level of educational attainment is a strong predictor of a child’s academic success, most parents at the center enroll in an English as a Second Language or a GED cohort for six hours a week. Because many families that enrolled at LCCSO were Q’anjoba’l speakers from Guatemala, the program saw more parents starting classes with little formal education and low literacy rates.

English for Parents: As parents learn English, they become more confident talking to teachers and asking questions about their child’s progress, as well as communicating with the broader community. In addition to fundamental language skills, an English for Parents class will teach parents how to use computers to access school information, role-play parent/teacher conferences, and utilize children’s books as learning tools. Participants also take field trips to the Omaha Public Library (OPL) and take part in OPL’s Summer Reading Program.

GED: In partnership with Metro Community College, the program offers GED classes. The goal of the classes is to help parents increase their educational level and better their family’s economic security through more stable and lucrative jobs or new educational pathways only open to GED graduates. GED classes also help parents guide their children on their academic journey (homework help, role modeling, academic language and concepts, etc.).



Along with ESL or GED, parent participants receive:

Parenting Classes and Workshops: Parenting classes and family-focused workshops strengthen and support parents, who are the first and most important teachers for their children. Parents learn practical strategies to support child development and education. Program staff and community organizations provide a wide variety of offerings, including Circle of Security®, Love and Logic®, domestic violence prevention, financial literacy, and nutritious cooking. All workshops teach skills and techniques to foster learning and wellbeing at home.

Sample Parent Classes and Workshops
Circle of Security® (LCCSO staff) Pyramid Model for Parents (Child Saving Institute) Digital Literacy 101 (Metro Community College) Baby and Me in Q’anjob’al language (LCCSO Navigator) Cooking Matters® (Whispering Roots) Love and Logic® (program staff)

Educational & Social Assistance Navigation Services: The center employs navigators who develop authentic relationships with parent participants and serve as their advocates. Every parent in the program is assigned an **Educational Navigator**, who conducts personal visits with family at least once a month to help connect them with the public school system and provide new insights into child development and learning strategies. Navigators use a research-based personal visiting/parenting curriculum, Growing Great Kids®, which ensures effective individualized education and support. **Social Assistance Navigators** assist families who are in crisis or have challenging social or economic needs. These navigators connect parent participants with many community resources, such as pantries, mental health services, and homeless shelters.

# of Personal Visits by Educational Navigator	# of Parent/Child Interactions by Educational Navigator	# of Personal Visits by Social Assistance Navigator
1851	884	879

Workforce Development: Workforce development classes are offered onsite in collaboration with Metropolitan Community College. Parents learn workforce readiness skills such as resume-building, interview skills, and job search methods and receive certificates in customer service, workforce ethics proficiency, and the National Career Readiness Certificate. A Workforce Navigator also offers individual career coaching or assistance connecting to continued education.

Digital Literacy: Parents who exhibit strong engagement in the program are loaned a computer. Digital Literacy is now a part of the English for Parents program through the online ESL curriculum Burlington English. Program participants who do not enter the program with these skills become proficient in using email, search engines, using a mouse, copying and pasting, and typing. Metropolitan Community College offers computer certificates to parents who take onsite courses that include the following topics: Basic Computer Skills, Internet Basics, Using Email, Social Media, and Microsoft Office software.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

While parents attend classes, the Learning Community Center of South Omaha offers year-round learning activities for young children, from newborn to age five. The primary focus is on building social, emotional, and executive functioning skills as well as cognitive concepts to support school readiness. The program partners with many organizations, including:

The Big Garden
Farm to School

Omaha Public Library
Story Time

Opera Omaha
Performing arts sessions

When staff or parents identify children with delayed development or challenging behaviors, the program connects these children and their families to programs such as Omaha Public Schools Early Intervention or KidSquad at Child Saving Institute. That way, young children receive interventions before they enter the public school system. The program also encourages families to enroll children who qualify in early childhood programs through Omaha Public Schools.

INTERACTIVE PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES

Interactive parent/child activities are offered to families enrolled in the program to promote supportive and responsive parent/child relationships and interactions, which are the building blocks for healthy brain development. Interactive parent/child activities allow parents opportunities to practice new parenting strategies while learning together with their children. Examples of interactive parent/child activities include field trips, special events, or family summer camps with themes such as STEM learning, music, art, or literacy. Other partners bring enrichment programs to the center, including:



Prime Time Family Reading Time®
Humanities Nebraska

College Prep for Families
UNO Service Learning Academy

String Sprouts®
Omaha Conservatory of Music

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Learning Community Center of South Omaha provided training and/or coaching for 44 South Omaha childcare providers in 2022-2023. After learning about the lack of bilingual trainers and coaches in the field, several members of the LCCSO team trained to become State of Nebraska-certified trainers and coaches in early childhood development. Two training sessions were held at the center on the Early Learning Guidelines. In partnership with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Rooted in Relationships provided culturally-relevant, bimonthly training, monthly coaching, and collaboration opportunities for 16 home and center-based childcare providers working in the South Omaha community.

LCCSO partnered with more than 35 organizations in 2023-2024. Some of the partners from the evaluation year include:

OMAHA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Provided **weekly violin lessons** to children from **40 families** through the String Sprouts program.

OMAHA PERFORMING ARTS

Through the Ticket Access Program, **28 families** from the LCCSO attended **4 shows** in 2023-2024.

METRO TRANSIT

Presented to **four groups** at the center about how to use public transportation.

PROJECT HARMONY

Provided onsite **individual and/or group therapy** to parent participants.

NEBRASKA DIAPER BANK

LCCSO distributed diapers to approximately **90 enrolled children** program each month.

HUMANITIES NEBRASKA

Prime Time Family Reading: **Six-week sessions** were offered four times, and **37 families** participated in programming.

OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Delivered prizes to families who completed the **Summer Reading Program** and provided ice cream and information on where to find **free back-to-school supplies**.

UNO SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Provided a Social Work practicum student for **16 hours a week** from July through early December 2023. The Social Assistance Navigator provided services onsite in 2024 as part of her practicum.

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 formative in nature. The tools selected for the evaluation often have a dual purpose to provide outcome results and to inform the team as part of a continuous improvement process.

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUPS

RESULTS. Focus groups were conducted in 2023-2024 to allow participants the opportunity to relay their experiences with the program, share success stories and provide input on possible improvements to the program. Questions were asked about the participants' overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with program components (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes), and ideas for improvements to the program. Focus groups were conducted with participants and staff members.

Summary of ELL Focus Groups

The following is a summary of focus group findings conducted at Learning Community South in the spring of 2024. Focus groups explored people's experiences with English language classes, agency partnerships, parenting workshops, on-site childcare, and relationships with Educational Navigators. Six in-person focus groups were conducted with 65 participants. Participants in the focus group met a minimum requirement of six months of enrollment in the program.

Participants expressed a mixed level of satisfaction with English language instruction.

While several participants reported satisfaction with English classes, there were mixed experiences with the content and method of instruction. Some participants desired more interaction with peers and said they would like to role-play different situations and practice English pronunciation with others. Some participants noted the fast pacing made it challenging to retain information pace. Other participants agreed that they would like to practice conversations in front of others, rather than recording themselves. One preferred less time on a computer, adding, "Maybe just assign the computer work for home." Further suggestions for English classes included longer time in the program and offering evening or weekend options.

Participants continue to see growth in their English-speaking abilities due to their enrollment in English language classes. One participant shared, "The classes have helped me a lot. I work in a restaurant, and I had difficulty speaking with those who only spoke English. They recommended me to come here to learn English, and I am so grateful to them... It has given me the opportunity to help others."

"We are adults, but we need to learn the language like children. I want to learn English like children, with experience, practice, and small tasks such as homework."

Some participants reported the ability to make appointments independently and noted an increased confidence to attend parent-teacher conferences without an interpreter. Other participants shared the surprise and joy in their children for their parent’s newfound ability to communicate in English, e.g., “My child said, ‘Mom, you understand what we are saying?!’ and it feels good to say, ‘Yes!’”

“I also think I have had a better life at home. I’m a better wife and a better mother to my children. I have learned the importance of spending more time with them. I feel like my children are happier, and we have better relationships.”

Parenting Workshops continue to benefit families.

When asked about their experiences with the various parenting workshops offered, one parent summarized, “The workshops are excellent. They teach us to be better parents. I am learning to have more patience with my child and how to talk to her. I have learned to be a better wife and mother.” Participants also honored different parenting styles, e.g., “I have learned that there are no wrong ways of parenting and mistakes help you learn. We don’t think the same way, and we all have different backgrounds. My teacher understands that and helps us carry the weight.”

Classes such as Love and Logic and Circle of Security helped parents understand the importance of giving children space, identifying emotions, understanding brain development, and decreasing screen time to focus on mental health. In cooking class, participants learned the benefits of adding vegetables and protein to meals.

One suggested improvement for the program’s parenting workshops was to group parents according to the age of children in their home.

One participant wished more was offered for parents of adolescents and older youth.

Ideas for future topics of classes include psychology, ways to reduce screen time and boundary setting for technology, more in-depth first-aid, substance use prevention, challenging behaviors, nutrition, and musical instruments for parents.

Workforce Development course prepares individuals for job interviews.

Participants enrolled in the Workforce Development course agreed that it was an effective preparation for future job interviews. They described practicing interviews as “fun and helpful.” Participants learned how to create a résumé and how to dress professionally for a job interview. Strategies for inquiring about salary were also introduced. One participant summarized, “It supported me at my job. I am putting it to practice...I wish the class was longer and I recommend it. In one form or another, it supports you at work and even at home.”

Satisfaction with the method of instruction in the course was mixed. Some participants felt the instruction was more rote, e.g., “I felt alone and asked to just do things on a computer without explanation.” Others felt there should be more support to help individuals learn at different levels. Several participants desired instruction to be offered in both English and Spanish.

Participants continue to show satisfaction and appreciation for unique opportunities made possible through agency partnerships.

Many parents noted high satisfaction with Prime Time Family Reading and learned innovative ways to read books with their children, e.g., “One of my friends did not know how to read in English... so she remembered what the teacher would say during each page and repeated that at home. She did not know what was actually on the page, but she was still able to ‘read’ the book to her children and had fun doing it.” Others reported learning the importance of asking questions during story time.



Participants also shared their child’s successes with reading as a result of the program. Another participant noted that her typically shy child was motivated to interact with others through the activities provided. A few participants were so happy with the content of the class that they wished to attend more than eight sessions.

Satisfaction was also reported with College Prep for Families. Participants explored the University of Nebraska-Omaha campus and learned how to support their children in achieving their dreams. Another participant shared, “It motivated me to support my child. I hope to see my child there one day.”

String Sprouts participants observed positive outcomes from the program, e.g., “I think String Sprouts helped improve communication between me and my daughter. She is very shy, but with this class, she has opened up more. She is more active than before.” Participants were impressed by seeing their children learn to play an instrument at such a young age and recognized the opportunity for younger siblings to watch and learn as well. One participant expressed a desire to enroll in the program but has been on a waitlist for some time.

“My daughter got a medal for reading the most amount of books at school, and she loves it. I think this class has helped show her the importance of reading.”

“Until I came to the center, I did not know that I can access my child’s classes, know more about the school, or use their iPad. They taught me that here. Before, no one made sure I knew how to navigate that.”

Technology classes helped parents to support their children in school.

Many parents believe technology classes support their ability to communicate via email with their child’s teacher. Others acquired a new level of confidence in being able to email the school office to communicate absences. Additional skills learned include using Google, Excel, and Microsoft Word. A few parents needed more fundamental knowledge of how to use a computer and were thankful for the instruction.

When asked for suggestions for future technology skills, a majority of participants requested skills to learn how to block inappropriate apps for their children and how to monitor their children’s interactions online. Other topics include learning how to use GPS, photography, typewriting, cybersecurity, and attachments through email.

Working with Educational Navigators is helpful when the assigned navigator remains consistent.

Participants recognized the importance of having an Educational Navigator and desired a lasting relationship with that individual. Participants continue to describe the navigators as responsive, professional, and compassionate. However, several expressed their disappointment in the frequency of switching Educational Navigators. Some shared that the wait time for a new Educational Navigator was long. Others noticed their children’s difficulty adjusting to a new Educational Navigator.



Overall, the assistance received from the Educational Navigators was beneficial. Participants found help with topics such as obtaining a driver’s license, requesting a birth certificate, assisting through the divorce process, and receiving support for their children. One participant stated, “I feel happy with my navigator. She has helped me with my daughters. When I tell my children that the navigator is coming, they get very excited. My navigator asks me what days and times work. She also asks me where I would like to meet.”

Suggestions for personal visits included opportunities for evening meetings so that spouses can participate. One participant felt that the days off of class should be used to take care of personal responsibilities outside of class.

Center-based early childhood center prepares children for school.

A majority of parents agreed that the program’s early childhood center prepared their children for school. In addition, many parents believe that their children are more advanced than their peers because of time spent in the program. Participants also liked the consistent professional development offered to teachers to provide more learning to their children. Skills such as colors, numbers, reading, and name-writing were mentioned. Parents also noticed the teaching of social-emotional skills with their children and appreciated daily communication from teachers through written notes. One parent commented, “I like the emphasis on emotions. It has taught me and my child so much.”

“My child knew how to read and write and was very advanced when entering school because of the center.”

A common area for improvement was the process of transitioning children to older rooms. Parents wanted more notice about upcoming transitions so they could prepare their children in advance. Others thought transition could be handled more gently for children.

“More staff would make it easier on them. If the childcare providers are good, then the children are good.”

Some participants expressed concerns regarding challenging behaviors in some of the classrooms. More aggressive behaviors among children have been observed. A few parents reported that young children who had recently transitioned to older classrooms were now hesitant to come to school. Parents believed that adding more teaching staff and having extra supervision might alleviate physical behaviors among children. Additionally, parents requested hiring teachers with a background in special education or providing more training for teachers in that area. It should also be noted that parents requested larger classrooms and child-sized bathrooms.

Participants were asked about their overall health and well-being related to health, finance, and levels of stress.

Participants reported positive outcomes for their mental health because of attending the program. One participant shared, “I was depressed before coming to this center. I went to the doctor, and I was pregnant at that time. I know there are a lot of women that feel this way. The doctor told me about this center, and it has helped me so much. I now have a place to come to.”

Participants benefit from having access to diapers and socializing with peers in the program, e.g., “I was nervous to go back to work after having my baby, but now that I’m attending the program, I can get breakfast with my friends, feel more relaxed, and even receive diapers, so it’s one less expense in my home.” Regarding health, one participant noted the high cost of insulin. “I have a child with diabetes. It is hard to find insulin. It is very traumatic and affects my family.”

Final thoughts and suggestions.

Participants continue to express gratitude, increased confidence, and improvement in their home environment due to attending Learning Community South. One participant reflected, e.g., “They always put us into account in their decisions and make us feel welcomed. I love to see the growth and change in this program. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of it. Everyone always respects our opinions and supports us.”

Summary of GED Focus Groups

In the spring of 2024, a total of 10 GED participants at Learning Community South participated in focus groups discussing their experiences in the class. A summary of their experiences follows.

Some participants expressed their satisfaction with the GED classes, particularly praising the patience and friendliness of their teachers. They appreciated the new schedule that combined mathematics and literacy classes on the same day, as it reduced the impact of absences on their learning.

Participants want more support with mathematics.

Many participants reported that class time consists of individualized work without a lot of support given. When participants approach teachers with questions, they are often given a book or a YouTube video in response. Participants desired more guidance on how to solve problems, e.g., “Algebraic expressions were difficult, so I sought help. The instructor said she would give more individual help and provided a page to look at, but that was it. The previous instructor showed us step-by-step on the board. We learned quickly, and I still remember it now.”

“We are missing the connection between instructor and student.”

In addition to support with math, participants desire more interaction with their instructor. During class, many students work on different topics according to their varying levels. One participant stated, “Instructors want to teach us as if we are students who have made it through high school or middle school, but that’s not the case for most of us. People with different experiences need different support.”

Participants appreciated technology classes.

Several participants identified Northstar as beneficial, stating that they learned about computer programs like Windows 10 and PowerPoint. One participant reported, “Previously, I could only use social media. But now I have a job and use that computer knowledge. It has helped me so much.”

Overall, the participants expressed a deep appreciation for the opportunity to obtain their GED. They found the classes to be a strong motivator for achieving their future goals as they continue to work towards their diplomas, e.g., “It is a great motivation to have future plans and goals. I want to show my children that if they try, they can achieve anything despite any situation or language barrier. They are able to learn anything they want!”

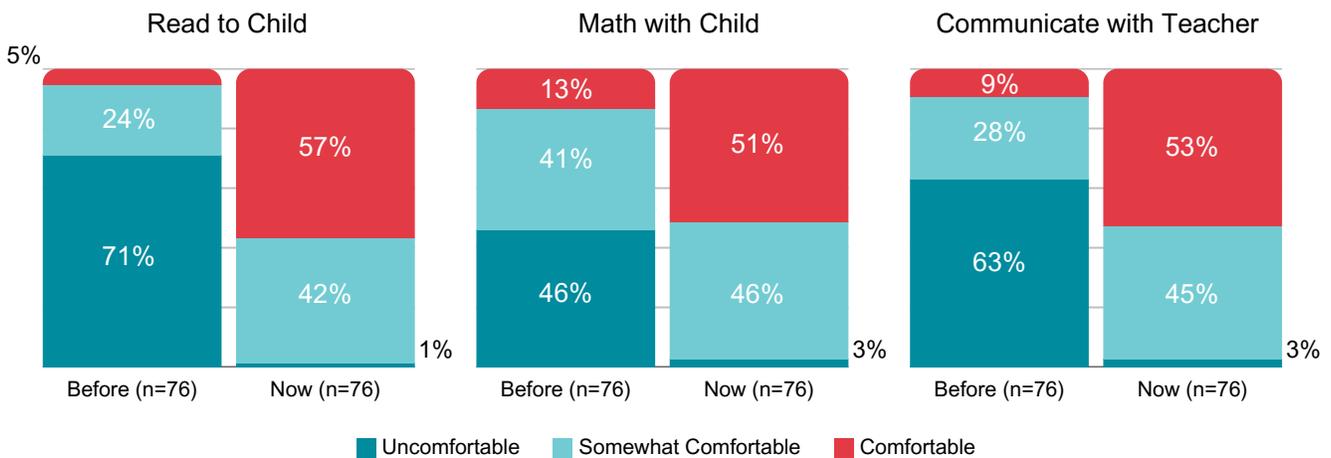


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

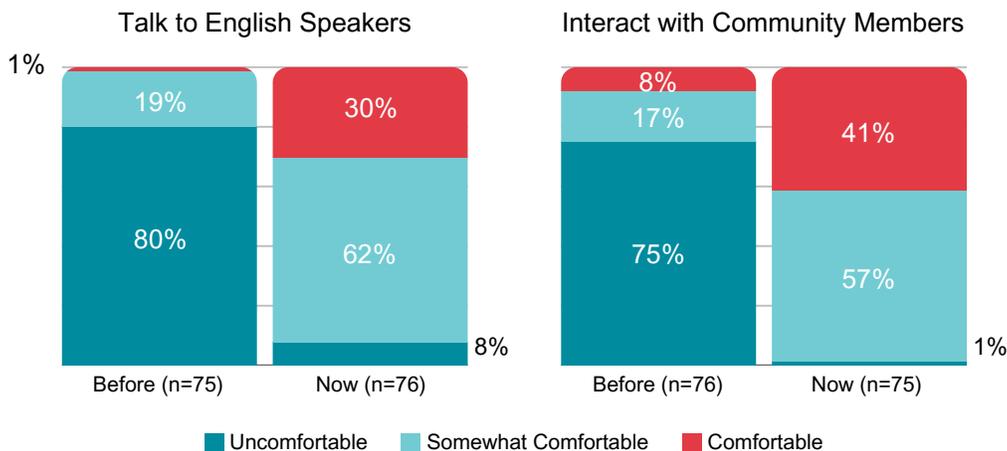
As part of the focus groups, parents reflected on their levels of comfort about engaging with aspects of their children’s education prior to starting the program and how they compared to now after participating in the programming. A total of 76 parents participated in the groups. The current results are consistent with several years of evaluation data. Parents feel increasingly comfortable engaging in school efforts including reading to their child in English, working on mathematics and communicating with the teacher.

The percent of participants feeling at least somewhat comfortable reading to their child increased from 29% to 99% and from 54% to 97% for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child’s teacher and the school, increasing from 37% to 98% being at least somewhat comfortable.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE INCREASED ACROSS ALL SCHOOL AREAS.



In addition to school engagement items, participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. In both scenarios, participants indicated increased levels of feeling comfort communicating with English speakers with more than 90% feeling at least somewhat comfortable after being the program for at least six months.



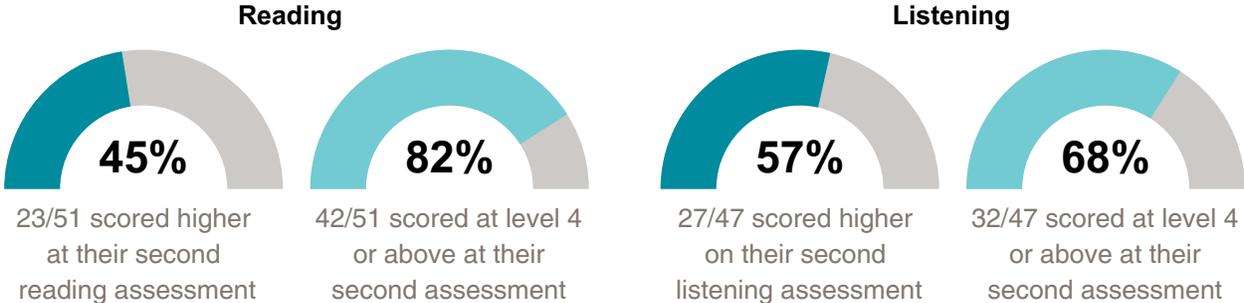
PARENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

METHOD. English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS®. CASAS® was used for multiple 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 by Munroe-Meyer Institute’s program evaluators.

The levels of the CASAS® indicate increasing level of skills and comfort in being able to listen, understand, and read English. 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. At ESL Level 4, participants can understand simple everyday conversations and have basic routine social interactions. They can follow simple directions and are recognizing new words and phrases. 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.

FINDINGS. A total of 249 CASAS® assessments were administered in 2023-2024, with 58 participants receiving more than one administration. The assessment is administered after every 60-90 hours of instruction.



Paired samples t-tests revealed significant growth from pre to post test for listening, $t(47) = -2.64, p < 0.05$ and no significant growth for reading . By the 2nd assessment most participants (82%) were at Level 4 or above for Reading while 68% were at Level 4 or above for Listening.

Individual reports of CASAS® results were provided to the participants and ESL teachers at the centers. Teachers used these scores to group students and 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.

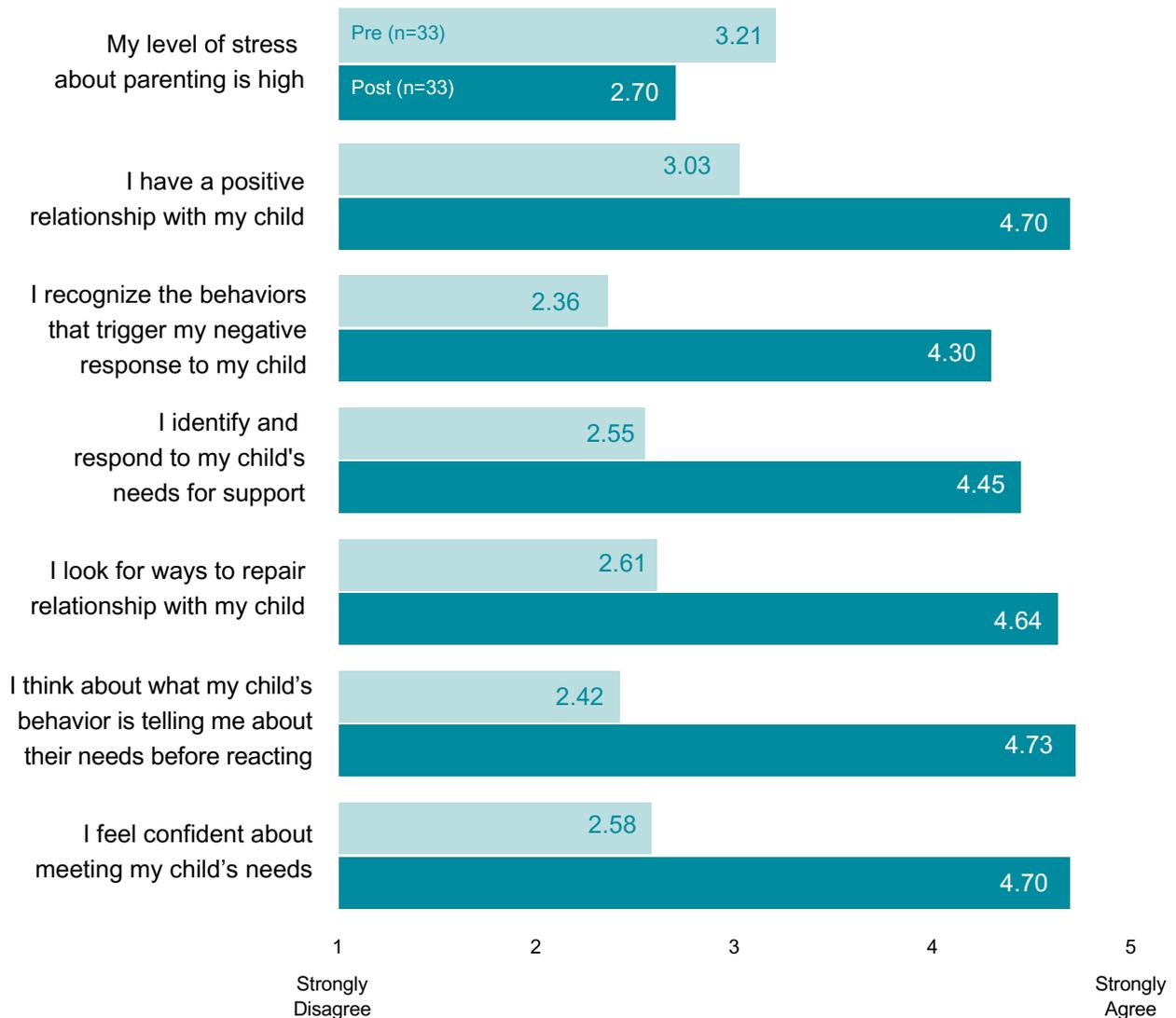
CIRCLE OF SECURITY PARENTING

METHOD. Circle of Security Parenting (COS-P) class participants were asked rate their level of stress and use of supportive parenting practices before and after class participation using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Thirty-three participants completed the survey.

FINDINGS. On average, participants reported lower levels of parenting stress from pre (3.21) to post (2.70). Mean scores increased in all self-assessments of supportive parenting practices. The largest increases were reported for thinking about the what the child’s behavior is saying about their needs before reacting (+95%), feeling confident about meeting the child’s needs (+82%), and recognizing behaviors that trigger a negative response to the child.

ON AVERAGE, COS-P PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HIGHER RATINGS OF THE THEIR SUPPORTIVE PARENTING PRACTICES FROM PRE TO POST.

Participants reported lower levels of parenting stress after attending the class. n=33



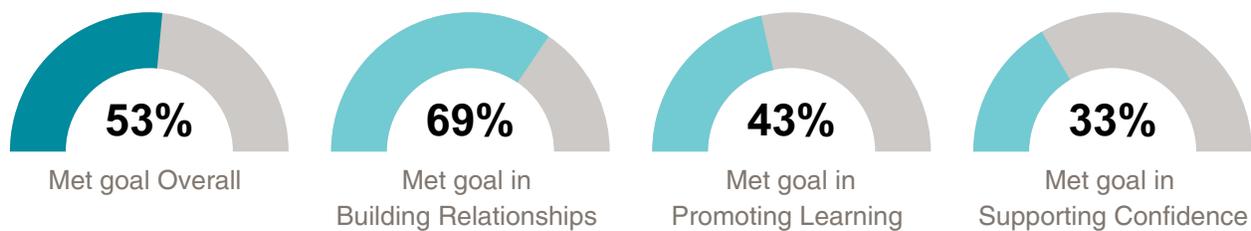
PARENTING PRACTICES

Video observations of parents and their children were submitted to the evaluation team. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) was used to provide feedback to parents and help navigators determine which skills to focus on with parents. As part of the continuous improvement process, educational navigators receive a written report with scores and recommendations to use with families.

METHOD. 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 interacting 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.

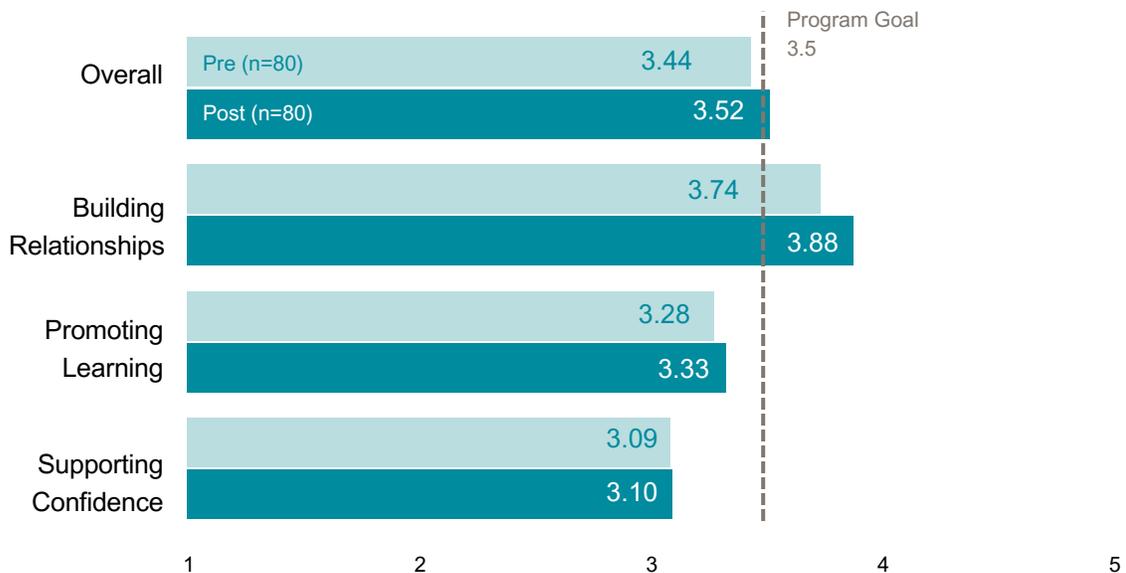
FINDINGS

A total of 80 families enrolled in LCCSO had the parent-child interaction assessment at least two points in time, with another 102 families having an initial assessment during the same period. By post, most parents met the program goal in two of the four areas.



The following graph shows average KIPS results for LCCSO families at pre and post.

ON AVERAGE, LCCSO PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS. n=80



The paired samples t-test analysis found that parents' skills over subscales and overall have had no statistically significant changes.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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

FINDINGS. The following work certificates were awarded in 2023-2024:



Additionally, 36 participants enrolled in two GED cohorts in partnership with Metro Community College. Of those participants, **four earned their GED**. Seventy-one percent in cohort 1 and 53% of cohort 2 demonstrated measurable skills gains (3-4 grade level increase).

Success Story

A recent success includes one participant who took ESL classes. She gained confidence in using conversational English and read her first ever book ever as part of her classwork. She reports more confidence in speaking with her children in English about complex emotions and in speaking with her children’s healthcare providers. She recently presented her story in English at the National Families Learning Conference and plans to move on to GED classes at the center.



SOCIAL ASSISTANCE NAVIGATION SERVICES

METHOD. Data were collected from parents who received additional services and resources through the social assistance navigator. Pre- and post-service data collection provided information about self-sufficiency, parent stress, and families' progress toward their goals.

FINDINGS

There were **224 family referrals** made to the social assistance navigator. Of those, 211 were simple referrals and 13 were complex referrals.

Simple referrals

A participant may seek assistance from a social assistance navigator (SAN) when he or she needs help connecting to another agency or filling out paperwork. Once a referral is received, SAN has 48 hours to attempt contact with the participant and assess the level of support the participant may need. Some participants can navigate community resources once directed to the agency. Other participants may encounter other barriers, such as transportation, a language barrier, or feeling insecure about how to proceed. If other barriers are presented, SAN will assist participants with problem-solving strategies and identify the steps to remove barriers. The goal is to empower participants so that they may feel comfortable addressing similar situations in the future.



Complex Referrals

A complex referral implies a participant has multiple needs to be addressed, for example: seeking financial assistance for rent, utilities, or medical bills, while also needing support to identify a low-cost behavioral health agency. Once a referral is received, SAN has 24 hours to attempt contact with the participant and assess the level of urgency to address the need. Participants under the complex referral will collaborate with SAN to identify the current level of support needed, what the client has attempted in the past when presented with a similar situation, and what services may be available in the community to address their needs. Once the goals are established, the participant is empowered to choose which item he or she may want to address first. A complex referral varies in the length of time it will be open. In the process, SAN provides educational resources such as budgeting information and coping skills the participant can attempt as their situation resolves.

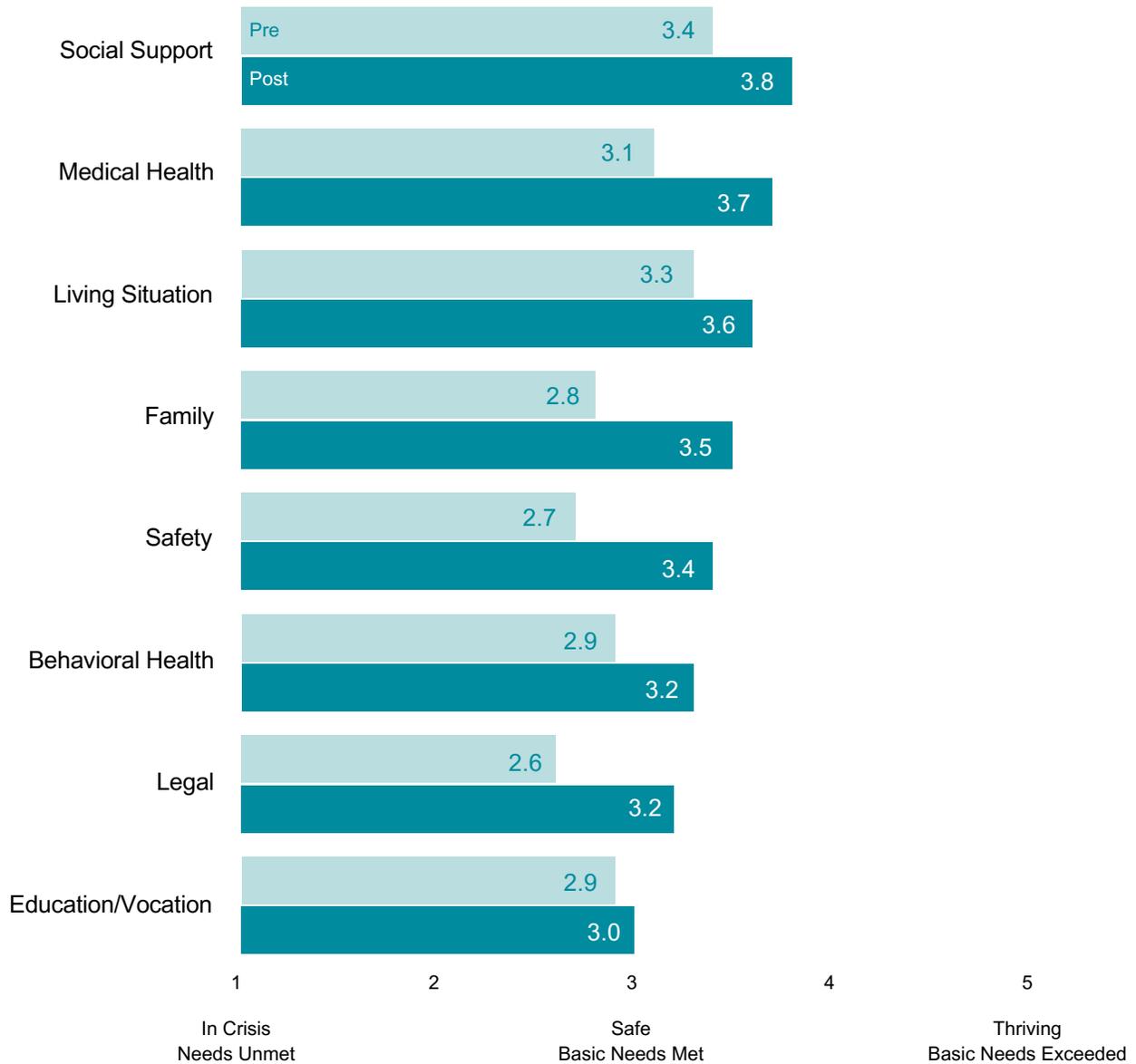


By the end of the year, of the families enrolled, 62% were able to close their case successfully while 15% were still in progress, 15% disengaged in services, and 8% declined services.

Self-Sufficiency

In 2023-2024, the SAN team impacted a total of 212 unique clients. The services in most need were often associated with financial need and identifying free or low cost legal, medical, and educational resources. The SAN team utilized the self-sufficiency matrix to identify any areas of risk and develop additional goals to empower families towards self-sufficiency. Sixty-five families were assessed at least one time using the self-sufficiency matrix, and 56 families completed pre- and post-service assessments in 2023-2024.

ON AVERAGE, SUCCESSFULLY DISCHARGED FAMILIES REPORTED INCREASED LEVELS OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN ALL DOMAINS. n=56



Participant Stress Level

Participants who engaged with SAN for complex cases were asked to rate their levels of stress on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 equaling the highest level of stress. Ten out of 12 participants rated themselves at least twice during the reporting period, and two participants disengaged with the SAN before completing a rating.

ON AVERAGE, PARTICIPANTS WITH COMPLEX REFERRALS REPORTED DECREASED LEVELS OF STRESS AFTER RECEIVING SERVICES.

Reported stress levels decreased by at least 2 levels for all respondents. n=10



Success Story

A participant reported feeling depressed after separating from her partner. Her Educational Navigator connected her to individual therapy offered through the program. She said the therapy has helped her cope with this situation and build her self-esteem. She asked for help for daughter, who started having behavioral issues at school and home during the separation. The Social Assistance Navigator connected her to the Early Intervention program offered through Omaha Public Schools. The participant reports that she is doing better and is more involved in her daughter's education and development.

She is spending more time with her daughter, and her Educational Navigator also taught her how to get free passes through the Omaha Public Library. Every week, she is taking her daughter to different places, such as the Zoo, Children's Museum, and Durham Museum. The participant shared that her participation in parenting classes, therapy, and home visits at LCCSO taught her more about how parent-child interaction is essential for the child's development. She said she is happy to be part of the program and excited about the new things she will learn.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

METHOD. Children of families were invited to participate in assessments of executive functioning and academic skills in the spring of 2023. The following tools were used:

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 online assessment was administered in English or Spanish by an evaluator from MMI in the fall of 2023 and spring of 2024.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

Batería IV Woodcock-Muñoz: The Batería IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measures cognitive abilities, achievement, and comparative oral language abilities. Four subscales were utilized in the evaluation: Identificación de letras y palabras (Letter-Word Identification), Problemas aplicados (Applied Problems), Comprensión de textos (Passage Comprehension), Cálculo (Calculation). In the spring of 2024, an MMI evaluator administered this assessment in Spanish to children entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2024.

FINDINGS

Executive Functioning

Sixty children were assessed, with 53 children having both pre and post assessments. The descriptive analyses found that 96% of the children demonstrated average executive functioning skills. Average scores were 95.6 (pre) and 96.3 (post). The national average is a score of 100. A paired samples t-test analysis indicated the growth from pre to post was not significant.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS DEMONSTRATED SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT FROM PRE TO POST. 96% scored in the average range. n=53

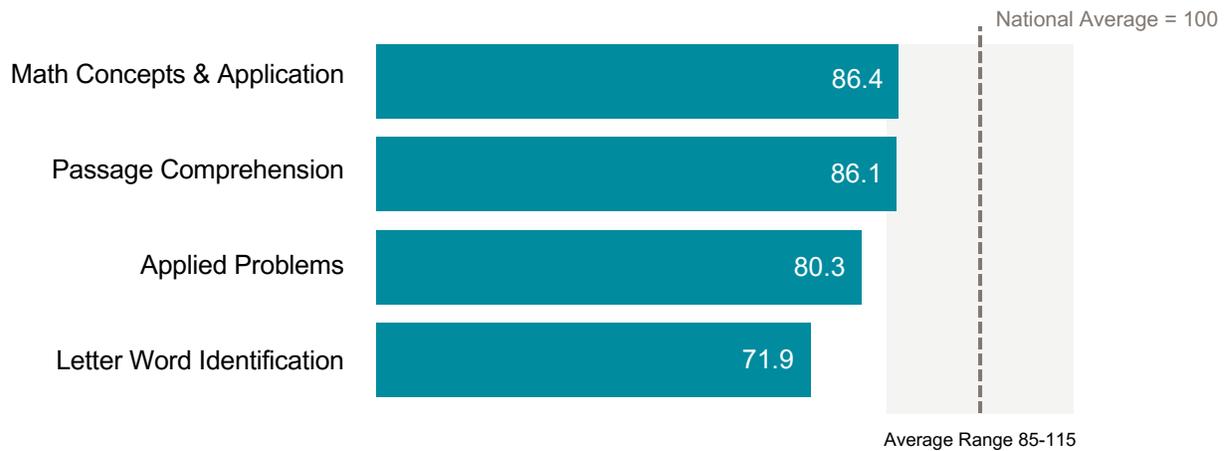


Academic Skills

Eighteen children were administered math and literacy assessments during the spring of 2023. Scores indicated average skills for one mathematics (SS=86.4) and one literacy assessment (SS=86.1).

FOR FOURTH YEAR, STUDENTS SCORED THE HIGHEST IN MATH CONCEPTS AND APPLICATIONS.

Two areas are in the average range. n=18



ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

School Attendance data was obtained from Omaha Public Schools on the school-age students of parents participating in the LCCSO program. Those students attend 29 different schools in the district. For K-5 students with parents attending programming (n=102), **53% missed fewer than 10 days of school**. On average, K-5 students were absent 10.46 school days, and the district goal is for students to miss fewer than 10 days.

SCHOOL AGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

For those students with parents attending the program for at least one year, academic achievement data were obtained from the district. To assess the academic outcomes of the school-age children whose parents participated in programming at LCCSO, the MAP® Growth™ assessment was used. NWEA-MAP® Growth™ provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time.

For purposes of analysis, only data for grades K-5 are reported in the chart below showing MAP NWEA® data for fall and spring.

OVER 65% OF STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE IN MATH ACROSS BOTH TIME POINTS.
Fewer students scored above the national average in the spring. n=94



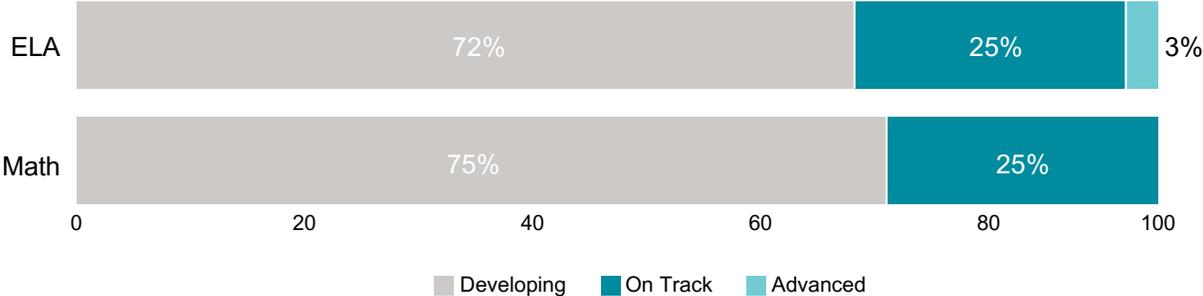
69% of K-5 STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR READING IN FALL AND SPRING.
By spring, fewer students scored above the national average. n=94



Students' scores were similar for mathematics and ELA in the spring, with 69% of students scoring in the average range. More students scored below the national average in ELA in spring. However, more students also scored in the above average range for ELA.

NSCAS proficiency levels were reported for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for 3rd-5th grade students (n=33). Unlike MAP data, more students (28%) scored in the proficient range for ELA than for math (25% proficient). Proficiency rates for Omaha Public Schools for grades 3-5 are slightly higher ranging from 40%-41% proficient for ELA and from 33-38% for mathematics. For English Learner, 3rd-5th grade students, proficiency rates ranged from 29-32% for ELA and 26-29% for mathematics. **Students with parents in the program had lower rates of proficiency in ELA and math when compared to district overall data but the scores are consistent with other English Learners.**

MORE STUDENTS IN GRADES 3-5 SCORED IN THE PROFICIENT RANGE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS THAN FOR MATH. n=33



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: USE OF DATA

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha focuses on using data gathered for the evaluation on an ongoing basis. The evaluation team from MMI and the management team at LCCSO engage in multiple feedback loops to improve programming and make informed decisions. KIPS™ and CASAS® assessments provide valuable information for the family navigators and English teachers to use in their interactions with families and students. Student data from the executive function and achievement assessments were shared both with program staff and with families. Focus group reports were shared with the management team to provide additional feedback from both participants and staff. These data aid in program improvements and decisions.

SUMMARY

Improvements in participant and child-level outcomes highlight the impacts of LCCSO’s 2Gen approach to supporting families.

School District Initiatives





2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS

1

Instructional Coaching was supported by districts and teachers.

80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching they received.

2

Extended Learning programs demonstrated positive student outcomes.

Most students showed positive improvement over the course of the intervention or program they were enrolled in.

3

Jump Start to Kindergarten resulted in students being prepared to enter school.

Students made significant gains in executive function.

They were rated as more proficient on two kindergarten readiness skills compared to students not attending the program.

4

District Initiatives served 335 teachers and 8052 students across 10 districts.



Who We Served

Instructional Coaching

6 Learning Community school districts were supported in 2023-2024. Each district uses a different coaching model based on its needs. Learning Community-funded Instructional Coaches impacted 335 teachers and 7,702 students. All schools funded by the Learning Community for Instructional Coaching were elementary buildings.

Bellevue Public Schools 113 Teachers impacted 1896 Students impacted	Gretna Public Schools 4 Teachers impacted 100 Students impacted	Millard Public Schools 54 Teachers impacted 953 Students impacted
Omaha Public Schools 60 Teachers impacted 2500 Students impacted	Ralston Public Schools 32 Teachers impacted 1528 Students impacted	Westside Community Schools 72 Teachers impacted 725 Students impacted

Extended Learning

4 The Learning Community funded four Extended Learning programs (three school districts and one community agency). Programs provided interventions to 248 students.

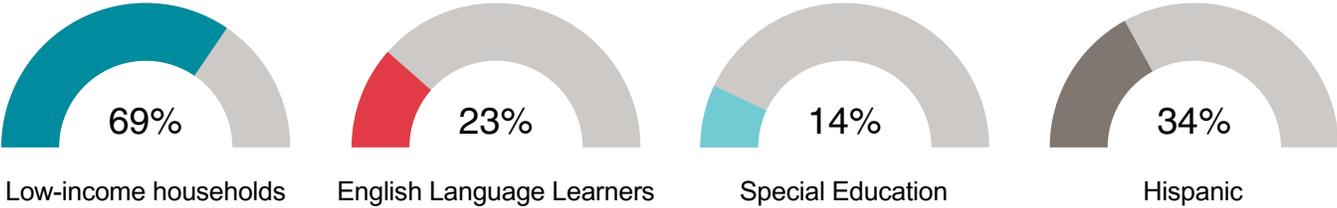
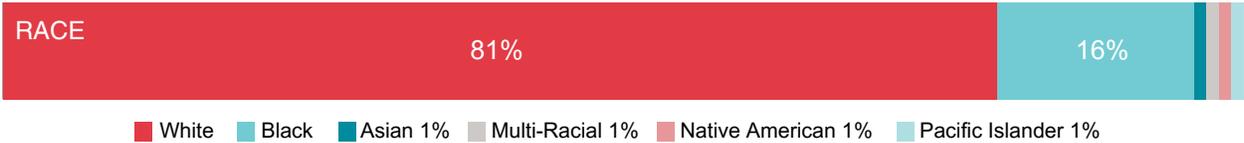
DC West Community Schools 40 Students impacted 12 Days offered K-5 Targeted grade levels	Elkhorn Public Schools 128 Students impacted 12 Days offered 1-3 Targeted grade levels	Springfield Platteview Community Schools 18 Students impacted 70 Days offered 1-3 Targeted grade levels	Completely Kids 62 Students impacted 152 Days offered K-5 Targeted grade levels
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Who We Served

Jump Start to Kindergarten

102

A total of 102 kindergarten students were served at one district in the summer of 2024. The full-day program was implemented in-person and ran for three weeks



10

Jump Start to Kindergarten served 10 classrooms in 5 schools across the participating district. The majority of children served were five years of age.



District Initiatives

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.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

Instructional Coaching has been an ongoing district initiative since 2012-2013 and has grown to include six Learning Community school districts (Bellevue Public Schools, Gretna 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 the five participating 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 Diane Sweeney’s and Jim Knight’s coaching framework with Charlotte Danielson’s teacher evaluation model to provide coaching across six elementary buildings using five instructional coaches. Coaching cycles begin as teachers enroll in the coaching process. Coaching activities included leading building professional learning, observations, modeling, individual student problem solving, data analysis and utilization, teacher feedback, and guidance with new curriculum.

GRETNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. During the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year Gretna Public Schools provided coaching support to its new teaching staff, targeting its support towards teachers in their first year of teaching in the elementary grades. Support began prior to school with a new teacher induction program and curriculum trainings. During the school year, support included observations, follow-up meetings, and check-ins. Mathematics professional learning in using Number Talks as a tool to facilitate discussion in the math classroom was also implemented for both new staff and existing staff.

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Millard Public Schools implemented instructional coaching at three buildings during the 2023–2024 school year. Two of the three coaches were funded by Learning Community funds.

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Instructional literacy coaches focused on literacy instruction, foundational skills, comprehension, and vocabulary in our kindergarten through sixth grade elementary classrooms. Coaches received professional learning on best instructional practices for teaching literacy.

RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Instructional Coach supported all elementary schools in the district, with a focus on assisting teachers in their first three years of teaching. Emphasizing classroom management, instructional practices, and onboarding new curriculum, the coach provided personalized coaching cycles tailored to individual teacher needs to positively impact student learning. These cycles could include modeling lessons, co-teaching, data collection, reflection, and collaboratively planning strategies to enhance student engagement and academic success. Additionally, the Instructional Coach played a role in the New Teacher Mentoring Program and supported Professional Learning Communities in each building by fostering reflective practice and collaborative thinking.

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Cognitive Coaching served as the base for the Instructional Coaching provided to four buildings in Westside Community Schools. 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.

OUTCOMES

COACH AND TEACHER FEEDBACK ON INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

METHOD. A combination of teacher surveys and instructional coach surveys were used to gather information on how both teachers and coaches perceived the instructional coaching programs across the six districts. Data are reported in aggregate, not by individual district.

FINDINGS

Teacher Survey

A total of 105 teachers across six districts completed the teacher survey. Most teachers completing the survey had at least 10 years of experience (52%) compared to 30% with 4-10 years of teaching experience and 17% in their first three years of teaching. When asked about the frequency of coaching support, 50% of teachers reported working with a coach at least twice per month. Teachers rated survey items on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Teachers reported that they had positive relationships with their coaches and building leadership supported the coaching program. Overall, 80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received from their district's instructional coaches.

COACHING WAS SUPPORTED BY DISTRICTS AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP. 80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching program at their site. n=105

Teachers were asked to rate the utility of each coaching strategy.

Coaching Strategy	Not at all useful	Slightly Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Extremely Useful
Coaching/Feedback	8.24%	4.71%	9.41%	23.53%	54.12%
Co-Teaching	8.51%	2.13%	4.26%	38.30%	46.81%
Data Analysis	6.02%	8.43%	4.82%	28.92%	51.81%
Lesson Planning	4.23%	8.45%	7.04%	36.62%	43.66%
Modeling Lesson and/or Strategies	6.25%	4.69%	6.25%	26.56%	56.25%
Observations (Live or Videotaped)	8.24%	4.71%	9.41%	23.53%	54.12%
Professional Development	3.16%	6.32%	15.79%	23.16%	51.58%
Small Group/Differentiated Instruction	4.00%	2.67%	9.33%	29.33%	54.67%

Teachers saw their coaches as resources for improving student outcomes and implementing new strategies.

“I feel like my second year in the district has been even more beneficial than the first with my coach. I have been able to identify specific areas to improve and we have been able to work well together to improve those areas. She has been a great support and resource when it comes to working through any issues that have arisen in my class.”

“She is a great sounding board and offers so many detailed ideas for solution and execution of solutions. I felt very supported.”

“She has helped me collect data to inform my instructional decisions and has helped find engaging resources to help my students. My students' reading scores have skyrocketed! They have made so much improvement with their phonics, reading, and comprehension! It is so nice to have an instructional coach to bounce ideas off of!”

Teachers described their coaches as positive, helpful, and supportive.

"[My coach] is the perfect coach in every sense. She listens, cares, shows that she cares through actions. No matter what is going on, I know without a doubt that [she] prioritizes staff members' concerns and she will help/guide/teach/problem solve until the issue is resolved."

"My coach is extremely positive. I'm encouraged by her very presence even after a long day of work. She is magnificent!"

"Our coach is super pleasant and steps in as needed. She is a big support, in particular, with new teachers and staff learning new curriculum. We are glad to have her on staff!"

Teachers appreciated opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve.

"[My coach] was a very great help with helping me find and implement data this year. She was also great with helping working through any issues and talk through different ideas with."

"She helped me with anything that was needed at any time. If there was a problem, she would help me find a solution. As a new teacher to the district, she helped me learn all there is to learn about the district and the new grade I was teaching in. She would always offer to come in at any time to help support, co-teach or teach a lesson in my classroom."

"I have enjoyed collaborating with my instructional coach this year. It was my 1st year teaching my grade level and in a new school. She helped me work through problems, talk about instruction, lesson plan, and be an ear when I needed one. It helped me be a better teacher!"

Teachers shared challenges with instructional coaching.

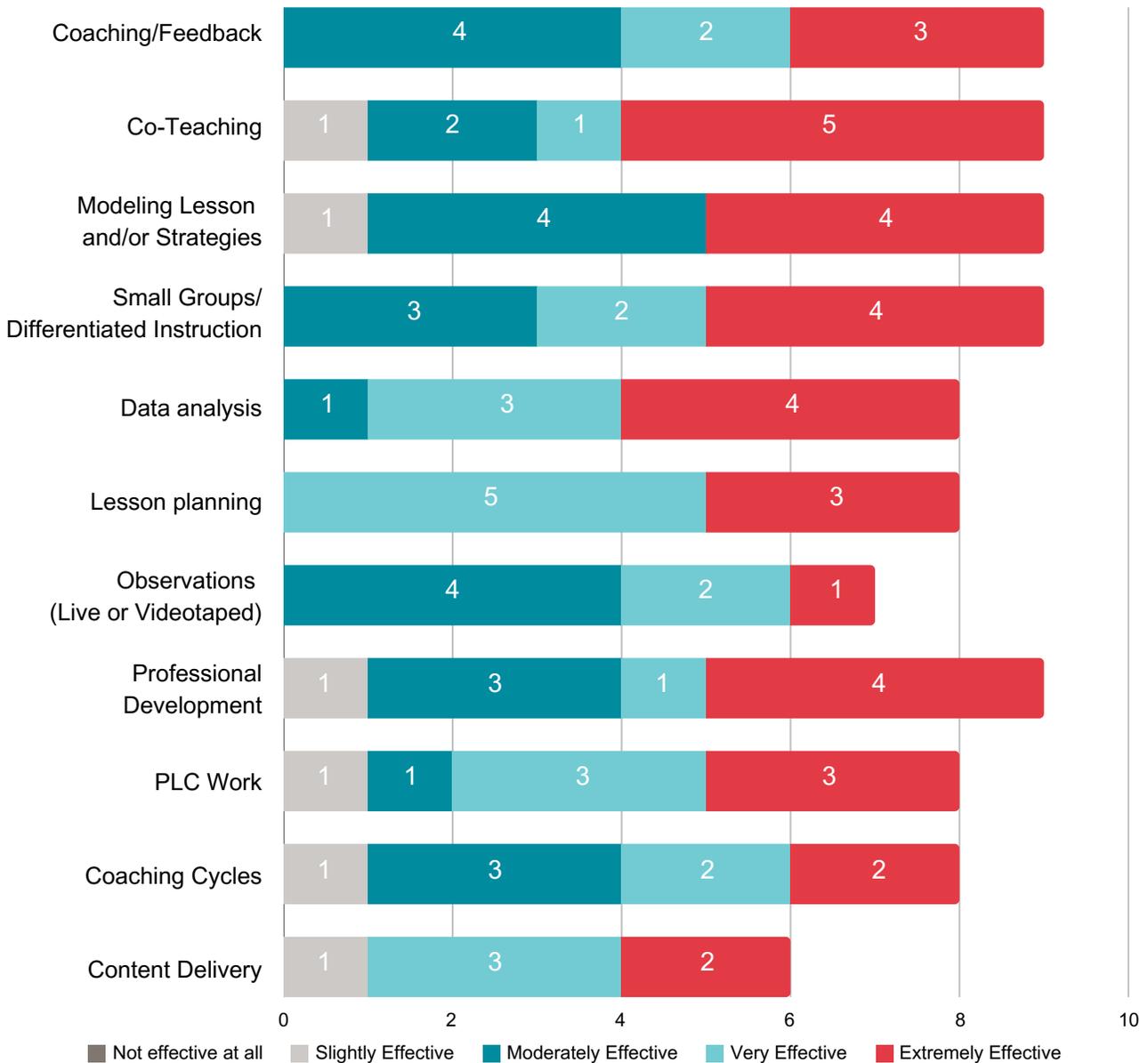
Some teachers felt frustrated with the level of feedback and support they received. Many of these respondents said they had little or no contact with their coaches, partly because of schedule limitations or coaches being used as substitute teachers. Others felt that their colleagues got more support because their coaches favored certain teachers, grade levels, or subjects. Some teachers wanted their coaches to provide more direct support in the classrooms (e.g., co-teaching or working with students and small groups).

"Our coaches do not co-teach or assist with learning in the classroom. The main purpose of our coaches is to look at data. Each of us certified teachers are capable of looking at our own data, and have absolutely no need for a coach. When this program began, I was excited to get a coach, until I realized how useless that position would be."

"My instructional coach works with teachers she prefers. She is only able to talk about one grade level's curriculum because that's the grade level she works on during curriculum writing. She is gone a lot for training, yet she doesn't bring any of it back to the staff. She seems to be gone more than she is here."

Instructional Coach Feedback

Nine coaches representing four districts provided feedback through an online survey. Of the nine coaches, 6 of them had more than 4 years of experience as a coach and 2 provided supports to more than 20 teachers in a year. Coaches were asked about the effectiveness of several coaching activities. Of the activities, four (Coaching/Feedback, Small Groups/Differentiated Instruction, Data Analysis, and Observations) were rated to be at least moderately effective.



Successes

Coaches were asked to share 2-3 success of their coaching year. Many highlighted collaboration with teachers engagement during trainings and team planning times. Others discussed students' academic growth in the subject areas targeted during coaching times. Finally, several coaches highlighted the work they did to build and maintain relationships with school staff.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Nebraska State Assessment Scores are reported by districts participating in the Instructional Coaching program. District averages are the average proficiency rates by grade level across each building in a district receiving instructional coaching. While some schools serve 6th grade, not all do. Therefore, proficiency rates are reported for 3rd-5th grades only. Free and reduced lunch eligibility statistics are not included for 2023-2024, as some districts are 100% qualified through the Community Eligible Provision. One district's NSCAS data is not reported because it joined the Instructional Coaching program later and was not a full-year participant.

DISTRICT NSCAS SCORES (3RD-5TH GRADES)

NSCAS English Language Arts

Percent Proficient

Grade 3	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	62%	59%
District A	66%	69%
District B	56%	56%
District C	56%	55%
District D	60%	52%
District E	51%	49%

Grade 4	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	55%	59%
District A	65%	62%
District B	48%	53%
District C	41%	52%
District D	39%	51%
District E	45%	50%

NSCAS Mathematics

Percent Proficient

Grade 3	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	58%	61%
District A	60%	57%
District B	50%	55%
District C	53%	55%
District D	47%	58%
District E	49%	55%

Grade 4	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	58%	60%
District A	61%	51%
District B	41%	37%
District C	50%	57%
District D	30%	45%
District E	48%	62%

NSCAS English Language Arts
Percent Proficient

Grade 5	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	57%	57%
District A	58%	60%
District B	37%	48%
District C	54%	45%
District D	51%	34%
District E	45%	47%

NSCAS Mathematics
Percent Proficient

Grade 5	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	65%	61%
District A	64%	60%
District B	39%	41%
District C	58%	43%
District D	47%	29%
District E	65%	62%

The statewide assessment scores in English Language Arts (ELA) increased for eight of the 15 student groups reported at the district level (53%) in 2023-2024. Scores decreased for six student groups (40%), and one group’s assessment scores were steady from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 (7%). Students tended to perform below the state average for ELA, as 12 of 15 student groups (80%) had lower proficiency rates than the Nebraska averages for their grade levels.

NSCAS proficiency rates in mathematics increased for eight of the 15 student groups (53%) and decreased for seven student groups (47%) in 2023-2024. Thirteen of the 15 student groups (80%) had proficiency rates that were lower than the statewide proficiency rates for their grade levels.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student data was submitted by the districts and/or programs. The districts used benchmark data from MAP, FastBridge, or Acadience to track student progress.

DISTRICT A. Students, on average, increased their percentile rank in early reading skills from a rank of 39 in fall 2023 to 40 in spring 2024. The average percentile rank for math grew four points from 38 in the fall to 42 in the spring. For reference, a percentile rank of 50 is equal to a standard score of 100. The average growth percentiles from fall to spring were 47 for reading and 51 for math. The 50th percentile is considered a reasonable approximation of one year’s growth.

DISTRICT B. Average percentile ranking for early reading skills in Kindergarten and first-grade students increased eight points from fall (42) to spring (50). The average adaptive reading percentile rankings for second-grade students decreased from 38 in fall 2023 to 36 in spring 2023, while adaptive math rankings decreased from 44 to 38. Average scores for the curriculum-based measures (CBM) decreased from fall 2023 to spring 2024 for students in grades 3-5. The ranking for CBM Reading decreased from 48 to 45, while CBM Math decreased from 59 to 56.

DISTRICT C. On average, students demonstrated slight increases in reading and math from fall to spring. The average percentile rank for reading increased from 50 to 51, while math increased from 50 to 52.

DISTRICT D. The percentage of students at or above benchmark in reading increased from 74.8% in fall 2023 to 75.6% in spring 2024. The percentage of students well below benchmark decreased from 12.5% to 10.8%.

DISTRICT E. By spring testing, 64% of students in grades K-3 met their projected growth in reading and 70% met their projected growth in math. The average percentile rank for reading increased five points from a rank of 55 in fall 2023 to a rank of 60 in spring 2024. The average percentile rank for math increased from 56 in fall 2023 to 60 in spring 2024.

DISTRICT F. Student performance, on average, decreased in reading and math from fall 2023 to spring 2024 but remained in the average range. The mean percentile ranks in reading were 52 in the fall and 50 in the spring, and the mean ranks for math decreased from 52 to 49.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to explore potential methods to target and improve students' literacy skills through coaching and other targeted professional development practices.

Extended Learning

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Extended Learning programs provided additional direct instruction for students with smaller teacher to student ratios and a focus on specific skills identified by district assessments. Summer programming was designed to prevent learning loss so that students are better prepared for academic success as they enter the next school year. Programs were funded in three districts and one community agency.

COMPLETELY KIDS. Students in this before and after school program were served at Field Club elementary. Completely KIDS focused on building the social-emotional and academic skills of the students in our programs. Through hands-on project based learning curriculum, the students learned while doing and stayed engaged in the activities.

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. The summer extended learning program consisted of 12 days, 3 hours each day. Students were provided targeted instruction in the areas of ELA and mathematics. Weekly communication and resources were shared with families about their child's progress. The goal of the program was to help students maintain their academic skills over the summer break.

ELKHORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Jump Start to Reading program served students entering Grades 1-3 in the fall. Students attended an average of 11 of the 12 days of the program.

SPRINGFIELD-PLATTEVIEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Students verified for this program received individual/small group math instruction at two elementary buildings. Students participated one hour per week with intervention lessons developed through collaborative efforts between classroom teachers and the math interventionist. The goal of the program was for at-risk students to meet grade level expectations in math by the end of the school year. The district looked at students who needed support in all grade levels but focused on students in the intermediate grade range.

OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Sixty-nine parents completed the program satisfaction survey. The survey was provided to programs in both Spanish and English. Parents were asked to respond to multiple satisfaction questions using a 5-point 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=4.79) with the extended learning programs. Parents rated staff as being excellent (M=4.90), believed their child would be more successful the following year in school, and felt their child enjoyed the program.

EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS MET EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS.

86% of parents feel their child will be more successful in school. n=69

I was satisfied with the program as a whole.



The staff were excellent (caring, reliable, skilled).



My child enjoyed attending the program.



I was satisfied with the hours of the program.



I was satisfied with the length of the program.



I believe that my child will be more successful in school as a result of the program.



I am satisfied with the level of communication I had with the program.



I was informed about my child's progress.



Parents were asked to provide one to two examples of things the program could better and 1-2 examples of positives about the programming. Parents appreciated the staff, engaging activities, socialization opportunities, and program schedules. Parents also loved the improvement made by their children and discussed evidence of growth. A few improvements were noted by parents, including fewer videos or iPad lessons and more communication on student progress and upcoming topics.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student data was submitted by the districts and/or programs. All the districts used MAP data to track student progress.

DISTRICT A. Students on average increased their percentile rank by over 4 points from an average percentile rank of 40 in the spring of 2024 to an average percentile rank of 44 in the fall of 2024. For reference a percentile rank of 50 is equal to a standard score of 100.

DISTRICT B. About half of students met their growth goal for mathematics (48%), while 29% met their growth goal in reading. At the post test, 52% scored in the average range or above for mathematics and 44% were in or above the average range in reading.

DISTRICT C. By spring testing, 89% of intervention students demonstrated growth (average growth was 16 RIT points) with 18% scoring at or above the district achievement goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to examine the impact of targeted intervention programs at the district level.

“The staff were wonderful and my daughter enjoyed going after getting the nerves out.”

“I like that she was proud of herself and how much more confident she appeared to be about reading.”

“I liked the timing of the program in the summer. It was a good space between school getting out for the summer but left some time before school started again.”

- Parents of students

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. The program includes a strong family engagement component such as home visits. It also utilizes certified teachers for part or all of their staffing. The program ran for three weeks and was a full-day program.

OUTCOMES

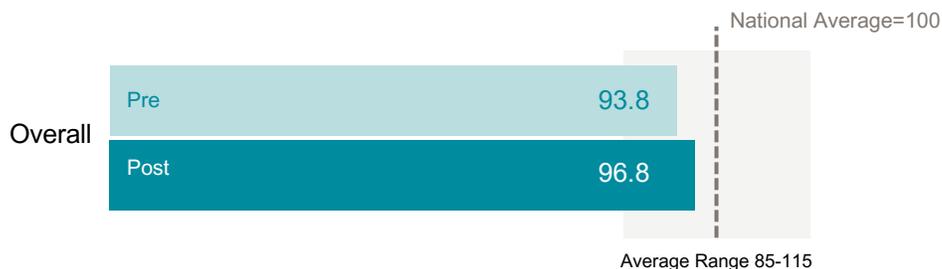
EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

METHOD. In recent years, the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Benson et al., 2013; Koruco, Litkowski & Schmitt, 2020; Meixner & Laubrock, 2024,). Executive functioning is defined as a student’s ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler’s ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et. al., 2013). The Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS), is an online assessment for children two and older.

RESULTS. For the 2024 summer, pre-post comparisons were made using a paired-samples t-test. The results found that overall, the students made significant gains in the area of executive functioning over the course of the program [$t(81)= 4.032$; $p<.001$], $d=0.34$] suggesting small meaningful change.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVERALL.

Effect size suggests moderate, meaningful change. $n=82$



The overall mean standard scores on the MEFS increased from 93.8 to 96.8, moving them to the desired mean of 100. The goal each year is to move the group as close to a mean standard score of 100 or greater as possible.

PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Twenty-seven parents provided feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program. Parents were asked to respond to multiple satisfaction questions using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

RESULTS. Families reported high overall satisfaction in all areas, including believing that the staff were excellent, teacher communication, the approachability of teachers, and the length of program. They also reported high levels of satisfaction on such items as their child enjoyed attending the program, their child believes that school will be a fun place to learn, and satisfaction with the hours of the program. The lowest level of satisfaction was parents feeling more prepared to be the parent of a Kindergartener as a result of the program and parents feeling informed about child's progress.

PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS. n=27

I was satisfied with the program as a whole.



The staff were excellent.



I am satisfied with the level of communication I had with my child's teacher.



If my child begins to struggle, I feel comfortable approaching his/her teacher or principal.



I was satisfied with the length of the program.



My child enjoyed attending the program.



My child believes that school will be a fun place to learn.



I was satisfied with the hours of the program.



I believe that my child will be more successful in Kindergarten as a result of the program.



I was informed about my child's progress.



I feel more prepared to be the parent of a Kindergartener as a result of the program.

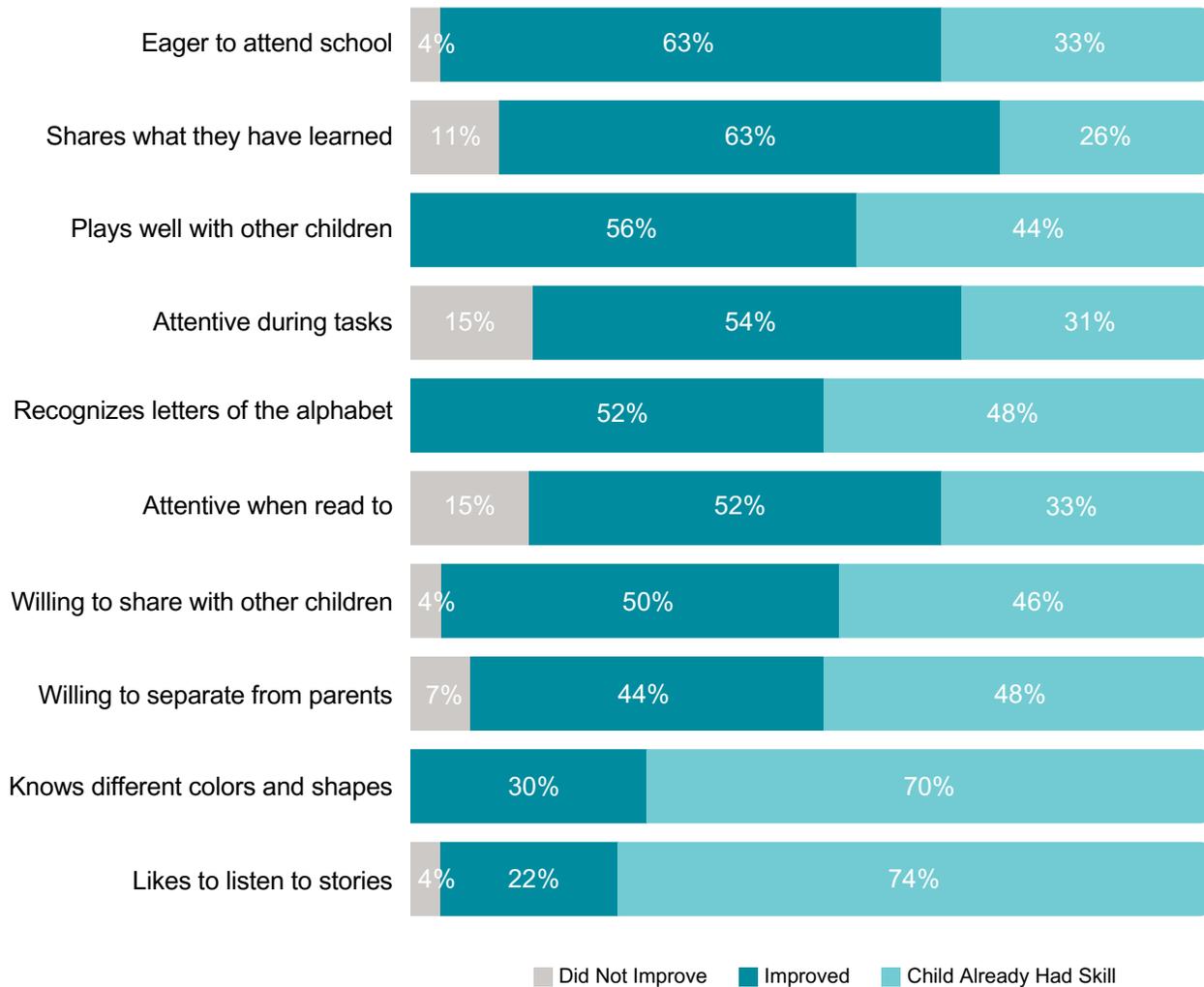


PARENT RATING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

How did parents rate their students' readiness for school?

Parents were also surveyed about their perceptions of how the program impacted their child. Over half of respondents reported that their child improved in the following areas: eagerness to attend school, sharing what they learned, plays well with other children, attentiveness during tasks, recognizes letter of the alphabet, attentive when read to, and willingness to share with other children. Some areas where the majority of students already possessed the skills included: knows different colors and shapes, likes to listen to stories, and willingness to separate from parents.

PARENTS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILDREN WERE EAGER TO ATTEND SCHOOL BY THE COMPLETION OF THE JUMP START PROGRAM. n=27



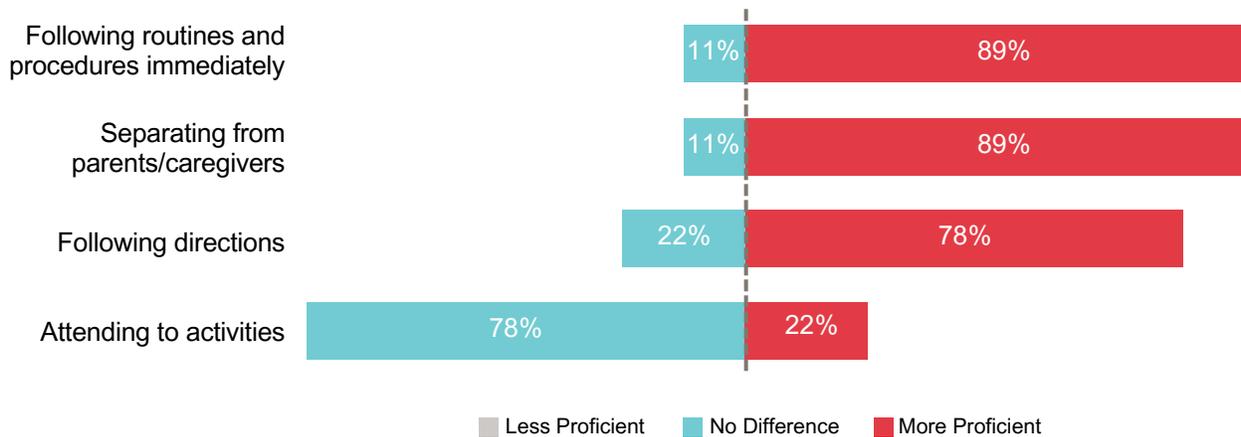
What did teachers report about students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. In the fall of 2024, all kindergarten teachers who had 2024 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 nine teachers that were surveyed, six taught Jump Start to Kindergarten this year.

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. No teachers reported that students that attended the program were less proficient than their peers. Attending to activities had the lowest percent of more proficiency (22%).

JUMP START STUDENTS WERE RATED MORE OR EQUALLY PROFICIENT IN ALL AREAS.

89% of teachers rated the students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten program as more proficient than their peers who did not attend the program in the areas of separating from parents/caregivers and following routines and procedures immediately. n=9



Special Projects: Family Engagement





2023-2024

PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED



Millard Public Schools

MPS expanded PreK-5th grade students' access to literacy materials by providing literacy modeling and 100 books to families enrolled in its home visiting program and offering literacy activities and open library times during the summer. Learning Community funds supported an expansion of the district's Jump Start to Kindergarten program, which added summer experiences for students entering kindergarten in August of 2024.



Ralston Public Schools

Learning Community funds enabled the district to purchase bilingual ReadShare Kits for its elementary schools. The take-home kits, intended for K-3rd grade students, encouraged students and their families to engage in literacy experiences together at home. Kits provided English and Spanish copies of nonfiction books that covered a variety of topics. Each of the district's six elementary schools received kits with nonfiction book sets, at-home activity sheets, and materials to support the activities. The program impacted approximately 350 students from 115 families.



Westside Community Schools

The district adopted and implemented ParentPowered, a family engagement curriculum and digital platform. Learning Community funds purchased the program, which connected families with evidence strategies and information for supporting their students. Funds also provided a stipend for the Learning Liaison, who coordinated and evaluated school-based family learning and engagement at four elementary schools. The district hosted five virtual kick-off events, one for each elementary school.



4

Douglas County West Community Schools

DC West designed and implemented a program to encourage father-figure involvement for PK-5th grade students. Funds from the Learning Community paid for two certificated staff stipends to research best practices and implement the program, as well as materials and resources to support programming.

5

Child Saving Institute

CSI provided training for early childhood teachers and parents. Participants learned about children's social-emotional development, including the role of adult-child connection in healthy development. Participants also received materials and strategies to use when teaching young children social-emotional skills like self-regulation.

6

Collective for Youth

Learning Community funds helped Collective for Youth provide experiences to 354 Omaha Public Schools children in summer 2024. Children learned about caring for school gardens and nutrition with Big Garden, environmental science with Keep Omaha Beautiful, gross motor skills development via sports with Future Fitness and Hoopin' Homies, and social skills through role play with RESPECT.

7

Metropolitan Community College

MCC launched a pilot program that provided a pathway for educators to earn the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and college credit toward an AA degree as an Early Childhood Educator. The program targeted 21 early childhood educators from diverse backgrounds. Over two months, participants engaged in 20 workshops, received mentorship, and completed hands-on training aligned with CDA standards. By the end of the pilot, two participants had successfully completed the CDA training and were scheduled for their exam and Professional Development Specialist visit.



OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION: SCHOOL DISTRICT

METHOD. Parents from Westside Community Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Millard Public Schools (n=195) provided feedback about the special projects they participated in at their districts. Parents were asked to respond to multiple questions using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Results for one district were not reported due to the number of responses with agreement ratings (n=1).

RESULTS. Families typically reported satisfaction with their school districts' Learning Community-funded projects. Respondents indicated they had more access to resources and/or staff support as a result of engaging with the activities and/or communication implemented by the districts.

DISTRICT A PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS. n=92

I feel like I have one or more people I could ask for assistance and/or resources if needed.



I feel more connected to the school community.



I feel more prepared for my child(ren) to start school in the fall.



The activities increased the number of books and/or literacy activities in our home.



DISTRICT B PARENTS REPORTED HIGH SATISFACTION WITH MATERIAL DELIVERY AND RESOURCES. n=111

I found the frequency of the material delivery to be satisfactory.



I feel like I have more resources and tools to engage with my child's education.



Information from ParentPowered was helpful and engaging.



I feel more prepared for my child(ren) to start school in the fall.



I feel more connected to the school community.



PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION: COMMUNITY PARTNER TRAININGS

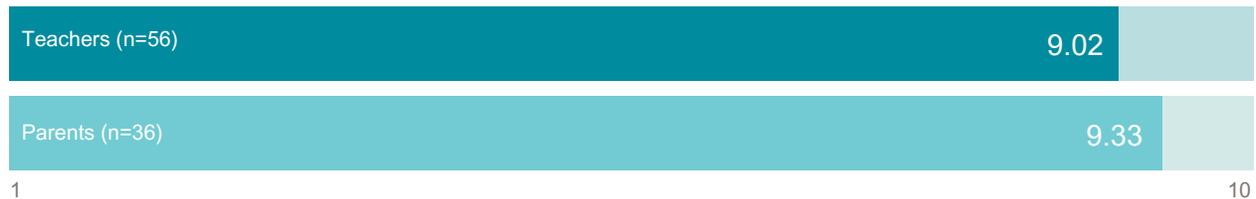
METHOD. Participants at the community partner trainings completed a post-training survey. Participants were asked to rate their confidence in using the training materials (1=low confidence, 10=high confidence) and to respond to multiple questions using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

RESULTS. Class participants (n=97), on average, reported high levels of confidence in using the materials provided at the trainings. Both teachers (n=60) and parents (n=37) indicated that they learned new strategies to help children calm down and left their training with more knowledge and tools to support children’s social-emotional development.

PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HIGH CONFIDENCE IN USING MATERIALS.

Parent and teacher participants gained knowledge and skills as a result of trainings. n=97

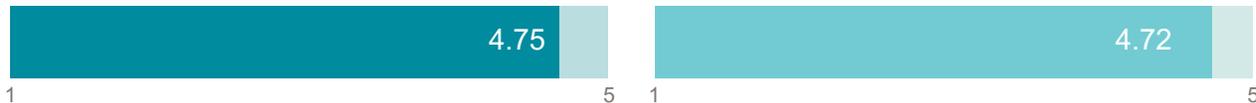
Confidence using the materials provided at the training.



Adult-child connection is an important component for healthy social-emotional development.



I learned at least one strategy that I will use to help children calm down when they are upset.



I have more knowledge and tools to support children’s social-emotional development.



As a result of this training, I can think of strategies that will help children learn social-emotional skills.



Learning Community Annual Report Summary

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

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- 186 Pre-K students were enrolled across 6 sites.
- The majority represent diverse racial and ethnic populations (n=163).
- 40% were identified for special education services.
- Classroom quality was above the thresholds of quality and in the top 10% of Head Start programs.
- Over half of the students scored at the national average or above for social-emotional skills by spring. Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills than boys.
- Significant improvements from fall to spring occurred for vocabulary, school readiness, and social-emotional skills. Vocabulary scores indicated a need for further improvement.

PARENT UNIVERSITY

- 203 parents were enrolled. Most participants represented low-income (91% had children who were eligible for free and reduced lunch) & culturally diverse populations. Families reported 12 different primary languages, and the most common primary language was Spanish (35%).
- Enrolled parents had 545 children, 320 of which were birth to age 8.
- 47% of parents completed high school, and 86% of families received additional government assistance.
- Parents participated in 56 courses/activities, which focused on parenting, literacy, life skills, and school success. The completion rate for activities with multiple sessions was 94%.
- 47% of parents completing the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) assessment met the overall goal for parent-child interactions, and 74% met the goal for Building Relationships.
- Participants noted multiple benefits to Parent University participation including access to resources, reduced stress, and relationships with Educational Navigators.
- Approximately half of the children of enrolled parents demonstrated language skills in the average range.
- The majority of children were in or above the average range across all social-emotional areas. Self-control was an area of strength.

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA: FAMILY LEARNING

FAMILY LEARNING

- 339 parents were enrolled, and 270 participants needed child care at LCCSO.
- 830 total children supported, 531 of which were ages birth to 5.
- 64% reported earning less than \$35,000 annually, and 40% had a high school diploma.
- Families participated in 1851 personal visits and 884 parent/child interactions with Educational Navigators during the 2023-2024 reporting period.
- Workforce Development participants earned 215 certificates.
- 36 participants were enrolled in GED classes, with four participants earning their GED.
- 71% of participants in cohort 1 and 53% in cohort 2 made measurable GED gains.
- Participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in English listening skills.

PARENTING OUTCOMES

- Most parents met the program goals in 2 out of 4 areas on the parenting measure. Building Relationships was an area of strength.
- Parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement.
- The social assistance navigator (SAN) assisted families with 211 simple referrals and 13 complex referrals. 96% of parents with simple referrals were successfully discharged.
- 62% of parents with complex referrals were successfully discharged. Parents who engaged with the SAN for complex case, on average, reported a decrease of stress from 9.2 to 3.2 on a 10-point scale.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- 53% of school-age students with parents attending the program were absent from school fewer than 10 days. K-5 students, on average, missed 10.46 school days in 2023-2024.
- 96% of students scored in the average range for executive functioning.
- Students scored in the average range for the Math Concepts & Application and Passage Comprehension portions of the Batería.
- Over 70% of students scored in the average range on NWEA-MAP mathematics assessment.

SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

- Approximately 335 teachers, and 7,702 students were served across elementary buildings in 6 districts.
- 52% of teachers had at least 10 years of experience; 17% were in their first 3 years.
- 80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received.
- Teachers reported that they had positive relationships with coaches and that building administrators supported the Instructional Coaching program.
- 56% of teachers indicated that lesson modeling was an extremely useful strategy for instructional coaching.

JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN

- 102 kindergarten-eligible students enrolled in Jump Start across 5 schools in 1 district.
- 69% represented low-income households, and 23% were English Language Learners.
- Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the program. Program staff and communication were strengths.
- Students' executive functioning skills improved significantly from pre to post, with the effect size suggesting moderate meaningful change.
- Kindergarten teachers consistently reported Jump Start students were more proficient than their peers in skills such as following routines and procedures immediately and separating from parents/caregivers.

EXTENDED LEARNING

- 248 students were enrolled in Extended Learning.
- 3 districts and 1 community agency participated.
- Parents' overall satisfaction with the program was 4.62 on a 5-point scale. Parents reported satisfaction with staff (4.90) and program hours (4.79), and they reported that their children enjoyed attending (4.79).
- District data indicated growth for students participating in Extended Learning.
- Some parents wanted more communication on student progress and upcoming topics.

References & Appendix

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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 measure school readiness concepts including colors, letters, shapes and concepts and numbers.
Bateria IV Woodcock-Muñoz	Woodcock, Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank (2017)	The Bateria IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measures cognitive, achievement and oral language abilities.
CASAS®		The CASAS® provides a measure of a participant's English language skills in reading and listening.
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.
Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)	Comfort & Gordon (2008)	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.
Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS)	Carlson, S.M. & Zelazo, P. (2014)	The MEFS is an digital assessment measuring student's broad executive function skills.
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (5th Ed.)	Dunn, D. M. (2019). Pearson	A measure of receptive vocabulary.

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MOEC Collective Impact Plan (CIP) and Superintendent Attendance Plan

Below are brief descriptions of the files associated with the MOEC Collective Impact Plan (CIP) and the Superintendent Attendance Plan connected to the Community Achievement Plan.

MOEC Collective Impact Plan (CIP) Overview

The vision of MOEC is that “all students in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area receive an exceptional education that provides multiple pathways into meaningful careers and a high quality of life in the region and beyond.” MOEC leaders advance this vision by:

- Setting transformational goals for student success
- Launching initiatives that dramatically improve student outcomes
- Strengthening connections between education systems and communities

For the seventh year, representatives from each district and higher education institution collaborated to collect data related to the established CIP metrics. MOEC teams have worked to refine data materials to clearly show outcomes, support decision-making, and inform the development of priorities, initiatives, and programs. This document summarizes the key resources that support MOEC’s work in tracking progress toward its four long-term goals:

- Success in kindergarten and the primary grades
- High school students prepared for postsecondary and career success
- Smooth transitions to postsecondary education
- Completion of postsecondary experiences

[MOEC Goals and Metrics](#)

The **MOEC Data Snapshots** offer a comprehensive, multi-year summary of all metric data collected by MOEC’s twelve school districts and three partner institutions of higher education. The document includes:

- Full datasets across multiple school years
- A multicolored, easy-to-read format with three data columns for each year
- Metrics aligned to MOEC’s long-term student success goals

[MOEC Data Snapshot 2022.pdf](#)

[MOEC Data Snapshot 2023.pdf](#)

[MOEC Data Snapshot 2024.pdf](#)

The **MOEC Data Dashboards** are a streamlined version of the full dataset designed to support quick identification of trends. It helps leaders observe patterns across districts and years. A note included in the dashboard acknowledges that data from 2019–20 and 2020–21 is incomplete due to the pandemic.

[MOEC Data Dashboard 2022.pdf](#)

[MOEC Data Dashboard 2023.pdf](#)

[MOEC Data Dashboard 2024.pdf](#)

Superintendent Attendance Plan Overview

The Superintendent Attendance Plan (SAP) is a statutory requirement under Nebraska §79-2121 and represents a coordinated, community-wide approach to reducing absenteeism, improving educational outcomes, and preventing unnecessary involvement with the juvenile justice system. This section provides an overview and general description of the core SAP documents, annual meetings, and supporting initiatives referenced in the reports submitted to the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

[Superintendents Attendance Plan 2023](#)

Purpose of the Superintendent Attendance Plan

The SAP integrates district-, county-, and community-level strategies to improve student attendance across eleven Learning Community school districts. The plan emphasizes:

- Prevention and early intervention;
- Consistent documentation and aligned referral processes;
- Cross-agency collaboration;
- Supports for families to maintain regular school attendance.

Superintendents' Attendance Plan (Annual Report)

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan (SAP) serves as the annual report submitted to the Learning Community, providing a comprehensive summary of district activities, required meetings, referral processes, chronic absenteeism trends, community partnerships, and collaborative initiatives. The report also documents district compliance with Nebraska statute, outlines persistent challenges, and highlights progress made through aligned, evidence-based strategies. As part of the SAP, MOEC also facilitates the four required annual meetings—District Representatives, County Officials, and Community Organizations—each designed to strengthen communication, refine processes, and improve coordinated responses to attendance concerns. Agendas and meeting summaries capture key discussion points, shared data, identified needs, and next steps for advancing systemwide attendance efforts.

In addition to the SAP requirements, MOEC leads and supports several attendance-focused initiatives that complement and expand this work. These include the Community-Based Attendance Coalition (CBAC), a long-standing partnership among schools and agencies aimed at removing barriers to regular attendance; the Greater Omaha Chamber–MOEC collaboration, which engages business and community partners in attendance messaging and support; and the NDE/MOEC/Attendance Works Attendance Improvement Cohort, a multi-year grant-funded effort strengthening Tier I–III attendance systems and reducing chronic absenteeism across 33 participating schools. Together, these initiatives provide critical context and further demonstrate the metro area's broad, sustained commitment to improving attendance through coordinated community action.

[Superintendents Attendance Plan Report 2024](#)

[Superintendents Attendance Plan Report 2025](#)



GOALS & METRICS

1. Students and families are engaged in high-quality early childhood experiences so they are successful in the primary grades.

- 1.1 Increase #/% of children enrolling in school-based Pre-K or kindergarten who are at age-appropriate developmental milestones or had been enrolled in a high-quality early childhood program.
- 1.2 Increase # of early childhood teachers who are properly credentialed.
- 1.3 Increase #/% of children entering kindergarten who meet the state-approved threshold for a student to be progressing toward future reading success.
- 1.4 Increase #/% of students who meet expectations for proficiency in literacy by the end of 3rd grade.

2. Students complete P-12 education and are prepared to successfully engage in a career pathway.

- 2.1 Increase #/% of students who meet expectations for proficiency in literacy (ELA) and math by the end of 8th and 11th grade.
- 2.2 Increase #/% of students who graduate from high school having successfully completed four years of math.
- 2.3 Increase #/% of high school freshmen who are on track to graduate by the end of 9th grade.
- 2.4 Decrease #/% of students who miss 10% or more days of school per year.
- 2.5 Increase #/% of students enrolled in postsecondary education within a year of high school graduation who are academically prepared to be successful according to the postsecondary institutions' established standards.
- 2.6 Increase #/% of teachers/instructors approved to teach AP, IB, dual enrollment, and industry-recognized credential courses.
- 2.7 Increase #/% of students who complete at least one dual enrollment, AP, IB or college-level course prior to high school graduation before transition to a career, military or higher education.

3. Students complete postsecondary experiences prepared for career success.

- 3.1 Increase #/% of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions within a year of high school graduation.
- 3.2 Increase #/% of students who successfully complete math and English program/degree requirements by the end of the first year of postsecondary education.
- 3.3 Increase #/% of recent high school graduates who persist from first term to second term in postsecondary education.
- 3.4 Increase #/% of degree/certificate-seeking students who graduate within 150% of expected timeframe for selected program.

4. Business and community partners are engaged in collaborations with educators to create career and employment opportunities.

- 4.1 Decrease # of unfilled teaching positions.
- 4.2 Increase #/% of students who participate in high school pre-apprenticeship/internship experiences.
- 4.3 Increase # of students who complete an industry-recognized credential or degree by high school graduation before transition to a career, military or higher education.
- 4.4 Increase #/% of students who participate in postsecondary internships, apprenticeships, clinical practices, and other experiential training opportunities that lead to employment.

MOEC Data Snapshot

MOEC Metric		Total Percentage 2017-18	Average Percentage 2017-18	Range of Percentages 2017-18	Total Percentage 2018-19	Average Percentage 2018-19	Range of Percentages 2018-19	Total Percentage 2019-20	Average Percentage 2019-20	Range of Percentages 2019-20	Total Percentage 2020-21	Average Percentage 2020-21	Range of Percentages 2020-21	Total Percentage 2021-22	Average Percentage 2021-22	Range of Percentages 2021-22
1-2: Entering kindergarten students meeting the state-approved threshold for a student to be progressing toward future reading success, based on an approved assessment instrument		Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	64%	72%	49% to 86%	86%~	89%~	72% to 97%	61%	83%	11% to 99%
1-3: Teachers in MOEC Pre K - K classrooms with an endorsement in early childhood education		Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	72%	79%	57% to 100%	72%	81%	57% to 100%	76%	78%	60% to 100%	70%	77%	50% to 100%
2-1A: Students who are meeting expectations for proficiency in literacy by the end of 3rd grade		51%	59%	34% to 84%	55%	62%	37% to 87%	#	#	#	49%*	56%*	21% to 90%*			
2-1B: Students who are meeting expectations for proficiency in math by the end of 8th grade		49%	57%	27% to 88%	48%	59%	22% to 90%	#	#	#	45%*	54%*	20% to 81%*			
2-1Ca: Students who demonstrate proficiency in literacy by the end of 11th grade		51%	62%	29% to 85%	51%	60%	29% to 84%	#	#	#	46%	53%	21% to 78%			
2-1Cb: Students who demonstrate proficiency in mathematics by the end of 11th grade		48%	60%	22% to 85%	50%	60%	26% to 81%	#	#	#	42%	48%	9% to 79%			
2-2: Students who graduate from high school having successfully completed four years of math		54%	62%	19% to 87%	53%	61%	19% to 85%	50%	58%	15% to 85%	51%	57%	10% to 87%			
2-3: High school freshmen who are on track to graduate by the end of 9th grade		87%	93%	78% to 99%	89%	93%	81% to 99%	87%	92%	77% to 99%	79%	88%	63% to 100%			
2-4: Students who complete at least one dual enrollment, AP, IB, or college level course prior to high school graduation		64%	68%	51% to 90%	67%	72%	56% to 92%	74%	72%	57% to 86%	66%	71%	50% to 88%			
2-5: Students who meet college and career readiness standards by end of 12th grade as measured by the ACT graduate report^^		24%	29%	9% to 65%	21%	26%	4% to 53%	19%	23%	4% to 45%	17%	23%	.3% to 48%			
2-6: Number of students who missed 10% or more days of school during the year	Kindergarten	12%	6%	1.4% to 21.8%	11%	7%	0% to 20%	13%	10%	2% to 22%	21%	13%	1% to 36%			
	1st Grade	10%	6%	1.9% to 18.3%	10%	7%	0.6% to 18%	11%	8%	2% to 17%	18%	12%	1% to 33%			
	2nd Grade	10%	5%	1.1% to 18.1%	9%	5%	0.2% to 17%	9%	7%	2% to 16%	17%	12%	2% to 29%			
	3rd Grade	9%	5%	1.4% to 16.8%	9%	6%	0.4% to 16%	9%	7%	1% to 21%	17%	12%	1% to 29%			
	4th Grade	10%	6%	0.8% to 17.9%	9%	6%	0.3% to 16%	9%	7%	0% to 16%	18%	15%	1% to 39%			
	5th Grade	10%	6%	0.5% to 18.5%	10%	6%	0.2% to 18%	10%	8%	3% to 16%	18%	13%	2% to 29%			
	6th Grade	13%	8%	2.3% to 24.0%	12%	7%	0.9% to 22%	13%	10%	4% to 22%	22%	16%	4% to 36%			
	7th Grade	17%	10%	2.0% to 29.8%	16%	11%	0.5% to 28%	16%	13%	5% to 25%	26%	18%	6% to 41%			
	8th Grade	19%	13%	3.8% to 31.6%	19%	13%	0.2% to 30%	19%	15%	6% to 32%	28%	21%	7% to 42%			
	9th Grade	22%	15%	3.0% to 39.7%	21%	14%	0.5% to 36%	22%	17%	6% to 35%	31%	22%	8% to 50%			
	10th Grade	25%	18%	5.2% to 41.4%	25%	17%	1% to 41%	25%	19%	9% to 41%	34%	24%	7% to 53%			
	11th Grade	30%	21%	7.2% to 49.0%	30%	22%	3% to 47%	30%	24%	9% to 47%	38%	28%	10% to 56%			
	12th Grade	29%	22%	9.5% to 43.0%	33%	22%	2% to 47%	31%	25%	10% to 43%	38%	27%	10% to 53%			
Total K - 12th Grade	19%	15%	4.0% to 27.9%	19%	12%	0.8% to 27%	17%~	13%~	5% to 26%~	30%	29%	5% to 64%				

MOEC Metric	Total Percentage 2017-18	Average Percentage 2017-18	Range of Percentages 2017-18	Total Percentage 2018-19	Average Percentage 2018-19	Range of Percentages 2018-19	Total Percentage 2019-20	Average Percentage 2019-20	Range of Percentages 2019-20	Total Percentage 2020-21	Average Percentage 2020-21	Range of Percentages 2020-21	Total Percentage 2021-22	Average Percentage 2021-22	Range of Percentages 2021-22
2-7: Students who participate in at least one school activity in high school	66%***	74%***	49.3% to 93.1%***	56%***	73%***	51% to 94%***	50%***	70%***	25% to 92%***	53%***	63%***	35% to 92%***			
2-8A: Graduates who complete a 4-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^	Class of 2011 31%	Class of 2011 37%	Class of 2011 14.2% to 54.0%	Class of 2012 33%	Class of 2012 37%	Class of 2012 14% to 60%	Class of 2013 31%	Class of 2013 38%	Class of 2013 16% to 61%	Class of 2014 33%	Class of 2014 41%	Class of 2014 13% to 68%	Class of 2015 %	Class of 2015 %	Class of 2015 % to %
2-8B: Graduates who complete a 2-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^	Class of 2014 4%	Class of 2014 6%	Class of 2014 1.7% to 24.2%	Class of 2015 4%	Class of 2015 5%	Class of 2015 3% to 10%	Class of 2016 4%	Class of 2016 5%	Class of 2016 1% to 23%	Class of 2017 6%	Class of 2017 11%	Class of 2017 2% to 75%	Class of 2018 %	Class of 2018 %	Class of 2018 % to %
3-1A: HS Grads exiting with completed FAFSA	Class of 2018 56.5%	Class of 2018 57.5%	Class of 2018 46.1% to 69.9%	Class of 2019 53.7%	Class of 2019 57.3%	Class of 2019 46.1% to 66.2%	Class of 2020 49.6%	Class of 2020 54.4%	Class of 2020 41.7% to 61.7%	Class of 2021 43.8%	Class of 2021 51.5%	Class of 2021 30.9% to 65.7%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
3-1B: HS Grads entering MOEC postsecondary with completed FAFSA	Class of 2018 87.6%	Class of 2018 84.2%	Class of 2018 50.0% to 100%	Class of 2019 88.0%	Class of 2019 83.4%	Class of 2019 50.0% to 97.0%	Class of 2020 86.9%	Class of 2020 84.9%	Class of 2020 72.5% to 100%	Class of 2021 84.0%	Class of 2021 81.3%	Class of 2021 72.5% to 90.8%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
3-2: HS Grads enrolling in any postsecondary the following year ^	Class of 2018 69%	Class of 2018 73%	Class of 2018 52% to 95%	Class of 2019 68%	Class of 2019 70%	Class of 2019 52% to 84%	Class of 2020 67%	Class of 2020 69%	Class of 2020 49% to 95%	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 % to %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
3-3A: HS Grads enrolling in MOEC postsecondary academically prepared for math	Class of 2018 47.7%	Class of 2018 58.5%	Class of 2018 30.8% to 100%	Class of 2019 52.0%	Class of 2019 60.8%	Class of 2019 29.7% to 78.6%	Class of 2020 51.5%	Class of 2020 59.4%	Class of 2020 28.4% to 81.8%	Class of 2021 41.6%	Class of 2021 47.8%	Class of 2021 20.8% to 73.3%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
3-3B: HS Grads enrolling in MOEC postsecondary academically prepared for English	Class of 2018 57.8%	Class of 2018 64.1%	Class of 2018 43.1% to 81.4%	Class of 2019 58.8%	Class of 2019 71.0%	Class of 2019 36.7% to 100%	Class of 2020 54.2%	Class of 2020 59.5%	Class of 2020 33.6% to 86.9%	Class of 2021 45.5%	Class of 2021 52.5%	Class of 2021 22.7% to 80.8%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
3-4: HS Grads enrolling in MOEC postsecondary with college credits	Class of 2018 41.4%	Class of 2018 47.5%	Class of 2018 25.9% to 80.0%	Class of 2019 46.1%	Class of 2019 55.7%	Class of 2019 36.0% to 100%	Class of 2020 45.0%	Class of 2020 51.7%	Class of 2020 35.2% to 82.5%	Class of 2021 46.4%	Class of 2021 52.8%	Class of 2021 33.3% to 91.7%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
4-1A: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who complete math program requirements by end of year 1	Class of 2017 30.4%	Class of 2017 26.3%	Class of 2017 0.0% to 52.6%	Class of 2018 27.9%	Class of 2018 32.3%	Class of 2018 7.4% to 66.7%	Class of 2019 37.5%	Class of 2019 43.4%	Class of 2019 24.5% to 100%	Class of 2020 37.0%	Class of 2020 43.0%	Class of 2020 28.2% to 69.4%	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 % to %
4-1B: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who complete English program requirements by end of year 1	Class of 2017 52.0%	Class of 2017 54.1%	Class of 2017 28.6% to 81.1%	Class of 2018 61.4%	Class of 2018 60.6%	Class of 2018 50.0% to 83.3%	Class of 2019 61.6%	Class of 2019 70.1%	Class of 2019 52.1% to 100%	Class of 2020 60.2%	Class of 2020 63.5%	Class of 2020 50.0% to 90.0%	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 % to %
4-2: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who persist from term 1 to term 2	Class of 2017 88.0%	Class of 2017 87.4%	Class of 2017 72.3% to 94.6%	Class of 2018 85.9%	Class of 2018 87.1%	Class of 2018 72.4% to 100%	Class of 2019 87.9%	Class of 2019 89.9%	Class of 2019 81.4% to 100%	Class of 2020 80.4%	Class of 2020 80.5%	Class of 2020 66.7% to 89.0%	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 % to %
4-3: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who declare major within 25% of program time	Class of 2017 87.5%	Class of 2017 88.0%	Class of 2017 79.0% to 100%	Class of 2018 85.1%	Class of 2018 86.5%	Class of 2018 73.6% to 100%	Class of 2019 89.9%	Class of 2019 91.7%	Class of 2019 83.9% to 100%	Class of 2020 88.2%	Class of 2020 89.8%	Class of 2020 84.4% to 100%	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 %	Class of 2021 % to %

Updated 03.31.22

**HS Grads = MOEC School Districts
Postsecondary = IWCC, MCC & UNO**

^ Data from National Student Clearinghouse
^^ Nebraska mandates all juniors take the ACT; Iowa does not.

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** CB Did Not Report
*** Bellevue & OPS Did Not Report

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~ Total number of students in Kindergarten who took the assessment. Not all students took the assessment due to COVID Learning protocols and/or parents opting out.
* NSCAS General Summative Tests were replaced with the NSCAS Phase I Pilot this year.
***Bellevue Did Not Report

[2019-20 Data FAQ](#)
[2019-20 Data Narrative](#)

[2020-21 Data Narrative](#)

MOEC Metric		Total Percentage 2017-18	Average Percentage 2017-18	Range of Percentages 2017-18	Total Percentage 2018-19	Average Percentage 2018-19	Range of Percentages 2018-19	Total Percentage 2019-20	Average Percentage 2019-20	Range of Percentages 2019-20	Total Percentage 2020-21	Average Percentage 2020-21	Range of Percentages 2020-21	Total Percentage 2021-22	Average Percentage 2021-22	Range of Percentages 2021-22	Total Percentage 2022-23	Average Percentage 2022-23	Range of Percentages 2022-23
1-2: Entering kindergarten students meeting the state-approved threshold for a student to be progressing toward future reading success, based on an approved assessment instrument		Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	64%	72%	49% to 86%	86%~	89%~	72% to 97%	61%	83%	11% to 99%	49%	57%	8% to 97%
1-3: Teachers in MOEC Pre K - K classrooms with an endorsement in early childhood education		Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	72%	79%	57% to 100%	72%	81%	57% to 100%	76%	78%	60% to 100%	70%	77%	50% to 100%	67%	63%	50% to 98%
2-1A: Students who are meeting expectations for proficiency in literacy by the end of 3rd grade		51%	59%	34% to 84%	55%	62%	37% to 87%	#	#	#	49%*	56%*	21% to 90%*	49%	52%	30% to 87%			
2-1B: Students who are meeting expectations for proficiency in math by the end of 8th grade		49%	57%	27% to 88%	48%	59%	22% to 90%	#	#	#	45%*	54%*	20% to 81%*	41%	47%	16% to 90%			
2-1Ca: Students who demonstrate proficiency in literacy by the end of 11th grade		51%	62%	29% to 85%	51%	60%	29% to 84%	#	#	#	46%	53%	21% to 78%	45%	46%	22% to 82%			
2-1Cb: Students who demonstrate proficiency in mathematics by the end of 11th grade		48%	60%	22% to 85%	50%	60%	26% to 81%	#	#	#	42%	48%	9% to 79%	41%	42%	10% to 77%			
2-2: Students who graduate from high school having successfully completed four years of math		54%	62%	19% to 87%	53%	61%	19% to 85%	50%	58%	15% to 85%	51%	57%	10% to 87%	49%	55%	17% to 86%			
2-3: High school freshmen who are on track to graduate by the end of 9th grade		87%	93%	78% to 99%	89%	93%	81% to 99%	87%	92%	77% to 99%	79%	88%	63% to 100%	85%	90%	74% to 99%			
2-4: Students who complete at least one dual enrollment, AP, IB, or college level course prior to high school graduation		64%	68%	51% to 90%	67%	72%	56% to 92%	74%	72%	57% to 86%	66%	71%	50% to 88%	68%	76%	58% to 88%			
2-5: Students who meet college and career readiness standards by end of 12th grade as measured by the ACT graduate report^^		24%	29%	9% to 65%	21%	26%	4% to 53%	19%	23%	4% to 45%	17%	23%	.3% to 48%	20%	18%	4% to 84%			
2-6: Number of students who missed 10% or more days of school during the year	Kindergarten	12%	6%	1.4% to 21.8%	11%	7%	0% to 20%	13%	10%	2% to 22%	21%	13%	1% to 36%	23%	18%	8% to 36%			
	1st Grade	10%	6%	1.9% to 18.3%	10%	7%	0.6% to 18%	11%	8%	2% to 17%	18%	12%	1% to 33%	21%	17%	7% to 32%			
	2nd Grade	10%	5%	1.1% to 18.1%	9%	5%	0.2% to 17%	9%	7%	2% to 16%	17%	12%	2% to 29%	19%	15%	6% to 30%			
	3rd Grade	9%	5%	1.4% to 16.8%	9%	6%	0.4% to 16%	9%	7%	1% to 21%	17%	12%	1% to 29%	18%	15%	7% to 27%			
	4th Grade	10%	6%	0.8% to 17.9%	9%	6%	0.3% to 16%	9%	7%	0% to 16%	18%	15%	1% to 39%	18%	14%	5% to 27%			
	5th Grade	10%	6%	0.5% to 18.5%	10%	6%	0.2% to 18%	10%	8%	3% to 16%	18%	13%	2% to 29%	20%	16%	7% to 30%			
	6th Grade	13%	8%	2.3% to 24.0%	12%	7%	0.9% to 22%	13%	10%	4% to 22%	22%	16%	4% to 36%	24%	17%	10% to 37%			
	7th Grade	17%	10%	2.0% to 29.8%	16%	11%	0.5% to 28%	16%	13%	5% to 25%	26%	18%	6% to 41%	29%	22%	7% to 44%			
	8th Grade	19%	13%	3.8% to 31.6%	19%	13%	0.2% to 30%	19%	15%	6% to 32%	28%	21%	7% to 42%	31%	22%	9% to 46%			
	9th Grade	22%	15%	3.0% to 39.7%	21%	14%	0.5% to 36%	22%	17%	6% to 35%	31%	22%	8% to 50%	34%	26%	17% to 55%			
	10th Grade	25%	18%	5.2% to 41.4%	25%	17%	1% to 41%	25%	19%	9% to 41%	34%	24%	7% to 53%	38%	28%	14% to 58%			
	11th Grade	30%	21%	7.2% to 49.0%	30%	22%	3% to 47%	30%	24%	9% to 47%	38%	28%	10% to 56%	42%	33%	16% to 64%			
	12th Grade	29%	22%	9.5% to 43.0%	33%	22%	2% to 47%	31%	25%	10% to 43%	38%	27%	10% to 53%	44%	33%	23% to 64%			
Total K - 12th Grade	19%	15%	4.0% to 27.9%	19%	12%	0.8% to 27%	17%~	13%~	5% to 26%~	30%	29%	5% to 64%	28%	22%	11% to 42%				
2-7: Students who participate in at least one school activity in high school		66%***	74%***	49.3% to 93.1%***	56%***	73%***	51% to 94%***	50%***	70%***	25% to 92%***	53%***	63%***	35% to 92%***	60%	67%	44% to 94%			
2-8A: Graduates who complete a 4-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^		Class of 2011 31%	Class of 2011 37%	Class of 2011 14.2% to 54.0%	Class of 2012 33%	Class of 2012 37%	Class of 2012 14% to 60%	Class of 2013 31%	Class of 2013 38%	Class of 2013 16% to 61%	Class of 2014 33%	Class of 2014 41%	Class of 2014 13% to 68%	Class of 2015 35%	Class of 2015 40%	Class of 2015 15% to 66%	Class of 2016 %	Class of 2016 %	Class of 2016 % to %
2-8B: Graduates who complete a 2-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^		Class of 2014 4%	Class of 2014 6%	Class of 2014 1.7% to 24.2%	Class of 2015 4%	Class of 2015 5%	Class of 2015 3% to 10%	Class of 2016 4%	Class of 2016 5%	Class of 2016 1% to 23%	Class of 2017 6%	Class of 2017 11%	Class of 2017 2% to 75%	Class of 2018 5%	Class of 2018 6%	Class of 2018 3% to 16%	Class of 2019 %	Class of 2019 %	Class of 2019 % to %

MOEC Metric	Total Percentage 2017-18	Average Percentage 2017-18	Range of Percentages 2017-18	Total Percentage 2018-19	Average Percentage 2018-19	Range of Percentages 2018-19	Total Percentage 2019-20	Average Percentage 2019-20	Range of Percentages 2019-20	Total Percentage 2020-21	Average Percentage 2020-21	Range of Percentages 2020-21	Total Percentage 2021-22	Average Percentage 2021-22	Range of Percentages 2021-22	Total Percentage 2022-23	Average Percentage 2022-23	Range of Percentages 2022-23
3-1A: HS Grads exiting with completed FAFSA	Class of 2018 56.5%	Class of 2018 57.5%	Class of 2018 46.1% to 69.9%	Class of 2019 53.7%	Class of 2019 57.3%	Class of 2019 46.1% to 66.2%	Class of 2020 49.6%	Class of 2020 54.4%	Class of 2020 41.7% to 61.7%	Class of 2021 43.8%	Class of 2021 51.5%	Class of 2021 30.9% to 65.7%	Class of 2022 45.4%	Class of 2022 52.2%	Class of 2022 33.6% to 62.1 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3-1B: HS Grads entering MOEC postsecondary with completed FAFSA	Class of 2018 87.6%	Class of 2018 84.2%	Class of 2018 50.0% to 100%	Class of 2019 88.0%	Class of 2019 83.4%	Class of 2019 50.0% to 97.0%	Class of 2020 86.9%	Class of 2020 84.9%	Class of 2020 72.5% to 100%	Class of 2021 84.0%	Class of 2021 81.3%	Class of 2021 72.5% to 90.8%	Class of 2022 84.7%	Class of 2022 80.3%	Class of 2022 61.5% to 94.7%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3-2: HS Grads enrolling in any postsecondary the following year ^	Class of 2018 69%	Class of 2018 73%	Class of 2018 52% to 95%	Class of 2019 68%	Class of 2019 70%	Class of 2019 52% to 84%	Class of 2020 67%	Class of 2020 69%	Class of 2020 49% to 95%	Class of 2021 65%	Class of 2021 71%	Class of 2021 50% to 85%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3-3A: HS Grads enrolling in MOEC postsecondary academically prepared for math	Class of 2018 47.7%	Class of 2018 58.5%	Class of 2018 30.8% to 100%	Class of 2019 52.0%	Class of 2019 60.8%	Class of 2019 29.7% to 78.6%	Class of 2020 51.5%	Class of 2020 59.4%	Class of 2020 28.4% to 81.8%	Class of 2021 41.6%	Class of 2021 47.8%	Class of 2021 20.8% to 73.3%	Class of 2022 37.0%	Class of 2022 40.5%	Class of 2022 15.4% to 75.4%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3-3B: HS Grads enrolling in MOEC postsecondary academically prepared for English	Class of 2018 57.8%	Class of 2018 64.1%	Class of 2018 43.1% to 81.4%	Class of 2019 58.8%	Class of 2019 71.0%	Class of 2019 36.7% to 100%	Class of 2020 54.2%	Class of 2020 59.5%	Class of 2020 33.6% to 86.9%	Class of 2021 45.5%	Class of 2021 52.5%	Class of 2021 22.7% to 80.8%	Class of 2022 42.4%	Class of 2022 45.9%	Class of 2022 23.1% to 78.8%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3-4: HS Grads enrolling in MOEC postsecondary with college credits	Class of 2018 41.4%	Class of 2018 47.5%	Class of 2018 25.9% to 80.0%	Class of 2019 46.1%	Class of 2019 55.7%	Class of 2019 36.0% to 100%	Class of 2020 45.0%	Class of 2020 51.7%	Class of 2020 35.2% to 82.5%	Class of 2021 46.4%	Class of 2021 52.8%	Class of 2021 33.3% to 91.7%	Class of 2022 47.6%	Class of 2022 54.0%	Class of 2022 34.4% to 80.9%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
4-1A: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who complete math program requirements by end of year 1	Class of 2017 30.4%	Class of 2017 26.3%	Class of 2017 0.0% to 52.6%	Class of 2018 27.9%	Class of 2018 32.3%	Class of 2018 7.4% to 66.7%	Class of 2019 37.5%	Class of 2019 43.4%	Class of 2019 24.5% to 100%	Class of 2020 37.0%	Class of 2020 43.0%	Class of 2020 28.2 % to 69.4%	Class of 2021 35.6%	Class of 2021 33.8%	Class of 2021 21.3% to 65.4%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
4-1B: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who complete English program requirements by end of year 1	Class of 2017 52.0%	Class of 2017 54.1%	Class of 2017 28.6% to 81.1%	Class of 2018 61.4%	Class of 2018 60.6%	Class of 2018 50.0% to 83.3%	Class of 2019 61.6%	Class of 2019 70.1%	Class of 2019 52.1% to 100%	Class of 2020 60.2%	Class of 2020 63.5%	Class of 2020 50.0 % to 90.0%	Class of 2021 63.2%	Class of 2021 65.4%	Class of 2021 49.2% to 76.2%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
4-2: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who persist from term 1 to term 2	Class of 2017 88.0%	Class of 2017 87.4%	Class of 2017 72.3% to 94.6%	Class of 2018 85.9%	Class of 2018 87.1%	Class of 2018 72.4% to 100%	Class of 2019 87.9%	Class of 2019 89.9%	Class of 2019 81.4% to 100%	Class of 2020 80.4%	Class of 2020 80.5%	Class of 2020 66.7 % to 89.0%	Class of 2021 86.0%	Class of 2021 85.3%	Class of 2021 66.7% to 94.7%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %
4-3: HS Grads in MOEC postsecondary who declare major within 25% of program time	Class of 2017 87.5%	Class of 2017 88.0%	Class of 2017 79.0% to 100%	Class of 2018 85.1%	Class of 2018 86.5%	Class of 2018 73.6% to 100%	Class of 2019 89.9%	Class of 2019 91.7%	Class of 2019 83.9% to 100%	Class of 2020 88.2%	Class of 2020 89.8%	Class of 2020 84.4 % to 100%	Class of 2021 92.1%	Class of 2021 94.3%	Class of 2021 87.5% to 100%	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 %	Class of 2022 % to %

Updated 03.14.23

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^ Data from National Student Clearinghouse
^^ Nebraska mandates all juniors take the ACT; Iowa does not.

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NSCAS and Iowa Assessments were not administered; Department of Education waived.
~ Pandemic measures made attendance data collection varied from district to district.
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[2019-20 Data FAQ](#)
[2019-20 Data Narrative](#)

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***Bellevue Did Not Report
[2020-21 Data Narrative](#)

2.6C	Teachers/instructors approved to teach dual enrollment courses														9%	19%	3% to 31%			
2.6D	Teachers/instructors approved to teach industry-recognized credential courses	Not Collected 2022-23													Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected
2.7A	Students who complete at least one AP course prior to high school graduation														55%	52%	7% to 77%			
2.7B	Students who complete at least one IB course prior to high school graduation														15%	19%	1% to 36%			
2.7C	Students who complete at least one dual enrollment course prior to high school graduation														46%	49%	34% to 84%			
2.7D	Students who complete at least one college-level course prior to high school graduation	Not Collected 2022-23													Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected
3.1	Students enrolled in <u>any</u> postsecondary institution within a year of high school graduation^		Class of 2019 68%	Class of 2019 70%	Class of 2019 52% to 84%	Class of 2020 67%	Class of 2020 69%	Class of 2020 49% to 95%	Class of 2021 65%	Class of 2021 71%	Class of 2021 50% to 85%	Class of 2022 63%	Class of 2022 65%	Class of 2022 38% to 81%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %	Class of 2024 %	Class of 2024 %	Class of 2024 % to %
3.2A	Students who successfully complete math program/degree requirements by the end of the first year of postsecondary education		Class of 2018 27.9%	Class of 2018 32.3%	Class of 2018 7.4% to 66.7%	Class of 2019 37.5%	Class of 2019 43.4%	Class of 2019 24.5% to 100%	Class of 2020 37.0%	Class of 2020 43.0%	Class of 2020 28.2% to 69.4%	Class of 2021 35.6%	Class of 2021 33.8%	Class of 2021 21.3% to 65.4%	Class of 2022 39.6%	Class of 2022 41.0%	Class of 2022 26.2% to 53.8%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3.2B	Students who successfully complete English program/degree requirements by the end of the first year of postsecondary education		Class of 2018 61.4%	Class of 2018 60.6%	Class of 2018 50.0% to 83.3%	Class of 2019 61.6%	Class of 2019 70.1%	Class of 2019 52.1% to 100%	Class of 2020 60.2%	Class of 2020 63.5%	Class of 2020 50.0% to 90.0%	Class of 2021 63.2%	Class of 2021 65.4%	Class of 2021 49.2% to 76.2%	Class of 2022 663.7%	Class of 2022 65.3%	Class of 2022 26.7% to 81.8%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3.3	Recent high school graduates who persist from first term to second term in postsecondary education		Class of 2018 85.9%	Class of 2018 87.1%	Class of 2018 72.4% to 100%	Class of 2019 87.9%	Class of 2019 89.9%	Class of 2019 81.4% to 100%	Class of 2020 80.4%	Class of 2020 80.5%	Class of 2020 66.7% to 89.0%	Class of 2021 86.0%	Class of 2021 85.3%	Class of 2021 66.7% to 94.7%	Class of 2022 74.4%	Class of 2022 71.9%	Class of 2022 53.8% to 80.6%	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 %	Class of 2023 % to %
3.4A	Graduates who complete a 4-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^		Class of 2012 33%	Class of 2012 37%	Class of 2012 14% to 60%	Class of 2013 31%	Class of 2013 38%	Class of 2013 16% to 61%	Class of 2014 33%	Class of 2014 41%	Class of 2014 13% to 68%	Class of 2015 35%	Class of 2015 40%	Class of 2015 15% to 66%	Class of 2016 43%	Class of 2016 46%	Class of 2016 14% to 73 %	Class of 2017 %	Class of 2017 %	Class of 2017 % to %
3.4B	Graduates who complete a 2-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^		Class of 2015 4%	Class of 2015 5%	Class of 2015 3% to 10%	Class of 2016 4%	Class of 2016 5%	Class of 2016 1% to 23%	Class of 2017 6%	Class of 2017 11%	Class of 2017 2% to 75%	Class of 2018 5%	Class of 2018 6%	Class of 2018 3% to 16%	Class of 2019 7%	Class of 2019 8%	Class of 2019 3% to 19%	Class of 2020 %	Class of 2020 %	Class of 2020 % to %
4.1	Number of unfilled teaching positions														3%	1%	0% to 6%			
4.2	Students who participate in high school pre-apprenticeship/internship experiences	Not Collected 2022-23													Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected
4.3	Students who complete an industry-recognized credential or degree by high school graduation before transition to a career, military or higher education	Not Collected 2022-23													Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected
4.4	Students who participate in postsecondary internships, apprenticeships, clinical practices, and other experiential training opportunities that lead to employment	Not Collected 2022-23													Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected

Updated 04.04.24

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***Bellevue Did Not Report

[2020-21 Data Narrative](#)

MOEC Dashboard: Metric Trends

MOEC Metric		Total MOEC Percentage					Trend	Average MOEC Percentage					Trend
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
1.2 Entering kindergartners who met the threshold for reading success				64%	86%~	61%	X			72%	89%~	83%	X
1.3 Pre-K and kindergarten teachers with early childhood endorsement			72%	72%	76%	70%	—		79%	81%	78%	77%	—
2.1A Proficient in literacy by end of grade 3			51%	55%	#	49%*	—		59%	62%	#	56%*	—
2.1B Proficient in math by end of grade 8			49%	48%	#	45%*	—		57%	59%	#	54%*	—
2.1Ca Proficient in literacy by end of grade 11			51%	51%	#	46%	—		62%	60%	#	53%	—
2.1Cb Proficient in math by end of grade 11			48%	50%	#	42%	—		60%	60%	#	48%	—
2.2 HS grads with 4 years of math			54%	53%	50%	51%	—		62%	61%	58%	57%	—
2.3 Freshmen on track to graduate by end of grade 9			87%	89%	87%	79%	—		93%	93%	92%	88%	—
2.4 Completed at least one college-level course by end of grade 12			64%	67%	74%	66%	+		68%	72%	72%	71%	+
2.5 Met ACT college/career readiness standards by end of grade 12			24%	21%	19%	17%	—		29%	26%	23%	23%	—
2.6 K-12: Missed fewer than 10% of school days			81%	81%	83% [^]	70%	—		85%	88%	87% [^]	71%	—
2.7 Participated in at least one school activity by end of grade 12			66%	56%	50%	53%	—		74%	73%	70%	63%	—

MOEC Metric		Total Percentage					Trend	Average Percentage					Trend
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
3.1A HS grads completed FAFSA by end of grade 12		57%	54%	50%	44%		—	58%	57%	54%	52%		—
3.1B HS grads entering MOEC postsecondary with completed FAFSA		88%	88%	87%	84%		—	84%	83%	85%	81%		—
3.2 HS grads enrolled in <u>any</u> postsecondary** within 1 year		69%	68%	67%			—	73%	70%	69%			—
3.3A HS grads in MOEC postsecondary prepared for math		48%	52%	52%	42%		—	59%	61%	59%	48%		—
3.3B HS grads in MOEC postsecondary prepared for English		58%	59%	54%	46%		—	64%	71%	60%	53%		—
3.4 HS grads in MOEC postsecondary with college credit		41%	46%	45%	46%		+	48%	56%	52%	53%		+
4.1A HS grads completed MOEC postsecondary program math requirement in year 1		30%	28%	38%	37%		+	26%	32%	43%	43%		+
4.1B HS grads completed MOEC postsecondary program English requirement in year 1		52%	61%	62%	60%		+	54%	61%	70%	64%		+
4.2 HS grads in MOEC postsecondary persisted from term 1 to term 2		88%	86%	88%	80%		—	87%	87%	90%	81%		—
4.3 HS grads in MOEC postsecondary declared major within 25% of program timeframe		88%	85%	90%	88%		≡	88%	87%	92%	90%		≡

Postsecondary = IWCC, MCC and UNO | HS Grads = MOEC school districts

Total Percentage = sum of numbers reported by MOEC districts divided by number possible

Average of Averages = sum of percentages divided by number of MOEC districts reporting

* Data from National Student Clearinghouse

** All Postsecondary institutions

X Trend not reliable due to pandemic

NSCAS and Iowa Assessments were not administered; Department of Education waived.

^ Pandemic measures made attendance data collection varied from district to district.

- Total number of students in Kindergarten who took the assessment. Not all students took the assessment due to COVID Learning protocols and/or parents opting out.

* NSCAS General Summative Tests were replaced with the NSCAS Phase I Pilot.

MOEC Dashboard

MOEC Metric		Total MOEC Percentage						Average of Average MOEC Percentage				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1.2 Entering kindergartners who met the threshold for reading success				64%	86%~	61%				72%	89%~	83%
1.3 Pre-K and kindergarten teachers with early childhood endorsement			72%	72%	76%	70%			79%	81%	78%	77%
2.1A Proficient in literacy by end of grade 3		51%	55%	#	49%*	49%		59%	62%	#	56%*	52%
2.1B Proficient in math by end of grade 8		49%	48%	#	45%*	41%		57%	59%	#	54%*	47%
2.1Ca Proficient in literacy by end of grade 11		51%	51%	#	46%	45%		62%	60%	#	53%	46%
2.1Cb Proficient in math by end of grade 11		48%	50%	#	42%	41%		60%	60%	#	48%	42%
2.2 HS grads with 4 years of math		54%	53%	50%	51%	49%		62%	61%	58%	57%	55%
2.3 Freshmen on track to graduate by end of grade 9		87%	89%	87%	79%	85%		93%	93%	92%	88%	90%
2.4 Completed at least one college-level course by end of grade 12		64%	67%	74%	66%	68%		68%	72%	72%	71%	76%
2.5 Met ACT college/career readiness standards by end of grade 12		24%	21%	19%	17%	20%		29%	26%	23%	23%	18%
2.6 K-12: Missed fewer than 10% of school days		81%	81%	83%^	70%	72%		85%	88%	87%^	71%	78%
2.7 Participated in at least one school activity by end of grade 12		66%	56%	50%	53%	60%		74%	73%	70%	63%	67%

MOEC Metric		Total Percentage						Average of Average MOEC Percentage				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
3.1A HS grads completed FAFSA by end of grade 12		57%	54%	50%	44%	45%		58%	57%	54%	52%	52%
3.1B HS grads entering MOEC postsecondary with completed FAFSA		88%	88%	87%	84%	85%		84%	83%	85%	81%	80%
3.2 HS grads enrolled in <u>any</u> postsecondary** within 1 year		69%	68%	67%	65%			73%	70%	69%	71%	
3.3A HS grads in MOEC postsecondary prepared for math		48%	52%	52%	42%	37%		59%	61%	59%	48%	41%
3.3B HS grads in MOEC postsecondary prepared for English		58%	59%	54%	46%	42%		64%	71%	60%	53%	46%
3.4 HS grads in MOEC postsecondary with college credit		41%	46%	45%	46%	48%		48%	56%	52%	53%	54%
4.1A HS grads completed MOEC postsecondary program math requirement in year 1		30%	28%	38%	37%	36%		26%	32%	43%	43%	34%
4.1B HS grads completed MOEC postsecondary program English requirement in year 1		52%	61%	62%	60%	63%		54%	61%	70%	64%	65%
4.2 HS grads in MOEC postsecondary persisted from term 1 to term 2		88%	86%	88%	80%	86%		87%	87%	90%	81%	85%
4.3 HS grads in MOEC postsecondary declared major within 25% of program timeframe		88%	85%	90%	88%	92%		88%	87%	92%	90%	94%

Postsecondary = IWCC, MCC and UNO | HS Grads = MOEC school districts

Updated 03.14.23

Total Percentage = sum of numbers reported by MOEC districts divided by number possible

Average of Averages = sum of percentages divided by number of MOEC districts reporting

* Data from National Student Clearinghouse

** All Postsecondary institutions

NSCAS and Iowa # NSCAS and Iowa Assessments were not administered; Department of Education waived.

^ Pandemic measur ^ Pandemic measures made attendance data collection varied from district to district.

- Total number of students in Kindergarten who took the assessment. Not all students took the assessment due to COVID Learning protocols and/or parents opting out.

* NSCAS General Summative Tests were replaced with the NSCAS Phase I Pilot.

MOEC Dashboard

#	MOEC Metric	Total MOEC Percentage						Average of Average MOEC Percentage					
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1.1	Children enrolling in school-based Pre-K or kindergarten who are at age-appropriate developmental milestones or had been enrolled in an accredited early childhood program												
1.2	Early childhood teachers who are properly credentialed		72%	72%	76%	70%	67%		79%	81%	78%	77%	63%
1.3	Entering kindergarten students meeting the state-approved threshold for a student to be progressing toward future reading success			64%	86%	61%	49%			72%	89%	83%	57%
1.4	Students who meet expectations for proficiency in literacy by the end of 3rd grade	51%	55%	#	49%*	49%	63%	59%	62%	#	56%*	52%	69%
2.1A	Students who meet expectations for proficiency in literacy (ELA) by the end of 8th grade						61%						70%
2.1B	Students who meet expectations for proficiency in math by the end of 8th grade	49%	48%	#	45%*	41%	57%	57%	59%	#	54%*	47%	68%
2.1C	Students who demonstrate proficiency in literacy (ELA) by the end of 11th grade	51%	51%	#	46%	45%	46%	62%	60%	#	53%	46%	53%
2.1D	Students who demonstrate proficiency in mathematics by the end of 11th grade	48%	50%	#	42%	41%	42%	60%	60%	#	48%	42%	56%
2.2	Students who graduate from high school having successfully completed four years of math	54%	53%	50%	51%	49%	47%	62%	61%	58%	57%	55%	52%
2.3	High school freshmen who are on track to graduate by the end of 9th grade	87%	89%	87%	79%	85%	79%	93%	93%	92%	88%	90%	89%
2.4	Students who miss 10% or more days of school during the year	81%	81%	83%^	70%	72%	75%	85%	88%	87%^	71%	78%	81%
2.5A	Students enrolled in postsecondary education within a year of high school graduation who are academically prepared for math	48%	52%	52%	42%	37%	41%	59%	61%	59%	48%	41%	48%
2.5B	Students enrolled in postsecondary education within a year of high school graduation who are academically prepared for English	58%	59%	54%	46%	42%	41%	64%	71%	60%	53%	46%	48%
2.6A	Teachers/instructors approved to teach AP courses												
2.6B	Teachers/instructors approved to teach IB courses												
2.6C	Teachers/instructors approved to teach dual enrollment courses						9%						19%
2.6D	Teachers/instructors approved to teach industry-recognized credential courses												
2.7A	Students who complete at least one AP course prior to high school graduation						55%						52%
2.7B	Students who complete at least one IB course prior to high school graduation						15%						19%
2.7C	Students who complete at least one dual enrollment course prior to high school graduation						46%						49%
2.7D	Students who complete at least one college-level course prior to high school graduation												
3.1	Students enrolled in any postsecondary* within a year of high school graduation^	69%	68%	67%	65%	63%		73%	70%	69%	71%	65%	
3.2A	Students who successfully complete math program/degree requirements by the end of the first year of postsecondary education	30%	28%	38%	37%	36%	40%	26%	32%	43%	43%	34%	41%
3.2B	Students who successfully complete English program/degree requirements by the end of the first year of postsecondary education	52%	61%	62%	60%	63%	64%	54%	61%	70%	64%	65%	65%
3.3	Recent high school graduates who persist from first term to second term in postsecondary education	88%	86%	88%	80%	86%	74%	87%	87%	90%	81%	85%	72%
3.4A	Graduates who complete a 4-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^	31%	33%	31%	33%	35%	43%	37%	37%	38%	41%	40%	46%
3.4B	Graduates who complete a 2-year postsecondary degree within 150% of expected time^	4%	4%	4%	6%	5%	7%	6%	5%	5%	11%	6%	8%
4.1	Unfilled K-12 teaching positions						3%						1%
4.2	Students who participate in high school pre-apprenticeship/internship experiences												
4.3	Students who complete an industry-recognized credential or degree by high school graduation before transition to a career, military or higher education												
4.4	Students who participate in postsecondary internships, apprenticeships, clinical practices, and other experiential training opportunities that lead to employment												

Postsecondary = IWCC, MCC and UNO | Students = MOEC schools
 Total Percentage = sum of numbers reported by MOEC districts divided by number possible
 Average of Averages = sum of percentages divided by number of MOEC districts reporting
 * Data from National Student Clearinghouse
 * All Postsecondary Institutions

NSCAS and Iowa Assessments were not administered; Department of Education waived.
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 * NSCAS General Summative Tests were replaced with the NSCAS Phase I Pilot.

**SUPERINTENDENTS’
ATTENDANCE PLAN
FOR DISTRICTS IN THE
LEARNING COMMUNITY OF
DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES**

Revised – January 2023, March 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties is the creation of the Nebraska Legislature. Within its boundaries are eleven school districts in the Omaha Metropolitan Area. Statutorily, an Advisory Committee comprised of the eleven superintendents of the Learning Community member districts is given certain responsibilities and duties.

In 2011, those duties were expressly expanded to the creation of a plan by the superintendents designed to combat the adverse impact absenteeism has on students and schools. The statutory authority and duty of the superintendents require a plan, “to reduce excessive absenteeism including a process to share information regarding at-risk youth with the goal of improving educational outcomes, providing effective interventions that impact risk factors, and reducing unnecessary penetration deeper into the juvenile justice system.” At-risk youth are defined in the statute as, “those who are under the supervision of the Office of Probation Administration, are committed to the care, custody, or supervision of the Department of Health and Human Services, are otherwise involved in the juvenile justice system, or have been absent from school for more than more than five days per quarter or the hourly equivalent except when excused by school authorities or when a documented illness makes attendance impossible or impracticable.”

It is within this framework that the Superintendents Advisory Committee presents this revised plan with its twin objectives of (a) meeting statutory duties and (b) creating a comprehensive school district/community approach to absenteeism that is cooperative, innovative, and is based on solid research and experience. The plan is organized in four parts:

PART I District Prevention, Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Attendance

PART II Absence Referral to County Attorney

PART III Tracking and Monitoring

PART IV Plan Review

NEBRASKA STATUTE

Section 79-209

In all school districts in this state, any superintendent, principal, teacher, or member of the school board who knows of any violation of subsection (2) of section 79-201 shall within three days report such violation to the attendance officer of the school, who shall immediately investigate the case. When, of his or her personal knowledge or by report or complaint from any resident of the district, there is a violation of subsection (2) of section 79-201, the attendance officer shall immediately investigate such alleged violation.

All school boards shall have a written policy on attendance developed and annually reviewed in collaboration with the county attorney of the county in which the principal office of the school district is located. The policy shall include a provision indicating how the school district will handle cases in which excessive absences are due to illness. The policy shall also state the circumstances and number of absences or the hourly equivalent upon which the school shall render all services to address barriers to attendance. Such services shall include, but need not be limited to:

- (1) Verbal or written communication by school officials with the person or persons who have legal or actual charge or control of any child;
- (2) One or more meetings between, at a minimum, a school attendance officer, a school social worker or a school administrator or his or her designee, the person who has legal or actual charge or control of the child and the child, when appropriate, to attempt to address the barriers to attendance. The result of the meeting or meetings shall be to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance. The plan shall consider, but not be limited to:
 - (a.) The physical, mental, or behavioral health of the child;
 - (b.) Educational counseling;
 - (c.) Educational evaluation;
 - (d.) Referral to community agencies for economic services;

- (e.) Family or individual counseling;
- (f.) Assisting the family in working with other community services; and
- (g.) Referral to restorative justice practices or services.

(3) The school may report to the county attorney of the county in which the person resides when the school has documented the efforts it has made as required by subsection (2) of this section that the collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance has not been successful and that the child has been absent more than twenty days per year. The school shall notify the child's family in writing prior to referring the child to the county attorney. Failure by the school to document the efforts required by subsection (2) of this section is a defense to prosecution under section 79-201 and adjudication for educational neglect under subdivision (3)(a) of section 43-247 and habitual truancy under subdivision (3)(b) of section 43-247. Illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney.

(4) Nothing in this section shall preclude a county attorney from being involved at any stage in the process to address excessive absenteeism.

Sec. 79-2121 The superintendents of any school districts that are members of a learning community shall develop and participate in a plan by August 1, 2011, to reduce excessive absenteeism including a process to share information regarding at-risk youth with the goal of improving educational outcomes, providing effective interventions that impact risk factors, and reducing unnecessary penetration deeper into the juvenile justice system.

BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHY

The superintendents, along with numerous involved members of the metropolitan area, have a common understanding that students who come to school reflect our wider community. It is impossible to isolate the “school” within the walls of the school building. Therefore, effective strategies to keep students in school must be linked to the wider community. At the same time, evidence shows that prevention, early identification, and intervention each are unique and vital components of ensuring a successful school experience. Prevention encompasses those school and community programs aimed at keeping students involved, active, and able to attend school regularly. Across the metro area, each school district, along with community providers, is actively engaged in numerous absence-prevention programs. Intervention arises when, despite those efforts, a student is becoming absent excessively, prior to the 20-day timeframe when Nebraska law allows that a student may be referred to the county attorney. The superintendents know that an organized and fully active partnership between school and community with specific objectives, planned sustainability, and the ability to take advantage of the full array of rights and responsibilities offered by the laws and regulations in Nebraska will result in successful intervention for students in the metro area.

The Superintendents’ Attendance Plan for Districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties is founded on current school district absence prevention policies, practices, programs, and initiatives and the current informal, collaborative structure that has been in place since 2010. In 2010, a group consisting of law enforcement, the courts, and school district representatives came together to initiate a court-supervised diversion program. A part of their efforts evolved into what was informally known as the Truancy Triage Treatment Team with a focus on information sharing, regular monitoring, personal family visits, and a multi-disciplinary approach that brought together stakeholders with statutory accountability for children (including the Douglas and Sarpy County Separate Juvenile Courts, the Douglas and Sarpy County Attorney’s Offices, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services [NDHHS], the Douglas County Juvenile Assessment Center, Sarpy County Juvenile Diversion

Superintendents’ Attendance Plan for Districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties – Proposed Revision January 2023

Program, Region VI, state probation, and school districts).

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan builds on this original collaboration through dedicated work in the superintendent-established **MOEC (Metro Omaha Education Consortium) School Attendance Workgroup**. MOEC was established in 1988 by five school districts and the University of Nebraska Omaha College of Education. When the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties was established, all public school districts in the two counties became members of the group. In 2016, with encouragement from community representatives, MOEC became an organization dedicated to collective impact to help member districts and postsecondary institutions collaborate for improvement.

MOEC has convened a workgroup dedicated to improving student attendance. The members of this workgroup, appointed annually by district superintendents, will follow a set schedule for collaborative discussions and data sharing, and will connect annually with a broad group of community entities to identify and provide a support network that students and families need to achieve regular and consistent attendance and avoid chronic absenteeism. It is the intent of this plan to intervene at the building level, district level, and community level at the earliest stages of problematic student absenteeism and/or at-risk behavior with the goal of improving student attendance, through voluntary participation, and, thereby, preventing children from being referred to the County Attorney.

The annual schedule of meetings of the MOEC School Attendance Workgroup will include the following:

- Monthly discussion of attendance issues and strategies at the MOEC Student Services Task Force;
- Semi-annual meetings of representatives of all Learning Community districts to analyze attendance data, share effective strategies, and identify community support agencies;
- At least one annual meeting of representatives of all Learning Community districts, and

representatives of the Douglas and Sarpy County Separate Juvenile Courts, the Douglas and Sarpy County Attorney's Offices, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS), the Douglas and Sarpy County Juvenile Assessment Centers, Region VI, Douglas and Sarpy County Administration, state probation to analyze attendance data, identify challenges and share effective strategies; a representative of the Nebraska Department of Education may be included as appropriate;

- At least one annual meeting of representatives of all Learning Community districts with representatives of community organizations dedicated to improving student attendance to share successful strategies, identify issues, and initiate additional collaboration when needed.

PART I

DISTRICT PREVENTION, MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS FOR ATTENDANCE

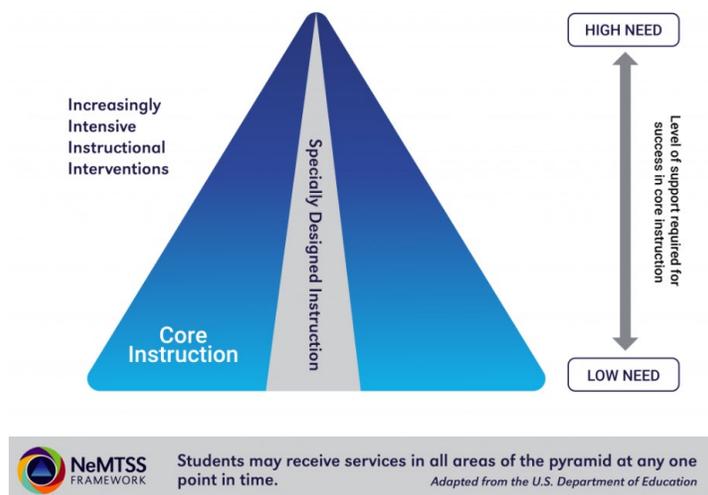
MISSION OF SUPERINTENDENTS' ATTENDANCE PLAN: To address absenteeism and at-risk behavior through encouragement of coordinated efforts to improve student attendance and learning.

PURPOSE: To improve student attendance and learning by offering assistance to youth and families, accomplished by early assessment and prompt delivery of coordinated interventions that promote school attendance and decrease at-risk behaviors.

MTSS – Multi-Tiered System of Supports

The Nebraska Department of Education incorporates and recommends that districts use a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) in dealing with various aspects of education. “MTSS is defined as **an educational framework for continuous improvement, problem-solving and decision-making**. It offers a meaningful and effective way to organize instruction and intervention to help improve outcomes for all students in the state.” The framework appropriately addresses school attendance issues, as well.

A Conceptual Framework for NeMTSS



MTSS Pyramid of Intervention related to Student Attendance:

- **Tier One: All Students** – School and district representatives will communicate with students, staff, families, medical representatives, and community members regarding the importance of regular school attendance through actions such as annual discussion of attendance in student handbooks, newsletters, teacher syllabi, news releases, attendance campaigns, and other forms of connection; daily review and communication about student absences; regular communication by phone, email, or robo calls about student absences; establishment of incentives to encourage regular school attendance; and recognition of students with excellent or improving attendance.
- **Tier Two: Students with Absences that Approach 10% of School Days to Date** – School representatives (including teachers, counselors, social workers, and/or building administrators) will communicate with students and families immediately when school attendance is recognized as a problem through use of phone calls, written notes, letters or emails. Official attendance letters will be sent to parents on a schedule established by the district. Administrative consequences will be implemented for students who are truant. Counselors, social workers, administrators and Special Education team members (if applicable) will meet to collaboratively address attendance issues with strategies including regular phone calls, conferences, check-ins, mentoring, or other appropriate strategies. Coordination with community agencies such as Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, juvenile justice, diversion, probation, child welfare or private or philanthropic organizations will be recommended and implemented as appropriate. Intensive school-based attendance intervention will be utilized as necessary to include options such as involvement of district social workers, district level school psychologists, central office administration, district level academic support programs. Referrals to faith-based organizations or appropriate community service providers may be made related to housing needs, transportation needs, health care and behavioral health needs, or other family needs. School representatives may request medical documentation for excessive absences related to illness. Academic interventions, educational evaluation, appropriate academic placement, academic tutoring, advisement programs, altered or extended school day placement and schedule modifications within the

school day may be implemented to assist with academic or mental health issues.

Interventions will be designed to promote regular school attendance and prevent children from being referred to the County Attorney.

Note: School districts will regularly seek assistance from community organizations. An example of focused collaboration among agencies occurs in a Project Harmony 1184 MDT team (Educational Neglect Team) designed in 2022 specifically to staff cases of school attendance involving representatives of school districts, Project Harmony, Douglas County attorneys, Health and Human Services representatives, Region 6, Completely Kids, GOALS Center, Project Harmony Connections, Child Saving Institute SAFE (School and Family Enrichment) Program, and Children's Hospital.

Other examples of agencies or groups that support work to improve student attendance (available in 2023) are listed alphabetically: Boys Town, The BRIDGE (Family Resource Connector Network), Center for Holistic Development, Child Protective Services, Child Saving Institute (including SAFE Program), Collective for Youth, Concord Mediation, D2 (Directions Diploma) Center, DCYC (Douglas County Youth Center), GOALS (Greater Omaha Attendance and Learning Services), Hope Center for Kids, Juvenile Assessment Center, Juvenile Justice Institute, Latino Center of the Midlands, Mentor Nebraska (Partnership 4 Kids, Success Mentors, TeamMates and others), Methodist Community Counseling, Nebraska Children Foundation, Nebraska Children's Home Society, Project Harmony 1184 Multi-Disciplinary Teams, Region 6 Professional Partner Program, Unite Us, Urban League of Nebraska YAN (Youth Attendance Navigators), Voices for Children, and others.

Tier Three: Students with Absences over 10% of School Days to Date Who have not Responded to School or District Strategies or Interventions – School

representatives will consider a County Attorney referral once a student reaches 20+ unexcused absences or if school efforts have not been successful at improving the student's school attendance. School representatives will coordinate case management with other systems (including community resources, mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare) while the County Attorney's Office representatives review the referral.

PART II

ABSENCE REFERRAL TO COUNTY ATTORNEY

Each school district shall use an approved County Attorney Referral Form when reporting students to the county attorney. Each school district will create and execute a collaborative plan with the student and family to remedy attendance concerns prior to referral. All attendance collaborative plans shall include the following:

- i. Summary of student/family demographic data
- ii. Summary of those in attendance
- iii. Summary of any previous meetings
- iv. Summary of factors impacting school attendance
- v. Summary of previous educational counseling and intervention
- vi. Summary of any educational evaluations
- vii. Summary of any individual or family counseling
- viii. Summary of access to additional community resources
- ix. Summary of other peer/school concerns

All Referrals to the County Attorney shall include the following:

- i. Summary of student/family demographic data
- ii. Names of the referring District and persons submitting the referral
- iii. Summary of attendance data for the current and two prior years
- iv. Summary of academic and behavior data
- v. A copy of the collaborative plan
- vi. Summary of interventions

COUNTY ATTORNEY INVOLVEMENT: DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES

All referrals are reviewed by the county attorney assigned to the case. The county attorney determines the response level necessary to assist the child and correct the problem. Response/intervention recommendations are made in the best interest of the child. County Attorney representatives communicate decisions/activities for each referral back to school officials.

If the Douglas or Sarpy County Attorney's Offices choose to not file on a referral, each respective school district can file an additional referral if absences accumulate to a level of concern as determined by district policies.

PART III

TRACKING AND MONITORING

The **MOEC School Attendance Workgroup** will collect and report the following information to the Learning Community Coordinating Council annually:

- aggregated school attendance rates by grade level (based on data collected by Nebraska Department of Education),
- data on legal agency disposition of school-district referrals to county attorneys,
- a list of current recognized community support organizations, and
- a summary of successes and challenges incurred in the prior academic year.

PART IV

SUPERINTENDENTS' ATTENDANCE PLAN REVIEW

During the school year, representatives from each school district will discuss school attendance issues and strategies at regular meetings of the MOEC Student Services Task Force.

Semi-annual meetings of representatives of all Learning Community districts will occur to review district attendance policies, analyze attendance data, share effective strategies, and identify community support agencies. A summary of the meetings will be presented annually to superintendents and to the Learning Community Coordinating Council.

At least one annual meeting will occur to include representatives of all Learning Community districts as well as representatives of the Douglas and Sarpy County Separate Juvenile Courts, the Douglas and Sarpy County Attorney's Offices, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS), the Douglas and Sarpy County Juvenile Assessment Centers, Region VI, Douglas and Sarpy County Administration, state probation, and (as appropriate) the Nebraska Department of Education to analyze attendance data, identify challenges and share effective strategies. A summary of the meeting/s will be presented annually to superintendents and to the Learning Community Coordinating Council.

At least one annual meeting will occur with representatives of all Learning Community districts and representatives of community organizations dedicated to improving student attendance to share successful strategies, identify issues, and initiate additional collaboration when needed. A summary of the meeting will be presented to superintendents and to the Learning Community Coordinating Council.

An annual report of analyzed data, summaries of required meetings, descriptions of strategic actions, and identification of successes and challenges will be presented to

superintendents and to the Learning Community Coordinating Council.

Report to the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
June 2024
Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium
Superintendents' Attendance Plan

Summary and Purpose

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan for the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties integrates community-wide efforts to improve student attendance. Emphasizing prevention and early intervention, the plan aims to keep students engaged and attending school regularly. By addressing absenteeism at multiple levels—building, district, and community—the plan seeks to reduce legal referrals and provide a supportive educational environment that promotes student success throughout the metropolitan area.

Nebraska statute §79-2121 requires a plan to *“to reduce excessive absenteeism including a process to share information regarding at risk youth with the goal of improving educational outcomes, providing effective interventions that impact risk factors, and reducing unnecessary penetration deeper into the juvenile justice system.”* To accomplish that, three meetings have been held to review school district efforts to hone effective strategies, identify challenges and create buffers, and analyze data. Additional information included in this summary was garnered from the first year of the two-year Attendance Cohort supported by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and facilitated by the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC) and Attendance Works.

[Superintendents Attendance Plan](#)
[MOEC Attendance Improvement Cohorts Flyer](#)

Scope

- MOEC, Douglas and Sarpy County School Districts
- Douglas and Sarpy County Attorney Offices, Juvenile Justice Institute, Douglas County Juvenile Assessment Center, Douglas County Juvenile Court Judge, NE Department of Health and Human Services, Region 6, Sarpy County Diversion, Sarpy County Juvenile Detention, Nebraska Probation (Douglas & Sarpy Counties), and Sarpy County Public Defender's Office
- Community Agencies: Bridge Family Network, Child Saving Institute, D2 Center, Latino Center of the Midlands, Project Harmony, Urban League of Nebraska, and Mentor Nebraska
- Nebraska Department of Education

- Community Based Attendance Coalition: Leadership from Ralston Public Schools, Child Saving Institute, Urban League of Nebraska, Metro-Omaha Raise Me to Read, Millard Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Douglas County Juvenile Justice, Mentor Nebraska, and Project Harmony
- Attendance Cohort Building Teams:
 - Bellevue - Avery Elementary, Bellaire Elementary, Bertha Barber Elementary, Central Elementary, Peter Sarpy Elementary
 - DC West - DC West Middle
 - Elkhorn - Arbor View and North Ridge
 - Gretna - Gretna Elementary
 - Millard - Harry Anderson Middle, Millard Central Middle, Millard North Middle, Bryan Elementary, Cody Elementary, Norman Rockwell Elementary
 - OPS - Bryan Middle, Davis Middle, McMillan Middle, Druid Hill Elementary, Franklin Elementary, Highland Elementary, King Elementary, Marrs Elementary, Miller Park Elementary, Minne Lusa Elementary
 - Papillion LaVista - LaVista Middle, Papillion Middle, Carriage Hill Elementary, G. Stanley Hall Elementary; LaVista West Elementary
 - Ralston - Ralston Middle, Blumfield Elementary, Mockingbird Elementary, Wildewood Elementary

(All supported by Attendance Works [[Attendance Works](#)] Coaching and Cohort meeting facilitation.)

Share Effective Strategies and Identify Challenges

Research demonstrates that both rigor and relationships are equally important in education, and that the hierarchy is relationships first. Districts understand and apply this daily through communication with families (written, text, phone, in person meetings), and by intentionally developing relationships with students.

Challenges to attending school are connected to a range of factors, including parental job requirements, transportation, and housing instability. Research also concludes that the lingering effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences and a lack of access to health care for physical and mental health needs play a significant role in absenteeism rates among students. Such challenges underscore the need for comprehensive support systems within school communities. In response, districts, community agencies and county government are engaged in identifying the unmet needs of families and students, and in seeking resources to provide the buffers and supports which help families succeed.

Synopsis - District Leaders Meeting on April 18, 2024:

Link to [Agenda for Meeting with District Leaders 4.18.24](#)

District leaders engage in holistic practices that consider the child, family, and community. Such practices include referring students for mental health services with trusted entities and in-school counselors; establishing formal and informal mentoring

relationships; and connecting families with religious, secular, and foundation entities to fulfill basic needs. Challenges include long wait lists for services, district, and community capacity to respond to many needs, and family engagement.

Synopsis - District Leaders and Government Meeting on May 7, 2024:

Link to [Agenda for Meeting with Govt & County Reps 05.07.24](#)

With an increase in referrals this year, Douglas County has taken significant strides in collaboration with Child Protective Services to ensure wrap-around care for families. Sarpy County has employed incentives and behavior modification strategies through its Justice Center and Diversion programs. Both note that transportation remains a significant reason for students missing school. Sarpy and Douglas County Government officials affirm that the documentation provided by schools is as required with very few being returned for more information. It was recommended that students should be referred when attendance trends arise, as opposed to waiting until the student has missed two or three months of school. Because counties are engaged in filling the gaps which families are experiencing, referring at the end of a school year does not give the system time to respond, and lessens options for the judges.

Synopsis - Community Agencies Meeting on May 15, 2024

Link to Agenda [Agenda for Meeting with Community Agency Reps 05.15.24](#)

Community agencies - whether embedded in buildings or at other locations - focus on relationship building, sharing the message of the importance of attending school, and many come together at the Community Based Attendance Coalition to learn ways they can support students and families. Challenges include timely communication with schools regarding absences, encountering waitlists for services, and experiencing from students a sense of resignation that they will never catch up with their credits, and the effort is not worth it. In the wake of the pandemic, those working in community agencies sense an attitude that school is not “necessary,” and they are working diligently to convince students and families of the significant benefit of education.

Synopsis - MOEC Attendance Cohort (2023-2024 School Year)

MOEC/NDE/Attendance Works Cohort members employ an impressive number of community resources to support the basic and mental health needs of families. The seven districts involved in the cohort noted connections to ten mental health groups, twenty-five churches, five mentor organizations, six hospitals/clinics, nine foundations, and forty-four local agencies/organizations providing services to families. Cohort members work to assure students are connected with a caring adult in the school, and are creating specific tiered responses for student needs. A planned focus for the coming year is building relationships with students and families when early absence patterns emerge. Members will also be intentionally weaving attendance messaging into everything they do and in all school to home communications. Major challenges include transportation, extended

(month-long or more) vacations, wait lists for services, and whole-staff buy-in that attendance is everyone's "job."

Analyze Attendance Data

Attendance data is analyzed by district attendance teams weekly and monthly and shared with faculty and support staff in buildings. Structures are in place to identify and support students (and their families) who are at educational risk due to chronic absences. The focus is on lowering the percentage of students who are chronically absent (10% or more of missed days).

MOEC Attendance Snapshot

Conclusion

State data collections indicate that attendance numbers doubled or tripled after the pandemic. While efforts to combat chronic absenteeism have yielded improved attendance figures in some elementary settings, significant challenges persist, demanding continued dedication and innovative strategies moving forward.

Schools, community organizations, and city/government officials understand the barriers to school attendance. Building trusting relationships with families and their students is key to discerning unmet family needs and the related issues that keep children from coming to school. While attendance notifications are required by regulation, districts report that shifting toward an asset-based response (knowing the student and getting to know the parents) is more effective than the punitive written word, and they are working to build a sense of belonging with children and families at each building level.

Even with the established and useful connections between school districts, cohort teams, community agencies, and numerous organizations that support their local school building, many barriers still exist. This indicates the need to scale further into the community with attendance messaging and toward city/county-wide collaborative problem solving regarding the issues families face that keep their children from attending school.

2024-2025 Superintendents' Attendance Plan
Report to the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
By Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium

Summary and Purpose of Superintendents' Attendance Plan

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan for the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties integrates community-wide efforts to improve student attendance. Emphasizing prevention and early intervention, the plan aims to keep students engaged and attending school regularly. By addressing absenteeism at multiple levels—building, district, and community—the plan seeks to reduce legal referrals and provide a supportive educational environment that promotes student success throughout the metropolitan area.

Nebraska statute §79-2121 requires a plan to “to reduce excessive absenteeism including a process to share information regarding at risk youth with the goal of improving educational outcomes, providing effective interventions that impact risk factors, and reducing unnecessary penetration deeper into the juvenile justice system.” To accomplish that, four meetings have been held to review school district efforts to hone effective strategies, identify challenges and create buffers, and analyze data.

Additional information in this report was garnered from key initiatives that are focused on not only addressing chronic absenteeism but also supporting good and improved attendance for all students, including the Community Based Attendance Coalition; a strategic collaboration between the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC) and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce; and the Attendance Improvement Cohort, supported by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and facilitated by MOEC and national organization, Attendance Works.

Superintendents' Attendance Plan:

[SUPERINTENDENTS ATTENDANCE PLAN 2023.pdf](#)

Summaries of Annual Meetings

As part of the Superintendent's Attendance Plan, MOEC facilitates four key annual meetings to support improved student attendance across the Learning Community. These meetings include: a district-level review of attendance policies, data, and effective practices; county-level meetings with juvenile justice and government partners to address systemic challenges; and a community-focused meeting to strengthen collaboration with local organizations. Each meeting is designed to promote shared accountability, identify barriers, and coordinate supports that help students

and families stay engaged in school. The following summaries highlight the discussions and outcomes from these four required meetings.

District Representatives Meeting Summary: The meeting was held on January 16 with district representatives as a requirement of the Superintendent’s Attendance Plan. The focus was on refining the referral process for chronically absent students, with county attorneys emphasizing the importance of clear documentation and school districts outlining tiered intervention strategies aligned with the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Participants discussed the need for a unified referral form across Douglas and Sarpy Counties, explored the development of an online submission portal, and emphasized improving communication between schools, county officials, and the courts. Concerns were raised about the practicality of detailed documentation at all intervention levels, prompting suggestions for standardized templates and streamlined processes. Future meetings will continue to address these challenges, aiming to align practices and enhance collaboration. Documents outlining the plan, meeting summaries, policies, data snapshots, and community resources were included to support these discussions.

District Representatives Meeting Agenda:

[Attendance WG Agenda District Reps 01.16.25.docx](#)

County Officials Meeting Summaries: The October 15 meeting of district, government, and county representatives was held in accordance with the Superintendent’s Attendance Plan and focused on clarifying roles and improving collaboration to address chronic absenteeism. Sarpy and Douglas County Attorneys outlined referral requirements, emphasizing the importance of thorough documentation of all supports offered to families—referrals are not accepted before a student reaches 20 absences. District representatives shared their multi-tiered intervention strategies, beginning with teacher outreach and extending to transportation, mental health services, and basic needs support. Challenges such as prolonged family absences and the need for consistent guidance were discussed, reinforcing the plan’s emphasis on early intervention and school-family partnerships.

The February 12 meeting, also part of the Superintendent’s Attendance Plan, continued this collaborative effort, emphasizing data-informed decision-making and alignment of referral processes across counties. Participants reviewed state attendance data, explored root causes using tools from Attendance Works, and examined a regional nonprofit asset map. Key topics included developing a standardized referral process aligned with MTSS, improving documentation practices, and enhancing coordination between schools and county attorneys. Legislative updates and NDE’s commitment to reducing chronic absenteeism through broader statewide collaboration were also discussed.

County Officials' Meeting Agendas:

[Attendance WG Agenda Govt & Co Reps 10.15.24.docx](#)

[Attendance WG Agenda Govt & Co Reps 02.12.25.docx](#)

Community Organizations Meeting Summary: The March 12 virtual meeting of community agencies and/or organizations brought together district and community representatives to support the goals of the Superintendent's Attendance Plan. MOEC shared updated attendance data from participating schools, noting reductions in chronic absenteeism across several districts. Community partners highlighted effective strategies, with a focus on supporting families at home and building strong school-agency partnerships. Key challenges included limited family engagement, space constraints within schools, and the need for a centralized database of agency services by county. Participants also recommended adding additional agencies and/or organizations to the list of identified community support organizations.

Community Organizations Meeting Agenda:

[Attendance WG Agenda Community Agency Reps 03.12.25.docx](#)

Results of Annual Meetings

Together, these meetings demonstrate the collaborative framework established by the Superintendent's Attendance Plan to improve student attendance through district, county, and community partnerships. Each convening advanced shared understanding, clarified referral processes, and identified both strengths and barriers within the current system. The collective focus on early intervention, consistent documentation, and aligned practices lays the groundwork for stronger support systems for students and families, reinforcing the belief that improving attendance is a shared community responsibility.

Additional Attendance Improvement Initiatives

Community Based Attendance Coalition

It is worthwhile to note that another group, convened outside the purview of the Superintendent's Attendance Plan but certainly supporting the work, has continued to meet to discuss community and school attendance issues since its inception in 2012. The Community Based Attendance Coalition (CBAC) includes 139 members from thirty-five schools and agencies, and it embodies work in schools and communities to build relational supports and wraparound services for students and families.

Meetings occurred monthly during the school year (September, October, November, January, March, and April), and experts were sought out to present best practice information regarding the issues members encounter in their work with students and families. Topics included transportation, training and interventions, support systems in the metro, and community resources, and recent discussions included availability of tickets/access to UNO activities for students; the opportunity of scholarship and daily support that is offered at metro Boys and Girls Clubs; building a continuum of care to support youth success with DCJJ; the lenses through which to view attendance conversations; and, the discrete and broad whole-child work in attendance. Past topics have included resilience and trauma, special education terminology and definitions, pathways for credit recovery, and compassion fatigue. The Coalition also updates yearly a social media campaign for late summer fall attendance campaigns.

Greater Omaha Chamber Attendance Collaboration

MOEC initiated a collaboration with the Greater Omaha Chamber to address rising chronic absenteeism, aligning with the Superintendent's Attendance Plan. A joint meeting in April brought together school district leaders and Chamber representatives to share data, outline the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for Attendance, and present successful district strategies. Discussions emphasized the role of consistent messaging, community engagement, and employer support in promoting attendance. Follow-up conversations centered on developing a call to action, creating messaging materials for businesses, and identifying next steps for continued collaboration. The effort underscored the importance of a coordinated, community-wide response to absenteeism, highlighting the potential of business and school partnerships to reduce barriers and reinforce the value of regular school attendance.

Attendance Improvement Cohort

MOEC, in partnership with NDE and Attendance Works, launched a two-year grant-funded initiative aimed at addressing chronic absenteeism across elementary and middle schools in the Omaha metro area. When the grant began in the fall of 2023, chronic absenteeism rates in participating MOEC schools were significantly higher than the state average. Through focused, collaborative efforts, schools reported reductions in chronic absenteeism ranging from 5% to 25%, with several schools reporting double-digit percentage drops in student absences.

The initiative engaged 33 schools across seven districts—21 elementary and 12 middle schools—organized into two-year attendance improvement cohorts. Each participating school formed a dedicated attendance team, engaged in three large-group collaborative sessions and two coaching sessions annually, and received up to \$8,000 in grant funding over two years. These funds supported attendance incentives, professional learning, and targeted strategies. The

initiative was grounded in a research-based framework from Attendance Works and emphasized Tier I, II, and III intervention planning, data use, and systemic school improvement.

Quantitative and qualitative outcomes reflect strong success:

- 100% of participating schools reported their teams were more effective, informed, organized, and better at using data by the end of the two years.
- 98% of respondents agreed the cohort helped prioritize attendance within their schools.
- 89% of respondents rated collaboration with peer schools as a valuable component of the program, helping fulfill the objective of creating a community of practice
- Chronic absenteeism, as reported by individual schools in April 2025, was reduced by more than 5% in multiple schools, with some even reporting a reduction of more than 20%.

The MOEC Attendance Cohort initiative has had a measurable and meaningful impact on attendance practices and outcomes in metro Omaha schools. With chronic absenteeism rates falling and school teams reporting increased confidence and capability, the program offers a promising model for other districts in Nebraska and beyond. Continued investment in data-driven strategies, community partnerships, and professional learning will be essential to sustaining this progress.

Superintendents' Attendance Plan Results and Impact

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan for the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties integrates an array of strategies and best practices, implemented and supported by multi-level efforts - building level, district level, and community level - to improve student attendance. The productive discussions and data sharing that transpired, as well as the connections with a broad group of community entities that were strengthened, helped to identify, provide, and broaden a multi-faceted support network that students and families need to achieve regular and consistent attendance and avoid chronic absenteeism. The collaborations and partnerships, fostered through a series of meetings that began just over two years ago when the Plan was adopted, have grown stronger and more focused; the results are more intentional, better-informed strategies and interventions that have ultimately resulted in improved attendance for all students in the metropolitan area. While there is certainly room for continued growth in attendance rates, a community of practice has been established, therefore providing the means to achieve continuous improvement.

Section: Increased Access to Early Childhood Programming

What are the highlights of your program? What are the goals? Purpose? This is just a brief summary of what your program intends to accomplish.

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is a collaborative initiative of the 11 school districts of Douglas and Sarpy Counties to develop early childhood programs for young children living in poverty. The focus of the plan is on closing opportunity gaps so that all children- regardless of social or economic circumstance- can reach their full potential. In partnership with the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties, the Buffett Institute provides leadership and support for the plan, which is an innovative and comprehensive approach to ensure early learning opportunities for all children.

The Superintendents' Plan was developed by the Institute in collaboration with district superintendents and their staff and launched in 2015. Today, more than 2,800 PreK through Grade 3 students are served at School as Hub Sites and many more benefit through their district's work in customized assistance through the Superintendents' Plan. The plan provides three interconnected levels of support for school districts, elementary schools, and community-based professionals to strengthen their birth through Grade 3 efforts: school as hub programming for birth through Grade 3, customized assistance for school districts, and specialized professional learning.

What are some successes from your project? Please feel free to add quotes, data points/charts, links, etc., to build on your response.

Successes from the 2024–25 school year include the following. For additional details—including charts, district-specific engagement, and stories of impact—please see the *Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Annual Report: 2024–25* available at https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/-/media/projects/buffett-nucleus/resources/reports/secp_report_annual_2024-25_digital.pdf:

- Leaders in 10 of the 11 Learning Community districts developed and implemented action plans that specified what they did to close opportunity gaps for young children with a focus on improving professional practice in three domains: leadership effectiveness, instructional excellence, family and community partnership engagement
- Each participating district implemented activities aligned with its district-level action plan and monitored progress to determine how its efforts are impacting schools, families, and children
- Additional support was provided to 10 schools across six districts to implement comprehensive School as Hub programming for children and families
- Schools implementing the School as Hub approach have reduced chronic absenteeism to levels far below the rest of Douglas County schools and, for the last two years, to levels notably below that of Nebraska as a whole.
- 15,000 children in PreK – Grade 3 are in districts with administrators and/or teachers who participate in professional development and Customized Assistance around early childhood programs and services
- 140+ PreK – Grade 3 classrooms participating in School as Hub
- 2,800+ PreK – Grade 3 children impacted
- “The School as Hub model has become the fabric of our school. Intentional consulting, focused coaching, and data-driven professional development have made a grand impact on our teachers, students, and families. As a result of our work, we have strengthened instructional practices, grown an understanding of teaching the whole child through best practice, and increased family involvement.” — Dr. Melissa Poloncic, Superintendent, DC West Community Schools

- “Through the work of the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute staff have helped us develop meaningful relationships with families and change outcomes for children. This is a continual focus around what really matters—ensuring high-quality curriculum, effective leadership, and relationships with families. The time dedicated to our youngest learners makes a real difference.” — Dr. John Schwartz, Superintendent, Millard Public Schools

What did you learn from the evaluation of the program?

The evaluation of the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan confirmed positive outcomes at the child, family, and systems levels.

Child-Level Outcomes

Children in School as Hub sites showed steady academic growth, particularly in kindergarten where the percentage of students on track for reading and math increased significantly from fall to spring. While gains in upper grades were more modest, principals attributed growth in literacy and numeracy to targeted professional development, aligned curriculum, and coaching supports. Students also reported a strong sense of belonging in their schools, with survey results indicating that they feel safe, connected, and proud to attend their school.

Family-Level Outcomes

Families engaged in School as Hub programming expressed high levels of trust, communication, and collaboration with schools. On the Family Engagement Survey, parents reported very positive experiences across domains such as knowing who to contact at school, feeling welcome, and understanding how to support their child’s learning. Interviews with families highlighted the value of home visiting, socialization events, and family learning opportunities, which provided both direct resources (e.g., books, supplies) and connections to community supports.

Systems-Level Outcomes

At the systems level, leaders across 10 of the 11 districts developed and implemented action plans that advanced district goals in leadership, instruction, and family engagement. Principals and district administrators reported increased opportunities for collaboration, strategic planning, and use of data for decision-making. Professional learning was consistently identified as impactful, with participants noting increased knowledge and confidence to apply early childhood practices. Communities of practice and coaching contributed to stronger teacher and principal self-efficacy, as well as deeper understanding of how to support young children’s experiences.

Summary

Overall, evaluation findings show that the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan is improving child learning and well-being, strengthening family engagement, and building district and school capacity to sustain high-quality early childhood systems. The results highlight both the progress achieved and the importance of continued focus on family engagement and support, child development, and professional learning to close opportunity gaps for children birth through Grade 3.

What proposed revisions do you have to your section of the CAP?

We propose revising the early childhood programming section of the CAP to more clearly align with the current Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan contract (2025–29). Updates will include:

- Framing district-level work under **Goal 1: Customized Assistance**, highlighting action planning and capacity-building for all 11 districts.
- Refining **Goal 2: School as Hub Programming** to emphasize the comprehensive birth through Grade 3 approach in schools serving high concentrations of poverty, with a focus on continuity of high-quality instruction, family partnerships, and wraparound supports.

Community Achievement Plan (CAP) Progress Updates
September 2025

- Updating **Goal 3: Specialized Professional Learning** to reflect the expansion of tailored professional learning, coaching, and communities of practice for educators, leaders, and family-facing staff.

These revisions will ensure the CAP reflects the integrated structure of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan in its evidence base and the outcomes demonstrated over the last contract period.

Section: Increased Parent Engagement and System Capacity Building Through the North and South Omaha Learning Centers

What are the highlights of your program? What are the goals? Purpose? This is just a brief summary of what your program intends to accomplish.

The Learning Community, and its partners, implement innovative, practical strategies to improve the landscape for learning in the Omaha metro region. We're here to close the opportunity gap, which impacts student achievement long before a child goes to school. The Learning Community works with children and families to challenge the opportunity gap through early childhood education, family engagement and workforce development. Valued [partners](#) come from public education, higher education, non-profit organizations and the philanthropic community. Our [investments](#) look to the future, focused on creating stronger communities and a better future for everyone.

**Learning Community Center of North Omaha
Intensive Early Childhood Partnership**

- High-Quality Classrooms: PreK students were taught in high-quality classrooms. CLASS domain scores met the quality threshold and ranked in the top 10% of Head Start programs nationally.
- Social-Emotional Growth: Students showed significant growth in social-emotional skills from fall to spring.
- Special Education: 40% of students received special education services, compared to the state early childhood average of 15–16%.
- Student Demographics: 186 children were enrolled across 13 classrooms in 6 schools (Conestoga, Kellom, Lothrop, Franklin, Skinner, Minne Lusa).
- Strengths and Needs: Non-IEP students demonstrated higher skills in vocabulary, social-emotional development, school readiness, and executive functioning. Students with IEPs still scored in the average range for executive functioning, but vocabulary scores indicated a need for improvement.

Parent University

- Enrollment doubled from the previous year: 203 parents and 545 children
- Strong course participation, with a 94% completion rate for multi-session courses.
- 81% of ESL/GED participants gained at least one level in reading and/or listening after 40+ hours of instruction.
- Children's social-emotional skills were in the average range, with self-control a notable strength (61% meeting/exceeding national average).
- Families engaged in school/community: 100% felt at least somewhat comfortable communicating with teachers after 6+ months.
- Challenges remain in language: over 40% of students scored below average on expressive/receptive language skills.

Learning Community Center of South Omaha

- 339 parents and 830 children were served.
- 96% of 224 referrals to the Social Assistance Navigator were successfully discharged; families reported increased self-sufficiency across all domains.
- Parents reported increased parenting skills and reduced stress, especially after receiving navigator support for complex issues.
- Children's outcomes:

- 96% scored in the average range in executive functioning.
- Pre-K students scored in the average range for math and literacy.
- 70%+ of K–5 students scored in the average range for math at fall and spring checkpoints.

2GEN APPROACH

The Learning Community uses a two-generation (2Gen) approach in designing early childhood and family engagement programs at each of the centers, Family Learning at the 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.

Key elements of the 2Gen approach include Early Childhood Development, Health & Well-being, Post-secondary & Employment Pathways, Economic Assets and Social Capital. Data are collected on each element contained in the 2GEN framework.

The **Learning Community Center of North Omaha** provides innovative and demonstrative programming to improve educational outcomes for students and families. 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 two primary programs: Intensive Early Childhood Partnership and Parent University.

Intensive Early Childhood (IEC) 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 and Franklin. In 2018, the intensive early childhood partnership expanded to Minne Lusa and Skinner. The IEC partnership supported students in 13 classrooms during the 2023-2024 school year.

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. The program aims to collaborate with school districts and community organizations to measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families in poverty. Parent University provides individualized and center-based supports and services to families whose children reside in school attendance areas of 24 elementary schools in North Omaha.

Families can participate in all three of the program's primary components: Education for Parents of Young Children, Early Childhood Education, and Interactive Parent/Child Activities.

The **Learning Community Center of South Omaha** is a comprehensive, center-based initiative created using national models and best practices from the two-generational approach. The program originated in 2012 as a collaborative effort between the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and OneWorld Community Health Centers. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha was nationally recognized by the White House as a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education and is a 2-GEN network partner through Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

Each family in the program is offered classes or programming an average of seven hours per week during the academic school year and throughout the summer. Families can participate in all three of the program's primary components: Education for Parents of Young Children, Early Childhood Education, and Interactive Parent/Child Activities.

What are some successes from your project? Please feel free to add quotes, data points/charts, links, etc., to build on your response.

In the section below are highlights from the 2023-2024 annual evaluation report. For the full report visit the website for The Learning Community of Douglas & Sarpy Counties (<https://learningcommunityds.org/>).

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- 186 Pre-K students were enrolled across 6 sites.
- The majority represent diverse racial and ethnic populations (n=163).
- 40% were identified for special education services.
- Classroom quality was above the thresholds of quality and in the top 10% of Head Start programs.
- Over half of the students scored at the national average or above for social-emotional skills by spring.
- Significant improvements from fall to spring occurred for vocabulary, school readiness, and social-emotional skills. Vocabulary scores indicated a need for further improvement.

PARENT UNIVERSITY

- 203 parents were enrolled. Most participants represented low-income (91% had children who were eligible for free and reduced lunch) & culturally diverse populations. Families reported 12 different primary languages, and the most common primary language was Spanish (35%).
- Enrolled parents had 545 children, 320 of which were birth to age 8.
- 47 % of parents completed high school, and 86% of families received additional government assistance.
- Parents participated in 56 courses/activities, which focused on parenting, literacy, life skills, and school success. The completion rate for activities with multiple sessions was 94%.

Coaching Successes

"I have teachers coming to me and sharing how they had tried something we had talked about and it was working in the classroom or for a particular child."

"The PLCs just run themselves. It is nice for the teachers to come together and help each other out. Having that team time and planning."

Success Stories

With continuous 1-on-1 support from the child learning specialist working directly with these children, Parent University families were able to see successes such as:

- A child's DECA scores grew from all typical in the fall to all areas of strength in the spring.
- A child's DAYC score for receptive language increased, changing from below expectations in the fall to meeting widely held expectations in the spring.

Through classes like Circle of Security and Common Sense Parenting, as well as the direct help and guidance from their educational navigators during home visits, families were able to see successes such as:

- Attachment was an area of concern for a child on the fall DECA. By spring, he scored in the typical range. His score for self-control improved from typical to an area of strength. His DAYC scores also improved in both receptive and expressive language.
- A child's DECA showed that all social-emotional areas were a concern in the fall. By spring, her DECA showed all areas as strengths. Her DAYC scores also improved from the average range in fall to the above average range in spring.

- 47 % of parents completing the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) assessment met the overall goal for parent-child interactions, and 74% met the goal for Building Relationships.
- Participants noted multiple benefits to Parent University participation including access to resources, reduced stress, and relationships with

Educational Navigators.

- Approximately half of the children of enrolled parents demonstrated language skills in the average range.
- The majority of children were in or above the average range across all social-emotional areas. Self-control was an area of strength.
- School Attendance data was obtained from Omaha Public Schools on the school-age students of parents participating in Parent University. Those students attend 22 different schools in the district. For those students with parents attending programming, 60% missed fewer than 10 days of school. K-5 students (n=47) missed an average of 14.14 school days. The goal for students across the district is to miss fewer than 10 days.
- Students' scores were stronger in mathematics, with more than 80% of students scoring in the average range in the spring.

My English is increased, and the teacher is nice and does a good job explaining."

Success Story

The Parent University team helped a parent experiencing chronic homelessness. With the help of the Educational Navigators, this parent successfully found permanent housing for her family, started taking workforce development classes to advance her career, and is now on a path toward a career in healthcare. Also, she can now better support her children through the parenting classes she has taken through the program.

Across all subjects and testing periods, 39% of students scored above the national average.

Learning Community of South Omaha

- 339 parents were enrolled, and 270 participants needed childcare at LCCSO.
- 830 total children supported, 531 of which were ages birth to 5. 64% reported earning less than \$35,000 annually, and 40% had a high school diploma.
- Families participated in 1851 personal visits and 884 parent/child interactions with Educational Navigators during the 2023-2024 reporting period.
- Workforce Development participants earned 215 certificates.
- 36 participants were enrolled in GED classes, with four participants earning their GED.
- 71% of participants in cohort 1 and 53% in cohort 2 made measurable GED gains.
- Participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in English listening skills.
- Most parents met the program goals in 2 out of 4 areas on the parenting measure. Building Relationships was an area of strength.
- Parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement.

Success Story

A recent success includes one participant who took ESL classes. She gained confidence in using conversational English and read her first ever book ever as part of her classwork. She reports more confidence in speaking with her children in English about complex emotions and in speaking with her children's healthcare providers. She recently presented her story in English at the National Families Learning Conference and plans to move on to GED classes at the center.

- The social assistance navigator (SAN) assisted families with 211 simple referrals and 13 complex referrals.

Success Story

A participant reported feeling depressed after separating from her partner. Her Educational Navigator connected her to individual therapy offered through the program. She said the therapy has helped her cope with this situation and build her self-esteem. She asked for help for daughter, who started having behavioral issues at school and home during the separation. The Social Assistance Navigator connected her to the Early Intervention program offered through Omaha Public Schools. The participant reports that she is doing better and is more involved in her daughter's education and development.

She is spending more time with her daughter, and her Educational Navigator also taught her how to get free passes through the Omaha Public Library. Every week, she is taking her daughter to different places, such as the Zoo, Children's Museum, and Durham Museum. The participant shared that her participation in parenting classes, therapy, and home visits at LCCSO taught her more about how parent-child interaction is essential for the child's development. She said she is happy to be part of the program and excited about the new things she will learn.

96% of parents with simple referrals were successfully discharged. 62% of parents with complex referrals were successfully discharged. Parents who engaged with the SAN for complex case, on average, reported a decrease of stress from 9.2 to 3.2 on a 10-point scale.

- 53% of school-age students with parents attending the program were absent from school fewer than 10 days. K-5 students, on average, missed 10.46 school

days in 2023-2024.

- 96% of students scored in the average range for executive functioning.
- Students scored in the average range for the Math Concepts & Application and Passage Comprehension portions of the Bateria.
- Over 70% of students scored in the average range on NWEA-MAP mathematics assessment.
- Learning Community Center of South Omaha provided training and/or coaching for 44 South Omaha childcare providers in 2022-2023. In partnership with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Rooted in Relationships provided bimonthly training, monthly coaching, and collaboration opportunities for 16 home and center-based childcare providers working in the South Omaha community.

"My child knew how to read and write and was very advanced when entering school because of the center."

What did you learn from the evaluation of the program?

The Intensive Early Childhood Partnership shows that when young children are immersed in nurturing, well-structured classrooms, they gain the foundational skills needed to thrive academically and socially. Consistent exposure to strong teacher-student interactions and intentional classroom organization not only develops early literacy and math concepts but also supports the growth of executive functioning and social-emotional skills. These results illustrate that when schools provide high-quality early experiences, they can directly influence long-term academic readiness, particularly for students facing the barriers of poverty.

At the same time, Parent University demonstrates that children's progress is strengthened when parents are engaged as active partners in their education. By building parents' confidence, equipping them with practical strategies, and connecting them to community resources, families are better able to support consistent attendance, healthy relationships, and learning at home. Parents who feel prepared to engage with schools and advocate for their children help create a bridge between home and classroom, ensuring that the gains made in high-quality early learning settings are reinforced and sustained beyond the school walls.

The Family Learning program further expands this impact by addressing the economic and educational needs of parents alongside their children. As families increase English proficiency, pursue GEDs, and complete workforce certificates, they not only enhance their own stability but also model lifelong learning for their children. These opportunities raise a family's ability to participate in the community, navigate schools, and provide stronger academic support at home. Together, the work in schools through early childhood classrooms and the work in centers with parents shows how the Learning

Community closes the opportunity gap: by aligning academic quality with family capacity so that both children and parents move forward together.

What proposed revisions do you have to your section of the CAP?

To strengthen partnerships with schools within the catchment areas of both the North and South Centers, the Learning Community will expand its satellite locations. The South Center launched its first satellite site within Bancroft Elementary in January 2025 and plans to open an additional elementary school-based site in January 2026 to further extend its reach. Parent University will also expand with the opening of a satellite location in January 2027, creating greater access for families in North Omaha.

In addition, we will increase our Workforce Development Pathway to serve a broader range of participants, providing families with more diverse opportunities for career readiness, credentialing, and long-term stability. This expansion will align directly with our commitment to the two-generation approach, ensuring both parents and children benefit simultaneously.

Finally, we will deepen our partnerships with childcare centers in both North and South Omaha. By embedding high-quality training, resources, and coaching, we aim to support early learning environments that sustain children's growth and strengthen the connection between families, schools, and community resources. Together, these strategies reinforce our long-term goal of closing the opportunity gap by advancing both academic achievement and family well-being.

Section: Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium (MOEC) Collective Impact Achievement Plan

What are the highlights of your program? What are the goals? Purpose? This is just a brief summary of what your program intends to accomplish.

The vision of MOEC is that “all students in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area receive an exceptional education that provides multiple pathways into meaningful careers and a high quality of life in the region and beyond.” MOEC Leaders have determined that “we will achieve this through setting transformational goals for student success, launching initiatives focused on dramatically improving student outcomes, and strengthening the connections between our education systems and communities.”

Chronic absenteeism, the ongoing teacher shortage, and the need to accelerate learning in literacy and math remain top priorities for districts. At the same time, MOEC and its partners have built strong momentum. The Attendance Improvement Cohorts have expanded to include high schools, the UNO–MCC (Metropolitan Community College) Momentum initiative is streamlining transfer pathways, and MOEC’s focus on dual enrollment continues to open college opportunities for more students. In addition, emerging collaboration with the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce and its Brain Gain initiative is strengthening the link between education and workforce development. Together, these efforts reflect MOEC’s commitment to both addressing persistent challenges and advancing collective solutions that improve outcomes across the metro.

What are some successes from your project? Please feel free to add quotes, data points/charts, links, etc., to build on your response.

This section highlights MOEC’s progress through its cross-district collaboration and three major initiatives: the Education Ambassador Program, the Science of Reading Workshops, and Dual Enrollment. Together, these efforts demonstrate measurable impact and regional collaboration toward the goals of MOEC’s Collective Impact Plan.

Task Forces and Work Groups

MOEC convenes and supports cross-district task forces and work groups, including Early Literacy, High School Principals, Dual Enrollment, Human Resources, and FAFSA Completion. These groups meet regularly to analyze key indicators, share effective practices, and drive collaborative action aligned with Collective Impact Plan goals. By promoting consistent data collection, shared learning, and connections among K–12 districts, postsecondary institutions, and community partners, these subgroups ensure that MOEC initiatives respond to performance trends and address opportunity gaps efficiently.

MOEC Education Ambassador Program

To address Nebraska’s educator workforce shortage, MOEC partnered with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to launch the Education Ambassador Program in 2023. Supported by a two-year, \$100,000 grant, the program cultivates teacher leadership, fosters collaboration across twelve districts, and elevates the teaching profession.

Over two years, 81 educators participated (43 in Year One, 38 in Year Two), spanning roles from elementary through high school. Six professional learning sessions each year featured local superintendents, national consultants, and community leaders. Ambassadors collaborated in cross-district groups to design projects aligned with AASPA’s Five Shifts to Address the Educator Shortage. Their work, ranging from recruitment pipelines to teacher wellness resources, was later presented to district administrators, providing innovative strategies to strengthen recruitment and retention.

Survey data reflected measurable success, with participants reporting increased leadership confidence and a stronger sense of professional purpose. The second year emphasized district-level collaboration based on superintendent feedback, ensuring solutions were tailored to local needs. The program also expanded public visibility: UNO's Maverick PR supported Ambassadors in developing promotional materials and a video that was featured by the *Omaha World-Herald*. Ambassadors shared their work at the Nebraska Educator Shortage Summit and the Nebraska Association of School Personnel Administrators conference, extending impact beyond MOEC districts.

MOEC Science of Reading Workshops

With support from the Lozier Foundation, UNO, and NDE, MOEC launched Science of Reading (SOR) workshops to strengthen educator knowledge and practice in evidence-based literacy instruction. These workshops align directly with Nebraska's revised English Language Arts standards and focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, sight word development, and concepts of print. The five-session series blended in-person sessions, online tasks, and classroom application. Across two years, 129 educators from 11 of 12 MOEC districts, plus additional teachers from non-MOEC schools, participated.

Survey data showed strong growth in teacher efficacy: pre/post comparisons indicated significant gains in both confidence and knowledge (spring cohort $M=3.47$ to 4.38 ; summer cohort $M=3.41$ to 4.38). Teachers noted the workshops expanded their repertoire of instructional strategies, improved intentional planning, and deepened their understanding of literacy skill progression. Many emphasized the applied learning approach and collaborative environment as particularly effective. Evaluation highlighted lessons learned. Semester-long formats supported greater reflection than compressed summer sessions, and district alignment with existing curricular materials emerged as an ongoing challenge. These insights have already informed future planning and collaborative curriculum conversations.

Building on early success, the initiative is positioned for statewide expansion. Over the next three years, Educational Service Units (ESUs) will train facilitators to deliver the model to 6,000–7,000 K–3 educators, extending the impact of MOEC's work to improve literacy outcomes statewide.

Dual Enrollment Expansion

Dual enrollment (DE) continues to grow across all twelve MOEC districts, ensuring more students have access to affordable college credit while in high school. In partnership with local colleges and universities, districts have broadened opportunities across large and small systems, reducing barriers and increasing equity of access.

Dual enrollment is a proven high-impact strategy: students who participate are more likely to graduate high school, enroll in college, and complete a degree. MOEC's coordination helps align offerings with workforce needs while ensuring equitable access across districts. Recent state policy has reinforced these efforts. Legislative Bill 173 proposed raising tuition-assistance funding for dual enrollment from \$3 million to \$13 million annually. While the final allocation was smaller, policymakers approved an additional \$5 million in future funding. This investment expands access to community college dual credit courses, lowering costs for students and strengthening pathways to postsecondary success. Together, MOEC's local coordination, state investment, and collaborative planning position dual enrollment as a growing strategy to prepare thousands of metro students for both academic and career achievement.

What did you learn from the evaluation of the program?

Community Achievement Plan (CAP) Progress Updates
September 2025

For the seventh year, representatives of each district and postsecondary institution collaborated to collect information related to the established metrics. MOEC representatives continued work to prepare data documents to clearly show outcomes, and those documents have been utilized not only to inform the development of priorities, initiatives, and programs but also to be the focus of a variety of committee meetings:

- [MOEC Data Snapshots Overview 2024.pdf](#)
- [MOEC Data Dashboard.pdf](#)

What proposed revisions do you have to your section of the CAP?

Annually, the Steering Committee reviews data to select focus areas for trainings, advocacy, awareness, and initiatives, guided by MOEC's Collective Impact Plan, developed in 2016 and updated in 2023, which aligns goals, metrics, and initiatives with MOEC's mission and collaborative work.

Section: Superintendents' Attendance Plan

What are the highlights of your program? What are the goals? Purpose? This is just a brief summary of what your program intends to accomplish.

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan, facilitated by the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC), is a regional plan designed to reduce chronic absenteeism across the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The plan takes a prevention-first, multi-tiered approach to improve student attendance and ensure equitable access to education. This work is guided by Nebraska Revised Statute §79-2121, which requires school systems to implement coordinated efforts that reduce excessive absenteeism, provide early intervention, and avoid unnecessary juvenile justice referrals. At the core of the plan, which includes superintendents, school district staff, community partners, county attorneys, and legal and government stakeholders, is a series of convenings that take place annually.

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan has been augmented through the development of a Community of Practice (CoP), which includes school teams from multiple districts. The CoP promotes systemic change through shared learning, coordinated implementation of evidence-based attendance strategies, and strategic alignment with state-level policies and expectations.

The goal of the plan is twofold. First, to support long-term, systemic change by developing cross-agency strategies that address root causes of absenteeism, such as family stress, transportation barriers, housing instability, and behavioral health needs, before they escalate into legal or system-involvement outcomes. Second, to increase the number of students regularly attending school by embedding evidence-based practices and creating positive school attendance cultures. These goals are pursued not only through direct district actions, but also through sustained collaboration with nonprofit agencies, legal entities, and statewide initiatives such as the Nebraska Department of Education's Attendance Improvement Cohort.

What are some successes from your project? Please feel free to add quotes, data points/charts, links, etc., to build on your response

The Superintendents' Attendance Plan has generated measurable progress toward its dual goals: increasing regular student attendance and supporting long-term systemic change through coordinated cross-agency strategies. Over the past two years, this work has strengthened collaboration across education, justice, and community sectors, while building school-based capacity to respond early and effectively to absenteeism.

At the systems level, the Plan's four annual convenings, bringing together district representatives, county officials, and community partners, have been critical for alignment. These meetings created shared language and consistent expectations across Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The January 2025 District Representatives meeting led to commitments to standardize referral documentation and explore a unified online submission system. The February 2025 County Officials meeting strengthened inter-county agreement on referral thresholds and emphasized school-led interventions like teacher outreach, transportation support, and mental health services. The March 2025 Community Partners meeting further advanced cross-sector collaboration by connecting schools to nonprofits, surfacing promising family engagement practices, and identifying the need for a centralized support services database.

In parallel, the MOEC/NDE Attendance Improvement Cohort, supported by Attendance Works, helped 33 schools across seven districts improve student outcomes through Tier I and Tier II strategies, data use, and culture shifts. Chronic absenteeism dropped 5% to 25% in participating schools: Carriage Hill

Elementary from 23.4% to 8.8%; Bryan Elementary from 63 chronically absent students to 15; Franklin Elementary by 14%; Marrs Middle School by 10%; and La Vista Middle School from 21.1% to 14.3%. Regular coaching, peer learning, and mini-grant funding enabled targeted strategies, including student incentives, mentoring, and attendance recognition.

Beyond quantitative gains, cohort schools reported cultural and structural changes. Attendance teams became more organized and data-driven; family communication was proactive; and teachers, counselors, and support staff shared responsibility for outreach and intervention. Attendance was reframed from a compliance task to a collective, solvable challenge, reflected in staff meetings, home visits, and everyday school practices.

Regionally, the impact is clear. According to Attendance Works, chronic absenteeism across MOEC districts decreased to 12.5% in elementary schools and 20.8% in middle schools in 2023–24. In Omaha Public Schools, suspensions were cut in half, signaling that positive engagement is replacing punitive discipline. Together, these efforts demonstrate that through aligned leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and school-based innovation, the region is making real strides toward ensuring that more students attend school regularly and have access to the supports they need to succeed.

What did you learn from the evaluation of the program?

One key lesson from the Superintendents' Attendance Plan is that sustained, systemic progress on attendance requires ongoing cross-sector collaboration. Integrating educators, county attorneys, and community-based organizations into a coordinated framework has reduced fragmentation and created more consistent support pathways for students and families. Legal partners emphasized that timely, well-documented school interventions are essential to ensure referrals to the justice system remain a last resort. District leaders also identified the need for streamlined referral processes and shared digital infrastructure to improve communication across agencies.

These insights are validated by the MOEC/NDE Attendance Improvement Cohort. Participating schools reported both quantitative and qualitative gains. More than a dozen schools saw double-digit drops in chronic absenteeism, alongside reductions in suspensions and disciplinary referrals, indicating that positive, preventative strategies are replacing punitive approaches. Outcomes were strongest in schools with committed internal attendance teams, regular data review, and leadership buy-in.

Cultural shifts were also evident. Evaluation data showed 100% of cohort participants reported more organized, data-driven teams; 98% said attendance became a clear school priority; and 94% wanted to continue collaboration, valuing coaching, peer learning, and shared planning. Multi-tiered systems clearly defined roles for principals, teachers, and support staff. In districts such as Ralston and Bellevue, teachers actively mentored students and families to support attendance, reflecting growing ownership beyond administration.

The evaluation also highlighted persistent challenges. Many root causes—family stress, housing instability, transportation barriers, and behavioral health concerns—exist outside school control, reinforcing the need for broader partnerships. Family engagement often falters without sufficient time, training, and access to community resources. Collaborations with organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, behavioral health providers, and family-serving nonprofits remain essential.

Finally, the MOEC-facilitated Community of Practice proved effective for reinforcing lessons, sharing successes, and adapting in real time. As schools continue to build internal capacity and strengthen external partnerships, this model will remain central to learning, improvement, and sustained progress in reducing chronic absenteeism across the region.

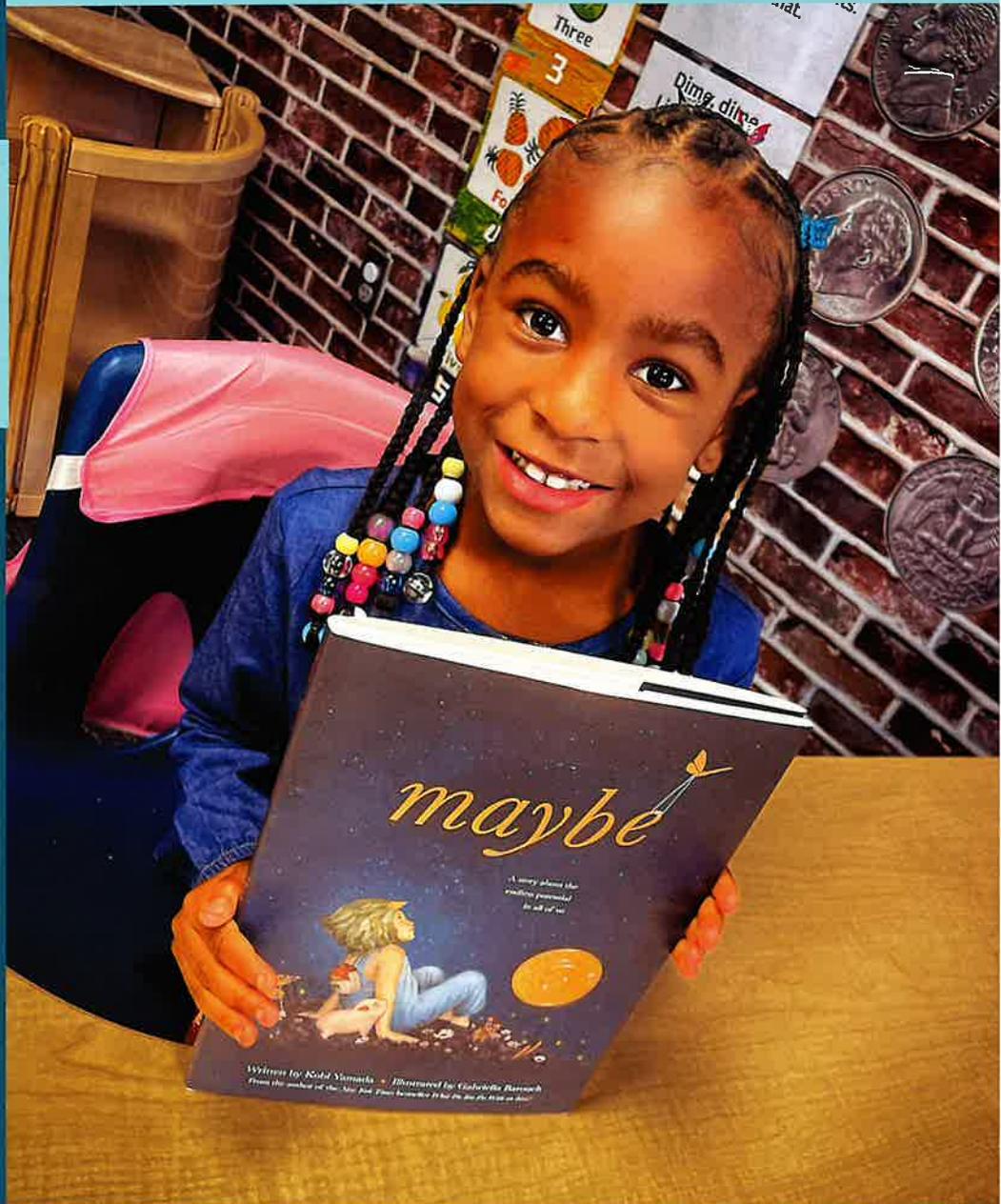
What proposed revisions do you have to your section of the CAP?

To reflect current realities and guide future progress, we propose updating Section 4 of the CAP to align with the expanded scope, structure, and outcomes of the Superintendents' Attendance Plan. The revised framework emphasizes access, system-building, continuous improvement, and sustainable change.

The updated goal reaffirms the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties' commitment, alongside MOEC, participating districts, legal partners, and community agencies, to sustain a regional plan focused on reducing chronic absenteeism and strengthening early intervention systems. Support will include structured cross-agency meetings, aligned referral and documentation practices, and enhanced access to wraparound services addressing root causes of absenteeism.

learning community

 DOUGLAS
SARPY



We are the
Learning Community

Brighter Futures. Stronger Communities.



Introduction to the Learning Community

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, we implement proven strategies to improve educational outcomes for children and families living in poverty.



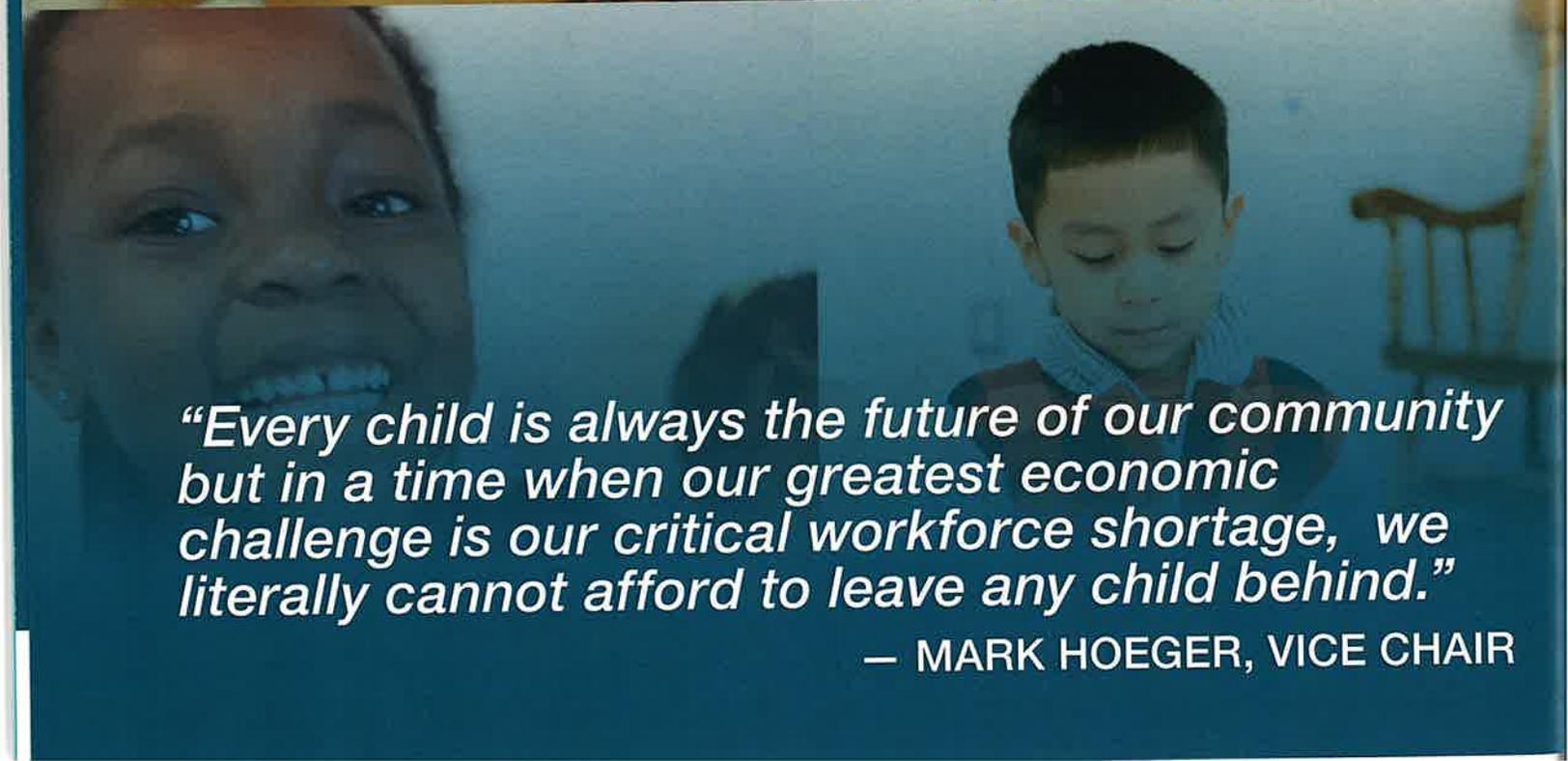
Our Vision

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



“The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties is an essential part of our city’s commitment to children’s success. We work to ensure there is no achievement gap because every child deserves access to the resources, opportunities, and support needed for an equitable education.”

— SHARNELLE SHELTON, CHAIR



“Every child is always the future of our community but in a time when our greatest economic challenge is our critical workforce shortage, we literally cannot afford to leave any child behind.”

— MARK HOEGER, VICE CHAIR

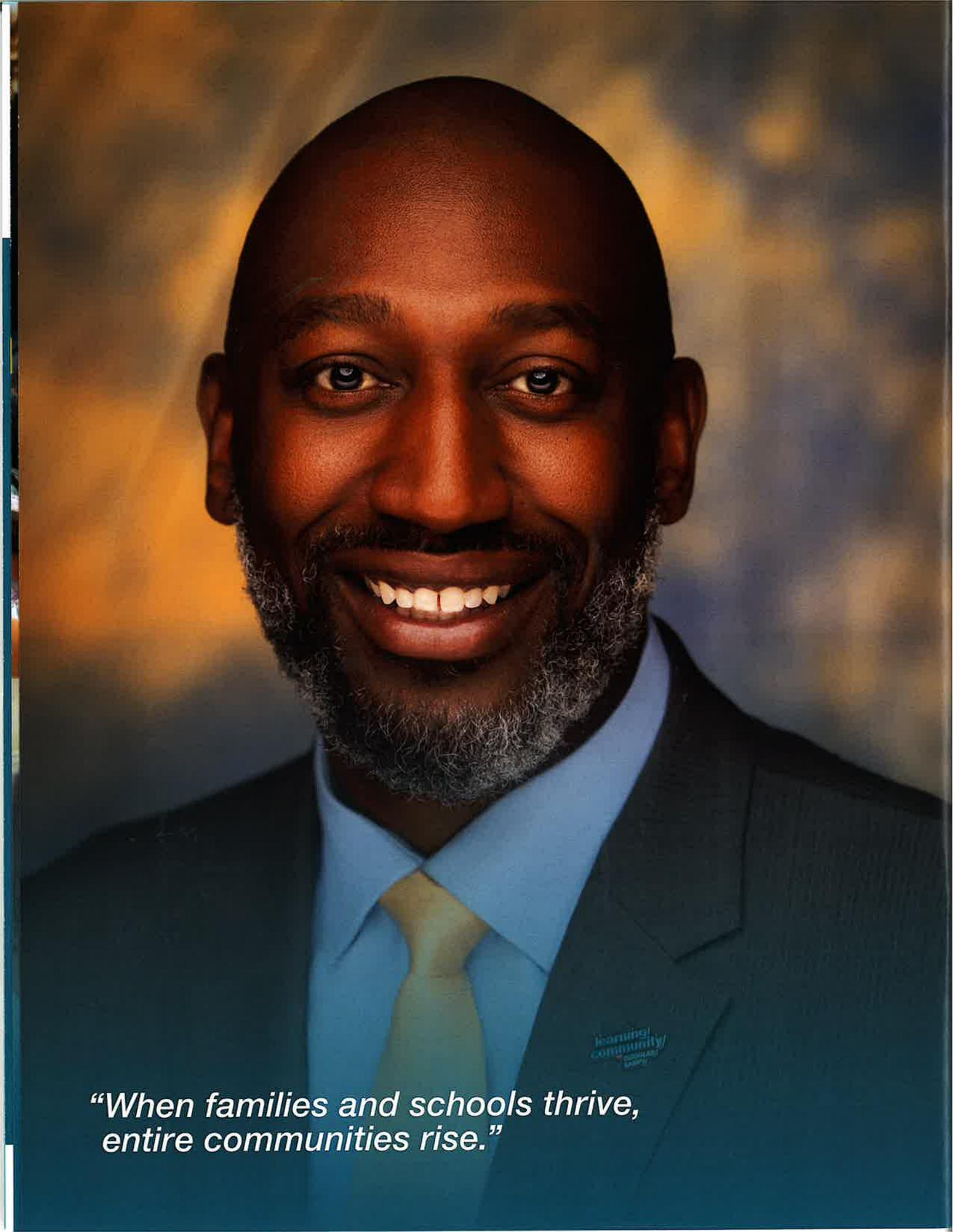


We're Here to Challenge the Opportunity Gap

The Learning Community works with children and families to challenge the opportunity gap through early childhood education, family engagement and district initiatives.

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*“When families and schools thrive,
entire communities rise.”*

Welcome Letter from the CEO

We are the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy County

DEAR PARENTS, EDUCATORS, SUPERINTENDENTS, DISTRICT LEADERS, COMMUNITY PARTNERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND FRIENDS,

Welcome to *We Are the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties*. This booklet is more than a reflection of our work—it is a celebration of who we are together. It tells the story of partnership, perseverance, and purpose, and of a shared belief that when families and schools thrive, our communities grow stronger and more united.

At the Learning Community, our vision is clear and unwavering: that all children achieve academic success without regard to social or economic circumstance. Guided by this vision, our mission calls us to action: in collaboration with school districts, community organizations, and families, we demonstrate, share, and implement effective practices that measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families that are facing troubling economic circumstances.

Every day, across Douglas and Sarpy Counties, we see that mission come to life. Families engaged in our programs are growing in confidence and connection. Parents and caregivers are gaining valuable language, workforce, and parenting skills—strengthening their households and building hope for the future. Educators, superintendents, and district leaders are innovating and collaborating to meet families where they are, ensuring that every student has the support needed to succeed. Through the compassionate guidance of our Educational Navigators and community partnerships, families are becoming empowered advocates for their children’s learning and long-term success.

These stories reflect the heart of our work and the values that guide us:

- Access & Opportunity — Every child deserves a fair and equal chance to succeed.
- Partnership & Collaboration — By working together, we create greater impact.
- Evidence & Continuous Improvement — We learn, adapt, and act with purpose.
- Whole-Family Approach — Strong families build strong futures.
- Courage & Urgency — The time to make a difference is NOW.

To our parents and families, thank you for your courage, trust, and commitment to your children’s growth. To our educators, superintendents, and district leaders, thank you for your dedication, innovation, and leadership in classrooms and communities alike. To our community partners, thank you for standing beside us to expand opportunity and hope. To our elected officials and legislators, thank you for your continued leadership and belief in the transformative power of education. And to our students, who inspire us every day—your potential is limitless, and your success is our purpose.

We Are the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties is not just a title—it is a declaration. It reminds us that this mission belongs to all of us: parents, educators, district leaders, partners, and community champions working together to build a future filled with opportunity and hope.

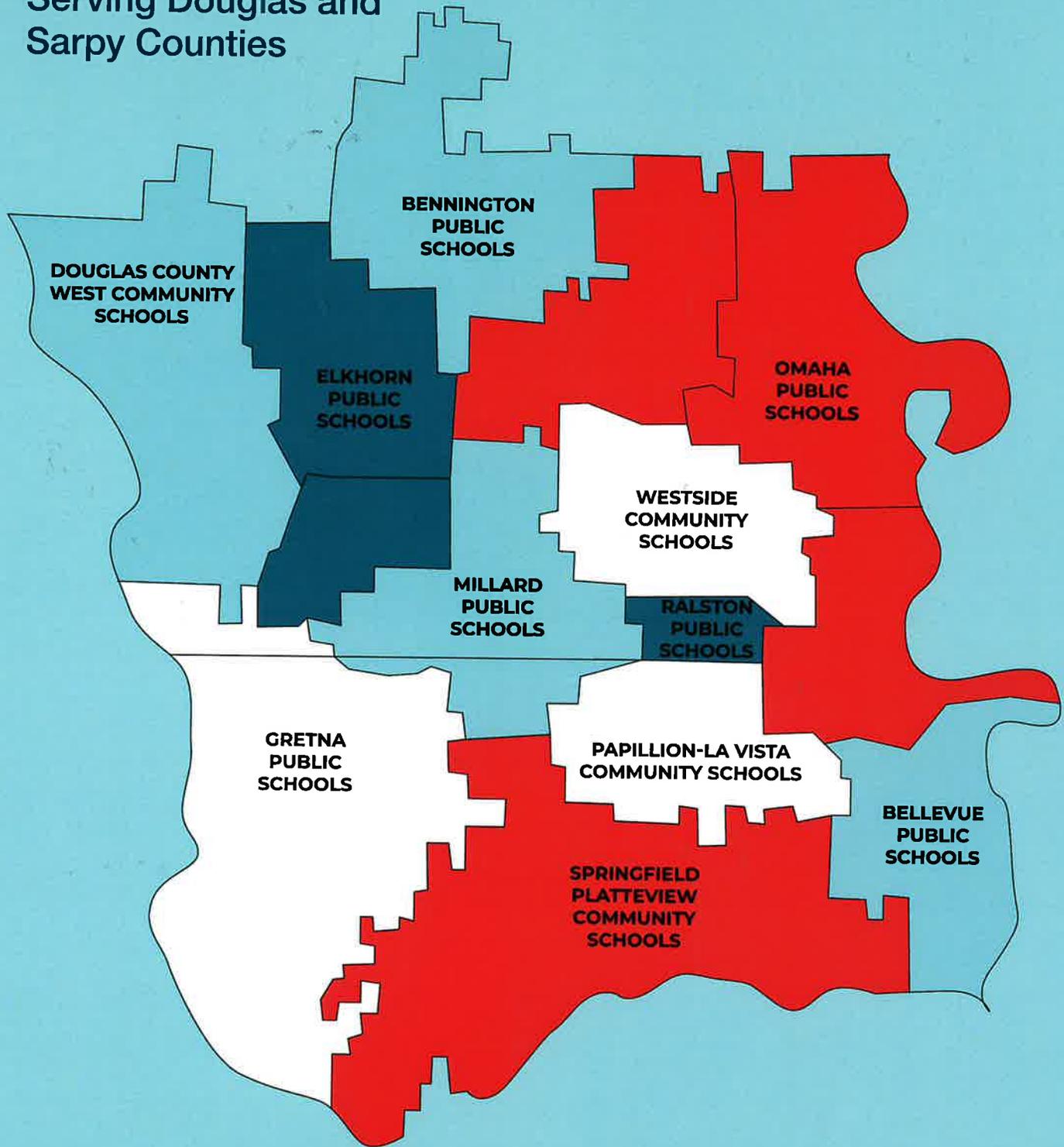
Together, we are creating stronger schools, empowered families, and thriving communities—one partnership, one classroom, and one child at a time.

With gratitude, hope, and determination,

Gerald M. Kuhn, CEO

Serving the Community

Serving Douglas and Sarpy Counties



The Learning Community connects 11 school districts across Douglas and Sarpy Counties—supporting families through collaboration, innovation, and opportunity.

Douglas County: Omaha, Westside, Millard, Ralston, Elkhorn, Bennington, Douglas County West
Sarpy County: Bellevue, Papillion La Vista, Gretna, Springfield Platteview

Who We Serve

A Shared Commitment to Every Child's Success

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties brings together 11 public school districts and a network of community partners committed to improving educational outcomes for every child.

We serve a region that represents Nebraska's largest and most diverse population—urban and suburban, multilingual and multicultural. Families across these two counties share a common goal: to give their children the best possible start in life.

Through collaboration with educators, local organizations, and families, the Learning Community builds bridges between schools and neighborhoods, aligning early childhood education, family engagement, and community resources to reduce opportunity gaps and strengthen student success.

Every program, partnership, and initiative is designed to meet families where they are—ensuring that all children, regardless of zip code, have access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Early Child Learning Centers 2024–2025

Total Families Impacted



North Center Impact



South Center Impact



Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council provides leadership and oversight for the Learning Community's programs, partnerships, and initiatives. Together, Council Members work to strengthen educational opportunities, support families, and foster collaboration across Douglas and Sarpy Counties.



SHARNELLE SHELTON

Subcouncil 2 | Chair



MARK HOEGER

Subcouncil 3 | Vice Chair



CYNTHIA A. JOHNSON

Subcouncil 1 | Secretary



TIM HALL

Subcouncil 6 | Treasurer



DAVID PRESTON, JR.

Subcouncil 1



CAROL HAHN

Subcouncil 2



WARREN WHITTED, JR.

Subcouncil 3



RAQUEL RODRIGUEZ

Subcouncil 4



STEPHEN BLOOM

Subcouncil 4



DOUGLAS BRADY

Subcouncil 5



TONYA WARD

Subcouncil 5



JASON TAYLOR

Subcouncil 6

Executive Leadership



GERALD KUHN

Chief Executive Officer



ANDREW KECK

Finance Director



ITZENI LOPEZ, MSW, MPA

Executive Director of
Elementary Learning
Centers



MONICA WELLS, M.S.ED

Director of Strategic
Initiatives



LATOYA MURRAY, SHRM-CP

Human Resources/
Operations Director



KIONE LOWE

Executive Assistant



About Our Programs

LEARNING CENTERS:

The Learning Community Centers create pathways for family success by combining parent education, early learning experiences, and direct access to community supports. Through home visits, parenting workshops, adult education, and partnerships with schools and community organizations, both centers help families equip children to thrive from birth through elementary school.

Focus:

- Empower parents as their child's first and most important teacher
- Strengthen early learning and school readiness outcomes

Reach:

- Serving families in proximately to North and South Omaha
- Engaging hundreds of parents annually through workshops, home visits, and navigation services

Impact:

- Families show greater confidence supporting learning at home
- Improved communication with teachers and stronger community connections
- Early data shows gains in kindergarten readiness and family stability

SUPERINTENDENT'S CHILDHOOD PLAN:

A collaborative framework between the Learning Community and school districts to strengthen teaching and learning from birth through third grade. The plan integrates district support, teacher training, and family engagement to create stronger early learning systems.

Focus:

- Improve quality and continuity of early childhood education

- Support educators through research-based professional development and family engagement strategies

Reach:

- Implemented with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute
- Engages 11 public school districts and thousands of children from birth to grade three

Impact:

- Improved classroom quality and instructional practices
- Stronger alignment between early childhood and elementary education
- Consistent family engagement that extends learning beyond the classroom

METROPOLITAN OMAHA

EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM (MOEC)

Founded in 1988, the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC) is a collaborative partnership dedicated to advancing public education across the Omaha metro area. Serving as a hub for innovation, shared learning, and collective action, MOEC unites school districts, higher education institutions, and community partners to strengthen teaching, leadership, and student success.

Focus

- Foster collaboration among educational institutions to address shared challenges and priorities
- Advance effective practices that improve learning across all levels of education

Reach

- Includes public school districts, community colleges, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Engages education leaders and professionals across the metropolitan area through meetings, task forces, and joint projects



Impact

- Promotes regional alignment and shared strategies that enhance educational quality and equity
- Serves as a catalyst for innovation, partnership, and continuous improvement in public education

DISTRICT INITIATIVES:

District Initiatives provide flexible funding and technical support to empower schools to innovate and address the unique needs of their students.

Focus:

- Fund and support district-led projects that reduce achievement gaps
- Promote literacy, attendance, and family engagement through local innovation

Reach:

- Investments made annually across 11 member districts
- Projects target key areas of student well-being and academic performance

Impact:

- Measurable gains in academic outcomes and engagement
- Increased family participation and collaboration with community partners
- Better alignment between in-school and out-of-school supports

WORKFORCE INNOVATION:

The Workforce Innovation program connects education and employment by linking families, schools, and local industries to prepare students and parents for future success.

Focus:

- Bridge the gap between education and employment. Support long-term career success through mentorship and skill-building

Reach:

- Connects middle and high school students, recent graduates, and families
- Partners include Avenue Scholars, D2 Center, Whispering Roots, and the Omaha Innovation Connection Hub

Impact:

- Students explore career pathways and develop technical and professional skills
- Families gain access to financial literacy and career readiness tools
- Employers benefit from a more prepared, local workforce

PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

Partnerships are at the heart of the Learning Community's approach, ensuring that families and educators have access to the support they need for success in school and life.

Focus:

- Connect families and schools with community partners addressing health, housing, and education needs

Reach:

- Collaborations with the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, OneWorld, Omaha Public Schools, Bellevue Public Schools, and local nonprofits

Impact:

- Expanded access to essential family services
- Reduced barriers to learning and attendance
- Stronger, more coordinated systems that promote long-term family success

Early Learning Centers

Parent University at Learning Community of North Omaha
Family Learning at Learning Community of South Omaha

CENTER DIRECTORS



DR. TANYA SANTOS
North Center Director



ANNE O'HARA
South Center Director

OUR CENTERS

Empowering families through education, connection, and community—because when parents grow, children succeed.

Key Elements of the 2Gen approach include:

- Early Childhood Development
- Health and Well-being
- Post-Secondary and Employment Pathways
- Economic Assets
- Social Capital groups for staff and future educators.



PARENT EDUCATION

- English as a Second Language / GED Classes
- Workforce Development
- Parenting Workshops
- Family Strengthening Workshops
- Home Visits

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

- Onsite Child Learning Activities
- Sibling Activities (summer)

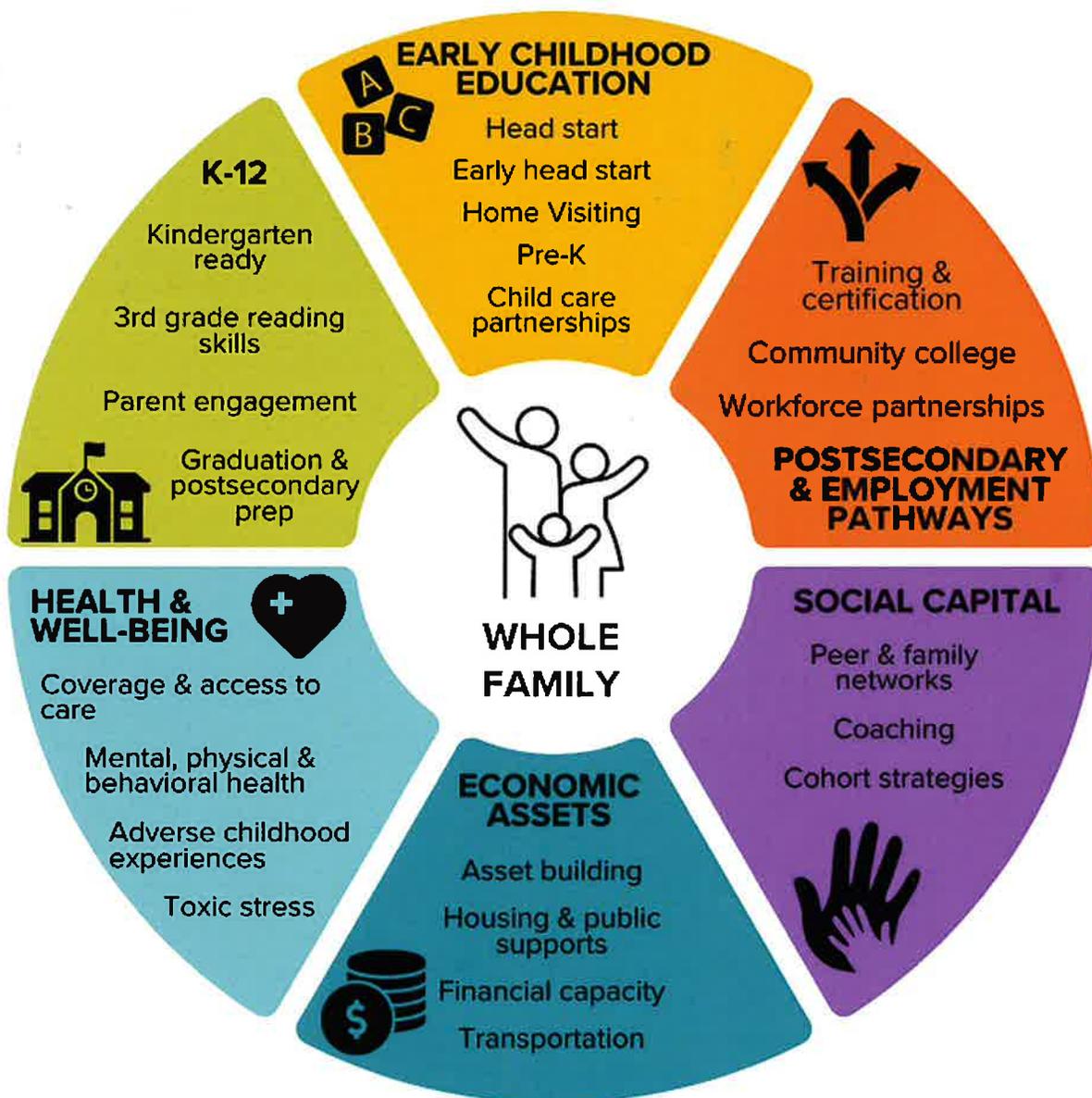


INTERACTIVE PARENT CHILD EDUCATION

- Educational Field Trips
- Family Camp
- Reading Programs
- College Prep
- Home Visits

2Gen Approach

The Learning Community uses a two-generation (2Gen) approach in designing early childhood and family engagement programs at each of the centers, Family Learning at the 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, 2023). 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.



District Initiatives

Category	Attendance Intervention	Early Childhood Education	Early Literacy	Extended Learning	Instructional Coaching	School As Hub
Bellevue Community Schools		X			X	X
Bennington Community Schools					X	
DC West Community Schools		X	X	X		X
Elkhorn Community Schools			X	X		
Gretna Community Schools	X				X	
Millard Community Schools			X		X	X
Omaha Public Schools		X	X		X	X
Papillion-La Vista Community Schools		X	X			
Ralston Community Schools				X	X	X
Springfield Platteview Community Schools	X			X		
Westside Community Schools					X	X

In partnership with school districts, the Learning Community supports innovative, district-led efforts that enhance learning opportunities for children and families. These initiatives reflect our shared mission and vision—ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of social or economic circumstance.

- ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION**
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
- EARLY LITERACY**
- EXTENDED LEARNING**
- INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING**
- SCHOOL AS HUB**

Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

The Intensive Early Childhood (IEC) Partnership, a collaboration between the Learning Community and Omaha Public Schools, strengthens early learning through evidence-based practices that support both educators and families. Rooted in research by Yazejian & Bryant (2012), the model integrates intensive teaching teams, reflective coaching, professional development, and family engagement. Since its launch in 2013, the IEC Partnership has expanded to serve classrooms across multiple schools, reaching 27 classrooms during the 2024–2025 school year.

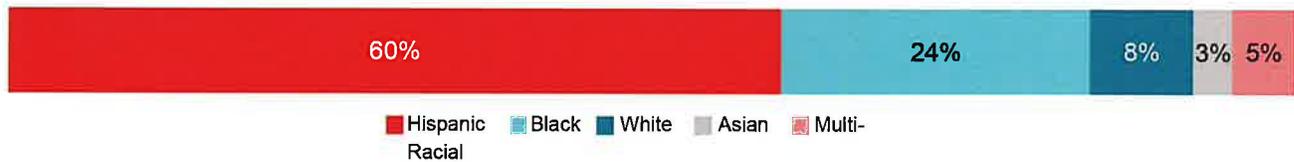


The expanded IEC partnership supported classrooms at the following schools:

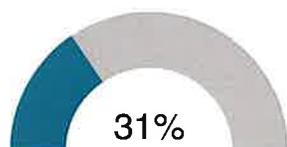


CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

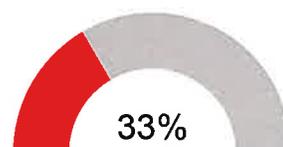
RACE



GENDER



Have an IEP



English Language Learners



Partners

Through meaningful partnerships and funding support, the Learning Community works hand in hand with schools and organizations that share our commitment to helping children and families learn, grow, and succeed together.





learning community

**DOUGLAS
SARPY**

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OMAHA, NE 68110
402.505.4301

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: December 4, 2025

The Rules and Regulations Committee reports on the December 4, 2025, meeting of the committee. Members present were chair Maggie Douglas, vice chair Liz Renner, Elizabeth Tegtmeier, and Kirk Penner.

Committee members reviewed the Report on Rules and Committee Report. Ami Huff highlighted the two hearings that are scheduled in December

The committee reviewed revisions to Rule 11, Regulations for the approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by Schools Board or Educational Service Units and for Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants. The public hearing was held on October 15, 2025. The committee, having no concerns, recommends approval.

The committee reviewed revisions to Rule 20, Regulations for the Approval of Educator Preparation Programs. The public hearing was held on October 24, 2025. The committee, having no concerns, recommends approval.

The committee reviewed revisions to Rule 47, Regulations for Career Academy Programs Established by School Districts. The public hearing was held on November 26, 2025. The committee, having no concerns, recommends approval.

The committee reviewed revisions to Rule 89, Regulations and Procedures to Incentivize Distance Education. The public hearing was held on November 6, 2025. The committee, having no concerns, recommends approval.

NDE staff provided information on Rule 10, Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools. Committee members had previously confirmed interest in reviewing policy issues related to sections 013 Waivers and Plans and 014 Loss of Accreditation.

NDE staff provided a public input draft on Rule 24, Regulations for Certification Endorsements and highlighted the changes made to the endorsements. The committee recommends moving forward with the public input draft.

NDE staff provided information on Rule 19, Enrollment Option Program. Input was received from legislative staff and other partners on an opportunity to revise Rule 19 to meet current needs of

students, families, and schools. The committee recommended that NDE staff proceed with revisions for Rule 19.

The committee reviewed a consent agenda item related to the Mentor Teacher Program Guidelines.

The committee also met on November 5, 2025, to discuss feedback and changes to Rule 13, Regulations and Procedures for Exemption Schools for Which Parents Elect not to Meet Legal Requirements for School Approval and Accreditation. The public hearing is scheduled for December 19, 2025.

This concludes the Rules and Regulations Committee report.

Maggie Douglas, Chair

*Submit a printed copy to the Committee Chair and email to the Recording Secretary.



To: Dr. Brian L. Maher, Commissioner of Education
From: Debra Holmes, Paralegal
Date: November 25, 2025
Subject: Report on Rules

Approved by the Governor and Secretary of State

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 3, *Regulations Governing High Ability Learners*

Public Hearing held:	April 29, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:	June 6, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General:	October 7, 2025
Approved by the Governor:	November 20, 2025
Effective Date:	November 30, 2025

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 8, *Regulations and Procedures for Community Achievement Plan Approval School Finance and Budgeting/State Funding of Educational Service Units and Learning Communities*

Public Hearing held:	August 18, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:	September 5, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General:	October 23, 2025
Approved by the Governor:	November 20, 2025
Effective Date:	November 30, 2025

Revision – Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 15, *Regulations and Procedures for English Learner Programs in Nebraska Public Schools*

Public Hearing held:	June 2, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:	June 6, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General:	October 8, 2025
Approved by the Governor:	November 20, 2025
Effective Date:	November 30, 2025

Repeal - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 22, *Regulations Governing the Master Teacher Program*

Public Hearing held:	April 29, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:	June 6, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General:	October 3, 2025

Approved by the Governor: November 4, 2025
Effective Date: November 15, 2025

Repeal - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 25, *Regulations Governing the Excellence in Teaching Act*

Public Hearing held: April 29, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education: June 6, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General: October 6, 2025
Approved by the Governor: November 4, 2025
Effective Date: November 15, 2025

Repeal - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 26, *Regulations and Procedures for Mentor Teacher Programs*

Public Hearing held: April 29, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education: June 6, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General: October 6, 2025
Approved by the Governor: November 4, 2025
Effective Date: November 15, 2025

Revision - Title 93, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapters 1-16, *Personnel Rules*

Public Hearing held: May 15, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education: June 6, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General: October 3, 2025
Approved by the Governor: November 4, 2025
Effective Date: November 15, 2025

Awaiting Approval by the Attorney General

Revision – Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 86, *Regulations and Procedures for Public School Breakfast Program Reimbursement*

Public Hearing held: August 18, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education: September 5, 2025
Approved by the Attorney General:
Approved by the Governor:
Effective Date:

Hearings held – Awaiting Approval by the Board

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 11, *Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants*

Posted for Public Input: July 17-30, 2025
Public Hearing held: October 15, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:
Approved by the Attorney General:
Approved by the Governor:
Effective Date:

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 20, *Regulations for the Approval of Educator Preparation Programs*

Posted for Public Input: July 8-22, 2025
Public Hearing held: October 24, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:
Approved by the Attorney General:
Approved by the Governor:
Effective Date:

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 47, *Regulations for Career Academy Programs Established by School Districts*

Public Hearing held: November 24, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:
Approved by the Attorney General:
Approved by the Governor:
Effective Date:

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 89, *Regulations and Procedures to Incentivize for the Education Innovation Fund Program – Distance Education Equipment Reimbursement and Incentives*

Public Hearing held: November 6, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:
Approved by the Attorney General:
Approved by the Governor:
Effective Date:

Hearings Scheduled

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 51, *Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs*

Public Hearing to be held: December 17, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:
Approved by the Attorney General:
Approved by the Governor:
Effective Date:

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 13, *Regulations and Procedures for Exempting Schools for which Parents Elect Not to Meet Legal Requirements for School Approval and Accreditation*

Public Hearing to be held: December 19, 2025
Approved by the State Board of Education:
Approved by the Attorney General:
Approved by the Governor:
Effective Date:

Information Items for December Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting

None.

Other Rules in the Revision Process

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 6, *Regulations and Standards for Uniform Sharing of Student Data, Records and Information*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 10, *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 14, *Regulations and Procedures for the Legal Operation of Approved Nonpublic Schools*

Repeal - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 17, *Regulations Governing the Approval of Alternative Schools, Classes, or Programs for Expelled Students*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 19, *Regulations Regarding School Enrollment*

Revision – Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24, *Regulations for Certificate Endorsements*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 27, *Regulations and Standards for Professional Practices Criteria*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 28, *Professional Practices Investigations, Hearings, and Determinations by the State Board*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 55, *Rules of Practice and Procedure for Due Process Hearings in Special Education Contested Cases*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 91, *Regulations Governing Driver Qualifications and Operational Procedures for Pupil Transportation Vehicles*

Revision - Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 92, *Regulations Governing the Minimum Equipment Standards and Safety Inspection Criteria for Pupil Transportation Vehicles*



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 18, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Melody Hobson, Administrator, Office of Early Childhood Education

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Action: Adopt proposed revisions to Rule 11: Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants (RR 022025.002)

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Rule

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The State Board of Education approved revisions to Rule 11: Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and For the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants) which became effective in March 2020.
- In June of 2024, The Office of Early Childhood Education began working on revising the current rule.
- Input was sought from school district staff, educational service units (ESUs), and partnering entities including the Sixpence Board of Trustees.
- Summary of input on the revisions was brought to the Rules and Regulations committee in August 2025 and the committee recommended proceeding with a hearing draft.
- The following are the proposed changes to Rule 11 contained within the hearing draft:
 - The definition of a prekindergarten program has been revised to be inclusive of kindergarten eligible children pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1101 to 79-1103
 - The definition of instructional time was changed to include home visits as instructional time, (Section 002.21)
 - The requirement that curriculum be consistent with the science of reading has been added. (Section 005.03)
 - Wording was added to clarify that children in prekindergarten programs may not be suspended pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-265.01, and that each school district shall develop and implement a policy which shall include alternatives to suspension. (Section 005.02A13)
 - The Rule 11 teacher waiver process was simplified. (Section 003.02)
 - A category of classroom staffing entitled “teacher assistant” was added. Wording was added to indicate that a teacher assistant can be employed in the before and after school hours and in infant and toddler classrooms under some conditions. (Section 005.05B)
 - Early childhood para-educator requirements were changed to match federal requirements for para-educators. (Section 005.05C)

- The Rule 11 hearing was held on Wednesday, October 15. Technical Difficulties required a second opportunity to provide testimony about the draft. The additional hearing was held on Monday, October 20.
- During the hearings one (1) person provided testimony supportive of the revision draft. Zero (0) hearing participants provided testimony in opposition to the revisions. Written testimony was submitted by the same individual who provided oral testimony at the hearing.
- Attachments:
 - Hearing summary
 - Hearing draft of Rule 11
 - Fiscal impact statement

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): Action: December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$650 This is the estimated cost to the NDE to hold the hearing and print copies for distribution upon approval of the revised rule. This will be paid through state general funds allocated to the NDE.

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS: NA

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT: NA

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS: NA

**Updated 08.15.2023*



SUMMARY OF RULEMAKING HEARINGS ON THE PROPOSED REVISIONS OF 92 NAC 11

DATE: October 21, 2025

FROM: Ami M. Huff
General Counsel

On **October 15, 2025**, a hearing was held virtually over Zoom on the proposed revisions of Title 92, *Nebraska Administrative Code*, Chapter 11 (Rule 11), Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants. General Counsel Ami Huff served as the hearing officer. A recording of the hearing is available at: [Testimony for Rule Hearings – Nebraska Department of Education](#)

SUMMARY OF ORAL TESTIMONY ON THE PROPOSED REVISION OF 92 NAC 11:

Ami Huff called the hearing to order, introduced herself, introduced the subject of the hearing, read into the record information about the legal notice of the hearing, outlined the procedures for the hearing and for receiving written testimony, and received testimony on revisions to Title 92 *Nebraska Administrative Code* Chapter 11.

Melody Hobson, Office Administrator in the Office of Early Childhood at the Nebraska Department of Education presented a summary of the proposed changes to Rule 11, as follows:

- The definition of a prekindergarten program has been revised to be inclusive of kindergarten eligible children pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat §§ 79-1101 to 79-1103.
- The definition of instructional time has been changed to include home visits as instructional time.
- The requirement that curriculum be consistent with the science of reading has been added.
- Wording has been added which clarifies that children in prekindergarten programs may not be suspended pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-265.01, and that each school district shall develop and implement a policy which shall include alternatives to suspension.
- The Rule 11 teacher waiver process has been simplified.
- A category of classroom staffing entitled “teacher assistant” has been added. Wording has been added that a teacher assistant can be employed in the before and after school hours and in infant and toddler classrooms under some conditions.

- Early Childhood Para-educator requirements have been changed to match federal requirements for para-educators.

ORAL TESTIMONY:

Testimony was received from Mitchell Clark, a policy advisor at First Five Nebraska. Mr. Clark testified in support of the Rule 11 changes. He stated these changes will streamline the waiver process for teacher certification; provide alternative pathways for classroom staff; and clarify the use of early literacy materials and instruction. Mr. Clark stated these changes are timely and necessary to address the demand for high quality early childhood education in Nebraska. Mr. Clark stated that programs continue to face significant staffing shortages. The initial waiver shows enrollment in public preschool has rebounded, but data from the Bureau of Labor statistics indicates that the number of preschool teachers is rebounding more slowly.

Mr. Clark further testified that he is in support of Section 3, which streamlines the waiver process to ensure pre-kindergartener programs can navigate staffing challenges; and Section 5 which creates alternative pathways to help fill the pipeline with qualified educators by introducing a new teacher assistant classification and aligning para educator requirements with federal law.

Mr. Clark also supported Section 5.03, which acknowledges the developments in early literacy instruction by reiterating the need for research-based materials in the classroom and training procedures aligned with age-appropriate reading sciences. He stated that research-based early literacy tools are essential to support literacy outcomes at higher grade levels, unlocking future opportunities for Nebraska's youngest learners.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY:

Written testimony was submitted by Mitchell Clark on October 20, 2025, and is attached to this report.

Melody Hobson, Office Administrator in the Office of Early Childhood at the Nebraska Department of Education, thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Ami Huff, hearing officer and General Counsel of the Nebraska Department of Education, thanked everyone for their patience in starting the hearing late, and closed the hearing on Rule 11.

On **October 20, 2025**, a continuation of the October 15, 2025 hearing was held virtually over Zoom on the proposed revisions of Title 92, *Nebraska Administrative Code*, Chapter 11 (Rule 11), Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants. General Counsel Ami Huff served as the hearing officer. A recording of the hearing is available at: [Testimony for Rule Hearings – Nebraska Department of Education](#)

SUMMARY OF ORAL TESTIMONY ON THE PROPOSED REVISION OF 92 NAC 11:

Ami Huff called the hearing to order, introduced herself, introduced the subject of the hearing, read into the record information about the notice of the hearing, stated this hearing was a continuation of the hearing on October 15, 2025, to allow members of the public to attend who did not have access to the zoom link at the last hearing, outlined the procedures for the hearing and for receiving written testimony, and received testimony on revisions to Title 92 *Nebraska Administrative Code* Chapter 11.

Melody Hobson, Office Administrator in the Office of Early Childhood at the Nebraska Department of Education presented a summary of the proposed changes to Rule 11, as follows:

- The definition of a prekindergarten program has been revised to be inclusive of kindergarten eligible children pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat §§ 79-1101 to 79-1103.
- The definition of instructional time has been changed to include home visits as instructional time.
- The requirement that curriculum be consistent with the science of reading has been added.
- Wording has been added which clarifies that children in prekindergarten programs may not be suspended pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-265.01, and that each school district shall develop and implement a policy which shall include alternatives to suspension.
- The Rule 11 teacher waiver process has been simplified.
- A category of classroom staffing entitled “teacher assistant” has been added. Wording has been added that a teacher assistant can be employed in the before and after school hours and in infant and toddler classrooms under some conditions.
- Early Childhood Para-educator requirements have been changed to match federal requirements for para-educators.

ORAL TESTIMONY:

There was no oral testimony at the October 20, 2025 hearing.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY:

Written testimony was submitted by Mitchell Clark on October 20, 2025, and is attached to this report.

Melody Hobson, Office Administrator in the Office of Early Childhood at the Nebraska Department of Education, thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Ami Huff, hearing officer and General Counsel of the Nebraska Department of Education, closed the continuation of the hearing on Rule 11.



October 15, 2025

Nebraska State Board of Education
Nebraska Department of Education
500 S. 84th St.
Lincoln, NE 68510

RE: Rule 11 changes

President Tegtmeier and Members of the Nebraska State Board of Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mitchell Clark and I am a Policy Advisor at First Five Nebraska, a statewide public policy organization that supports quality early care and learning opportunities for Nebraska's youngest children. I am here to testify in support of the proposed Rule 11 changes, particularly those which streamline the waiver process for teacher certification, provide alternative pathways for classroom staff, and clarify the use of early literacy materials and instruction.

The proposed changes are both timely and necessary to address the demand for high-quality early childhood education in Nebraska—a cornerstone for children's long-term success. However, as you know, programs continue to face significant staffing shortages due to broader workforce challenges and more competitive wages in other school settings. Since the initial waiver was implemented in 2020, enrollment in public preschool has rebounded, but data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the number of preschool teachers is rebounding more slowly.

Streamlining the waiver process in Section 003 is necessary to ensure that pre-kindergarten programs can navigate staffing challenges. Likewise, the alternative pathways proposed in Section 005 will help fill the pipeline of qualified educators by introducing a new teacher assistant classification and aligning paraeducator requirements with federal law.

The proposed changes in Section 005.03 also acknowledge developments in early literacy instruction by reiterating the need for research-based materials in the classroom and training procedures aligned with age-appropriate reading science. Research-based early literacy tools are essential to supporting literacy outcomes at higher grade levels, unlocking future opportunities for Nebraska's youngest learners.

Thank you again, President Tegtmeier and members of the Nebraska State Board of Education for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitchell Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mitchell Clark
Policy Advisor
First Five Nebraska

TITLE 92 - NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 11 - REGULATIONS FOR THE APPROVAL OF PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNITS AND FOR THE ISSUANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRANTS

001 General Provisions

001.01 Statutory Authority. This Chapter is adopted pursuant to **Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-318, 79-265.01, and Sections 79-1101 to 79-1104 and 79-318** of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska (R.R.S.).

001.02 Scope and Application of this Rule. This Chapter governs the approval of prekindergarten programs established by school boards or educational service units for children ages birth to **compulsory kindergarten-entrance age** under the provisions of **Neb. Rev. Stat. § Section 79-1104 R.R.S.** This Chapter also governs the issuance of the Early Childhood Education Grants to school districts for programs serving children ages three to **compulsory kindergarten-entrance age** under the provisions of **Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ Sections 79-1101 to 79-1103 R.R.S.**

001.03 Related Regulations. In addition to the requirements of this Chapter, public school districts are also governed by regulations contained in Title 92 Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC), Chapter 10, dealing with the accreditation of schools; 92 NAC Chapters 21 and 24 dealing with teacher certification and endorsement; 92 NAC Chapters 51 and 52 dealing with special education programs; and 92 NAC Chapter 19 dealing with enrollment. Public school districts operating a child care program may also be governed by 391 NAC Chapter 3 dealing with licensure of child care centers. Nothing in this Chapter may be interpreted to supersede the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, 20 USC § § 1400 et al., including corresponding federal regulations, the Nebraska Special Education Act, and 92 NAC Chapters 51 and 52 where appropriate.

002 Definitions

002.01 At risk when used with reference to a child means the child is experiencing conditions or factors which could have a negative impact on his or her development or learning, including but not limited to such factors as low birth weight, poverty, being a child of teen parents or parents who did not graduate from high school, or living in a home

whose occupants have limited ability to speak and understand English.

002.02 Board means the State Board of Education.

002.03 Center-based program means a prekindergarten program serving children in a class on a part-day or full-day program basis.

002.04 Class means a group of children who are receiving early childhood services in a classroom for a specific time period established by the school district or educational service unit. When there is more than one group of children (example: a morning group and an afternoon group), each group represents a distinct class for all purposes and must meet all requirements of this Chapter. Each class will meet instructional hour requirements for center-based programs indicated in Section 005 of this Chapter.

002.05 Commissioner means the State Commissioner of Education.

002.06 Comprehensive services means services other than the educational and family development and support components of the prekindergarten programs that are accessible to program participants including, but not limited to, nutritional, medical, dental, social, and mental health services.

002.07 Compulsory kindergarten-entrance age means a child will reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year.

002.08~~002.07~~ Contact Hours, when used in conjunction with home-based programs, means that program staff will have contact with each enrolled family at least three (3) times each month and a minimum total of 180 minutes per month.

002.09~~002.08~~ Curriculum means an intentional design to enhance children's learning that is appropriate for the age and development of the children and is designed and implemented to promote positive outcomes in the areas of social, emotional, intellectual, language, physical, and aesthetic development, for all children served in the prekindergarten program.

002.10~~002.09~~ Department means the State Department of Education, which is comprised of the Board and the Commissioner.

002.11~~002.10~~ Developmentally appropriate means that the learning environment and teaching strategies are based on widely accepted

theories and research about the typical and atypical growth, development, and learning of children.

002.12~~002.11~~ Established, when used with reference to prekindergarten programs established by a school board or educational service unit, means a prekindergarten program that is operated by a school district or educational service unit directly; or by contract with another entity; or in coordination, cooperation, collaboration or partnership agreement with another entity.

002.13~~002.12~~ Family development and support means those components of a prekindergarten program which recognize the central role of the family in their children's development. Family development and support includes, but is not limited to, home visitation, parent resources and information, conferences, and referrals for additional services for children and families.

002.14~~002.13~~ Family literacy means education and related activities which involve children and their families in interactive literacy experiences.

002.15~~002.14~~ Full-day program means a prekindergarten center-based program that provides instruction, programming, and services for 6 or more hours per day in a class setting.

002.16~~002.15~~ Home-based program means a prekindergarten program that specifically provides home visiting services and does not include a center-based component. This definition includes Sixpence programs as described in subsection 005.13, but does not apply to or include special education services in the home under Rule 51 and Rule 52 (92 NAC 51 and 52).

002.17~~002.16~~ Home visiting services means a method of service delivery for child and family development and support where guidance, information, and child development services are offered in partnership with the family. Services may be provided for either home- or center-based programs in the family home or at another location determined by the family and the home visiting specialist or teacher. This definition includes Sixpence home-visiting programs as described in subsection 005.13, but does not apply to or include special education services in the home under Rule 51 and Rule 52 (92 NAC 51 and 52) or the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA), Title I, Part C services.

~~002.18~~002.17 Home visitor means a person who provides family development and support services under the supervision of a home visiting specialist or a teacher.

~~002.19~~002.18 Home visiting specialist means a person who develops, supervises, and provides home visiting services.

~~002.20~~002.19 Infant means a child age birth to 18 months.

~~002.21~~002.20 Instructional hour when used in connection with center-based programs means a period of time, at least sixty (60) minutes long, which is used for teaching in the following areas of children's growth and learning: social-emotional development, cognitive learning in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics, science, and problem solving; creative arts, health and nutrition; and physical and motor development. Meal or snack time is part of the program curriculum and provides opportunities for learning and social development, as well as nutrition, and therefore, is included as part of the instruction time. Outdoor and gross motor time will be included as part of the instruction time. Sharing information with the family outside of the school during home visits will count as instructional time. Time spent transporting children from home to the school and back or; conducting parent/teacher conferences in the school setting or home visits will not count as instructional time.

~~002.22~~002.21 Instructional hour, when used in connection with home-based programs, means contact hours. Time spent conducting home visits or phone contact will count as contact hours. Parent/teacher conferences are not considered contact hours.

~~002.22~~ Kindergarten entrance age means five years of age on or before July 31 of the current school year.

002.23 Paraeducator means an individual who serves in a non-teaching role under the supervision of a teacher certificated to teach pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

002.24 Parent means parent or legal guardian.

002.25 Part-day program means a prekindergarten center-based program that provides instruction, programming, and services for less than 6 hours each day in a class setting.

002.26 Partnership agreement means, for the purposes of this Chapter,

a formal written agreement that describes the level and nature of commitment of each party to the prekindergarten program. The partnership agreement should describe the following: resources contributed by each partner; rights and responsibilities of each partner; and any other relevant information agreed upon by all parties. The parties are not required by this Chapter to enter into partnership agreements or form a partnership under the Nebraska Uniform Limited Partnership Act.

002.27 Prekindergarten program means all early childhood part-day or full-day center-based programs (may be called preschool, Head Start, child care, Sixpence or some other name depicting a center-based program) and/or home-based programs provided for children who have not reached the age of ~~six~~ five on or before ~~December~~ July 31 of the current school year.

002.28 Preschooler means a child age 3 years to ~~kindergarten~~ compulsory kindergarten-entrance age.

002.29 School year means the time period between July 1 and June 30 each year.

002.30 Suspension means the temporary removal of a child from the learning setting due to a child's behavior including requiring the child to cease attendance for a specified period of time, reducing the number of days or amount of time that a child may attend, removing the child from the regular group setting for an extended period of time, or requiring the parent or the parent's designee to pick up a child for reasons other than illness or injury.

~~002.31~~ 002.30 Teach means and includes, but is not limited to, the following responsibilities as found in ~~subdivision (12) of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-101~~ Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-101(12): (a) the organization and management of the classroom or the physical area in which the learning experience of prekindergarten age children takes place; (b) the assessment and diagnosis of the individual educational needs of the children; (c) the planning, selecting, organizing, prescribing, and directing of the learning experiences of the children; (d) the planning of teaching strategies and the selection of available materials and equipment to be used; (e) the evaluation and reporting of children's progress; and (t) ~~plus~~ the provision of a learning environment and opportunities for positive relationships with children and families.

~~002.32~~ 002.31 Teacher means a person who is certificated pursuant to

92 NAC 21 to teach.

002.33 Teacher assistant means a person who provides care, support, and education under the direction of a teacher certificated to teach pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

002.34 ~~002.32~~ Toddler means a child age 18 months to 3 years.

003 Prekindergarten Program Approval Process

003.01 Intent to Operate Statement: Any public school district or educational service unit intending to establish a prekindergarten program will provide the following information to the Department at least 60 days prior to providing any such program:

003.01A A written statement indicating the intent to establish a prekindergarten program meeting the requirements of this Chapter and a description of the prekindergarten program to be provided. The description will include the type of service to be provided, the planned number of instructional hours for a center-based program or contact hours for a home-based program, and the ages of children in the program. This statement will be signed by the school district superintendent or the educational service unit (ESU) administrator.

003.01B Written verification that the district or educational service unit staff member who coordinates the prekindergarten program holds a Nebraska Teaching Certificate and has at least 9 college credit hours in early childhood education.

003.01C When known, name of the certificated teacher or teachers who will assume teaching responsibilities.

003.02 Approval Requirements. Prekindergarten programs established by school boards or educational service units will be approved by the Board pursuant to this Chapter upon the recommendation of the Commissioner. Approval requires compliance with the requirements identified in this Chapter.

003.02A School systems may submit a request for a waiver for subsections 004.07 and 005.05A of this Chapter listing each staff member that does not meet those requirements. To be eligible for a waiver, the following minimum information is required and must be submitted within 90 ~~30~~ days of the hire date of each staff:

003.02A1 Copy of each advertised job posting and starting salary, and

003.02A2 List of all other applicants for the position along with their resume and/or application, **if any**, and

003.02A3 Resume of person hired, and

003.02A4 A copy of an approved course of study from a cooperating college or university showing the staff member will be able to achieve a teaching certificate with an early childhood endorsement within four years. Such course of study should also include a copy of the staff member's current transcripts **that shows:**

~~003.02A4a Twelve (12) graduate hours in early childhood education; or~~

~~003.02A4b Bachelor's degree or higher including 12 undergraduate hours in early childhood education; or~~

~~003.02A4c Associate's degree in early childhood education.~~

003.02A5 For teachers of **a** prekindergarten center-based program, provide the plan developed as required by subsection 005.0SA for the staff member to obtain the required endorsement.

003.02B The Commissioner will submit the waiver request to the Board with his or her recommendation for approval or denial. The Board may approve the requested waiver if the components of the plan will promote quality learning, equity, and/or accountability. The Board will reject the waiver if the plan and requested waiver would not provide quality learning, equity, and/or accountability.

003.02C The approved waiver **may be renewed annually** request will not exceed four (4) years.

003.03 Duration and Continuation of Program Approval. Program approval is granted for one year from each July 1 through the following June 30. Renewal is based on the program's compliance with this Chapter during the prior school year.

003.03A Districts approved for a waiver of subsection 004.07 for specifically identified staff must provide the courses each staff member subject to a waiver completed towards that staff member's approved course of study as part of the Early Childhood Program Report as described in subsection 003.06. Renewal of program approval is dependent upon the annual progress.

003.04 Approval For the Purpose of Early Childhood Education Continuation Grants or the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOA). Prekindergarten programs established by school districts may be approved annually for purposes of TEEOSA or for Early Childhood Education continuation grants under this Chapter on the annual submission of the following by the establishing district:

003.04A An Early Childhood Program report demonstrating that the program will continue to meet the requirements of this Chapter, and, for programs receiving grants, a continuation plan demonstrating that the program will continue to meet grant requirements.

003.04B For programs receiving grants, a proposed operating budget demonstrating that the program will receive resources from other funding sources equal to or greater than the sum of any grant received pursuant to this Chapter for the prior school year plus any calculated state aid as calculated pursuant to subsection (1) of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1103 for the prior school year.

003.05 General Reports. The head administrator of each school district or educational service unit establishing a prekindergarten program will include information about such programs in the ~~Nebraska Department of Education~~ approved data system. All early childhood data is due as specified by the data system calendar.

003.06 Early Childhood Program Report. An Early Childhood Program Report Form will be electronically submitted annually on or before by October 15 of each year through the Department portal, ~~and on the form provided by the Department.~~ The report form is contained in Appendix A of this Chapter. When the report reflects failure to comply with the requirements of this Chapter, it will be accompanied by a written plan for correcting the violation(s). The plan is subject to approval by the Commissioner or his or her designee. The Commissioner or his or her designee may approve the plan if in his or her judgment it is reasonably calculated to correct the violation prior to the end of the current school year.

004 Requirements For All Prekindergarten Programs (Center-based and Home-based) Established By School Boards or Educational Service Units

004.01 Stated Purpose. Each program will have a stated purpose of promoting social, emotional, intellectual, language, physical, and aesthetic development and learning for the children served and of promoting family development and support.

004.02 Planning. Each program will have a planning period. The planning period will include activities associated with:

004.02A Determining the community's unmet needs for early childhood education for prekindergarten children in terms of the number of such children in the community, an estimate of the number of children at risk, kinds of programs available, numbers of children birth to compulsory kindergarten-entrance age who are not currently receiving services, and barriers to the provision of services.

004.02B Developing cooperative relationships with public and nonpublic providers of early childhood programs, including the development of cooperative agreements and contracts, as needed to carry out the proposed program.

004.02C Recruiting and training staff.

004.02D Identifying and listing existing school-community resources available to provide comprehensive services to the program participants.

004.03 Advisory Committee. A local Early Childhood Advisory Committee will be established with membership representing families and community members.

004.03A An existing advisory committee such as that required for services to children below age five (5) with disabilities in Title 92 NAC Chapter 51, a Head Start Policy Council, or a Title I Advisory Committee, may serve this purpose if the representation conforms with this section and the mission is expanded to encompass the purpose of this Chapter.

004.03B Advisory Committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act as described in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 84-1407 to 84-

1414.

004.04 Coordination with Existing Programs and Funding Sources.

Each program will develop, and keep on file, a written plan to show that the program will be coordinated or contracted with existing programs, including those listed in subsection 004.04A and nonpublic programs which meet the requirements of this Chapter. Each program will develop and keep on file a written plan to coordinate and use a combination of local, state, and federal funding sources including, but not limited to, those listed in subsection 004.04A in order to maximize the participation of economically and categorically diverse groups of children and to ensure that participating children and families have access to knowledge of comprehensive services that may be available.

004.04A For the purposes of subsection 004.04, existing programs and funding sources are as follows:

004.04A1 Grants provided through the Early Childhood Education Grant Program for children ages three to compulsory kindergarten-entrance age under Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1103 and the Early Childhood Grant Program for children ages birth to three (Sixpence Grants) under Neb. Rev Stat. § 79-1104.02

004.04A2 Programs for children with disabilities below five years of age funded through the Special Education Act, the Early Intervention Act, and funds available through the flexible funding provisions under the Special Education Act.

004.04A3 The federal Head Start Preschool or Early Head Start program.

004.04A4 Title I of the federal funds provided through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and subsequent reauthorizations or other appropriate federal legislation.

004.04A5 Child care assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services.

004.04A6 Local district funds.

004.04A7 Funds obtained through contracts with other school districts, such as contracts to provide services to children below age five with disabilities pursuant to 92 NAC 51.

004.04A8 Private grants and gifts.

004.04A9 Parent fees from the program's locally-developed sliding scale.

004.04A10 Nonpublic prekindergarten programs which meet the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1104(2) and this Chapter.

004.05 Fees. Fees if charged will not exceed the actual cost for providing prekindergarten programs. Programs charging fees will have a plan to use a sliding fee scale in order to maximize the participation of economically and categorically diverse groups. Programs may waive fees on the basis of need. This subsection does not allow any school district to fail to meet its responsibilities under the Special Education Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-1110 to 79-1167).

004.06 Program Coordinator. Prekindergarten programs will be coordinated by either a certificated district staff member or an employee of an agency with whom the district has a partnership agreement who holds a current Nebraska Teaching Certificate with at least 9 college credit hours in early childhood education and has the authority and responsibility to ensure compliance of this Chapter.

004.07 Program and Staff Requirements. All teachers and administrators in prekindergarten programs established by school district or educational service units will hold a valid certificate or permit to teach issued by the Department pursuant to 92 NAC 21 unless a waiver has been granted by the Board pursuant to subsection 003 .02A in which case the specific staff member or members listed as the subject of the waiver, will temporarily be exempt from the requirement in subsections 004.07 and 005.05A. Each center-based part-day or full-day program will also meet program and staff requirements in Section 005 of this Chapter. Each home-based program will also meet the program and staff requirements in Section 006 of this Chapter.

004.08 Participation and Inclusion. Participation of children and families in any program under this Chapter will be voluntary. Programs will not exclude children verified as having disabilities and will include to the extent possible children of diverse social and economic characteristics.

004.08A Birth Certificates. Within 30 days of enrollment, parents or guardians must submit to the district a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other documentation in compliance with the

Missing Children's Identification Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 43-2001 through 43-2012.

005 Additional Program and Staff Requirements for Prekindergarten Programs Serving Children Birth to Compulsory Kindergarten-Entrance Eligibility Age in a Center-Based Program

005.01 Instructional Hours. Each class in the program will operate a minimum of twelve (12) instructional hours per week during the school year. Programs receiving grant funds pursuant this Chapter or receiving Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) funds will operate a minimum of four hundred and fifty (450) instructional hours per school year.

005.01A Pursuant to the provisions of Neb. Rev Stat. § 79-213, school systems unable to meet the minimums for instructional hours due to epidemic sickness, severe storm conditions, or destruction of the school house may request permission from the Board to offer fewer than the minimum hours by submitting an affidavit sworn to by the secretary of the school board and explaining the circumstances resulting in the request.

005.02 Family Development and Support. Each center-based part-day or full-day prekindergarten program will provide a strong family development and support component which recognizes the central role of parents in their children's development and establishes a working partnership with each parent. The family development and support component will include, at a minimum:

005.02A Written information for families about the program's philosophy, policies, and procedures.

005.02B An orientation to the program for children and families.

005.02C At least two (2) home visits per year between the parent(s) and the teacher to discuss the child's development and learning. If the family decides to have the visit at a location other than the home, it must be conducted at a location determined jointly by the family and teacher.

005.02D Specified opportunities for program staff to dialogue with families through such activities as parent conferences, participation on advisory committees, needs assessments, participation as classroom volunteers, and flexible scheduling of meetings and

events.

005.02E Services based on the family's needs and interests that include but are not limited to, components that will enhance parenting skills and the family's ability to access community resources.

005.03 Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Curriculum Practices. and Assessment. The part-day or full-day center-based prekindergarten program will provide a play-oriented learning environment, which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials. Programs must implement developmentally appropriate research-based early childhood curricula, including additional curricular enhancements, as appropriate that are based on scientifically valid research and have standardized training procedures consistent with the science of reading for children of this age and include curriculum materials to support implementation.

005.03A A written program plan will be developed to explain and implement the program. The written program plan will include a description of how the program curriculum, practices and assessment provide a variety of developmentally appropriate, experiential activities which:

005.03A1 Promote a positive self-concept in each child.

005.03A2 Foster attachments for all children by ensuring they have consistent teachers and paraeducators daily.

005.03A3 Develop social skills in each child.

005.03A4 Encourage each child to think, reason, question, and experiment.

005.03A5 Foster both receptive and expressive language development and provide early literacy/pre-reading experiences.

005.03A6 Incorporate family literacy experiences.

005.03A7 Develop an understanding of mathematical concepts including quantities of things, of time, and of space.

005.03A8 Enhance each child's physical development and skills.

005.03A9 Encourage sound safety, health, and nutritional practices, including avoidance of controlled substances.

005.03A10 Stimulate each child in creative expression and appreciation of the arts.

005.03A11 Include exploratory play in a language and literacy-rich environment during a majority of the daily schedule.

005.03A12 Reflect and respect the diversity of races, national origins, gender, and physical and mental abilities in the larger society and with particular emphasis on the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children enrolled through planned activities, use of materials, and use of equipment.

005.03A13 Use positive, age-appropriate techniques of child guidance including redirection, anticipation, elimination of potential problems, and encouragement. Suspension of prekindergarten aged children is prohibited pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-265.01. Each school district shall develop and implement a policy which shall include alternatives to suspension.

005.03A14 Use child assessment (evaluation) practices based on documentation gathered through an established system of ongoing observation and assessment to provide objective measures of each child's performance and progress in development and learning to meet the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines.

Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards. The summary of these standards are contained in Appendix D of this Chapter. The assessment data is will be used to plan and implement teaching strategies and activities to meet the individual needs of each child. Any formal assessment tools used will meet accepted standards of reliability and validity. Developmentally appropriate practices will be implemented for all children. Individualized support will be provided for children who are not progressing within age-expectations for literacy/pre-reading and mathematics.

005.03A15 Link the prekindergarten to the district's kindergarten/primary program through a written transition plan insuring continuity, identification, and implementation of processes necessary to facilitate the transition of children. The prekindergarten program will be included in the school district school continuous improvement plan.

005.03A16 Include a well-defined language development and early literacy emphasis, including the involvement of parents in family literacy activities.

005.03A17 Provide at least one outdoor play period (weather permitting) daily.

005.04 Evaluation and Quality Assurance. The program will participate in periodic program evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes. The evaluation process will be designed by the Department and will include, but not be limited to the following:

005.04A An assessment of program quality.

005.04B A report of child outcomes including at least one objective measure of child performance and progress.

005.04C A written plan for dissemination of the results of the evaluation.

005.05 Program Staff. The prekindergarten program will use qualified staff as set forth below.

005.05A Teacher: Any teacher in a prekindergarten program will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate with one of the following endorsements: Early Childhood Special Education (Birth through Kindergarten), Early Childhood Inclusive (Birth through Grade 3), or Early Childhood Education (Age 3 through Grade 3), or Special Education: Early Intervention Specialist, Birth through Prekindergarten. ~~The Early Childhood Education (age 3 through Grade 3) endorsement will not be valid for teaching children below age 3.~~ A program may use a teacher without such an endorsement if the teacher files with the Department, as part of the annual Early Childhood Program Report, a plan developed by the teacher and the cooperating college or university to complete the endorsement. The plan will require the teacher to receive at least six (6) semester hours of credit annually toward completion of the endorsement.

When fifty percent (50%) of the required courses have been completed, the teacher is eligible for a provisional endorsement pursuant to 92 NAC 24.

005.05B Teacher Assistant/Paraeducator.

A teacher assistant in a prekindergarten classroom serving children younger than age 3 may carry out daily activities of the classroom if a certificated teacher with one of the following endorsements: Early Childhood Special Education (Birth through Kindergarten), Early Childhood Inclusive (Birth through Grade 3), Early Childhood Education (Age 3 through Grade 3), or Special Education, Early Intervention Specialist (Birth through Prekindergarten) is assigned to a prekindergarten classroom in the program during normal school hours and plans appropriate teaching activities in collaboration with the teacher assistant.

A teacher assistant in a prekindergarten classroom in a before and/or after school program may carry out daily activities of the classroom if a certificated teacher with one of the following endorsements: Early Childhood Special Education (Birth through Kindergarten), Early Childhood Inclusive (Birth through Grade 3), Early Childhood Education (Age 3 through Grade 3), or Special Education: Early Intervention Specialist (Birth through Prekindergarten) is assigned to a prekindergarten classroom in the program during normal school hours and plans appropriate teaching activities in collaboration with the teaching assistant.

A teacher assistant/paraeducator assigned to work as a member of a team in a classroom setting will have received at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in child development/early childhood education, or the equivalent in prior training or experience as determined by the Commissioner or his or her designee. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following:

005.05B1 Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05B2 Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05B3 Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05B4 Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department's of Education-Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.

005.05B5 The program may employ a teacher assistant ~~paraeducator~~ who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the teacher assistant ~~paraeducator~~ completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment.

005.05C Paraeducator. The prekindergarten program may employ a paraeducator to work as a member of a team in a center-based program. Paraeducators must meet federal requirements for instructional para professionals.

005.05D~~005.05C~~ Home Visitor. The prekindergarten program may employ a home visitor in a center-based program who provides family development and support services under the direction of a teacher. The home visitor will have at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in one or a combination of the following areas: (i) Early Childhood Education; (ii) Early Childhood Special Education; (iii) Child Development; (iv) Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology, including coursework in the area of family centered practices or child and youth development.

005.05D~~005.05C~~1 The program may employ a home visitor who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the home visitor completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the

following:

005.05D~~E1A~~ Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05D~~E1B~~ Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05D~~E1C~~ Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05D~~E1D~~ Holding a Nebraska Home Visitor certificate will be equivalent to three (3) semester hours.

005.05D~~E1E~~ Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department's of Education Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.

005.05E~~005.05D~~ Orientation. All staff working in the prekindergarten program will be provided with an orientation prior to having direct responsibility for the care and teaching of children or for providing family and development services. The orientation will include job duties and responsibilities, building safety procedures, information about the state law regarding reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect under Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-711, child assessment information, and daily routines and schedules.

005.05F~~005.05E~~ Language Resource. If the majority of children enrolled in the program use a common language other than spoken English, at least one staff member who uses such language will be available as an active participant to communicate with such children in classroom and group experiences. Where less than a

majority of the children enrolled in the program speak a language different from the rest, one staff member or a community resource person or parent will be identified to serve as a resource to the program.

005.05G~~005.05F~~ Staff Development Plan. There will be a written plan detailing staff development opportunities for all teachers, teacher assistants, paraeducators and home visitors working in the program who have regular contact with children and their families. The written plan will include a professional development goal, the strategies for meeting the goal and a timeline for completion. The written plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

005.05H~~005.05G~~ Staff Development Hours. Teachers, teacher assistants, paraeducators and home visitors who have regular contact with children in early childhood programs will participate annually in at least fifteen (15) clock hours of Early Childhood Training Center approved staff development. All staff development will relate to prekindergarten or child development.

005.05I~~005.05H~~ Background checks. Program staff who are not required to hold a Nebraska Teaching Certificate and who have contact with children will be checked by program administration against the Nebraska Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect and the Nebraska Adult Protective Services Registry, before being hired. No person or persons may be hired or remain employed who has a felony conviction nor any misdemeanor conviction involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct as further defined and identified in 92 NAC Chapter 21 subsections 003.12 and 003.13.

005.06 Child/Staff Ratio and Group Size. Child/staff ratios and group sizes will be maintained as indicated below with staff assigned who meet the qualifications described in subsection 005.06. When age groups are mixed, the lower ratio will prevail.

005.06A If the program serves infants, at least one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate or be qualified as a teacher assistant. A paraeducator, teacher assistant, or an additional certificated teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each four (4) children with a maximum group size of eight (8).

005.06B If the program serves toddlers, at least one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska

Teaching Certificate or be qualified as a teacher assistant. A paraeducator, a teacher assistant, or an additional certificated teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each six (6) children with a maximum group size of twelve (12).

005.06C If the program serves preschoolers, at least one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate for each group of twenty (20) children. A paraeducator or an additional certificated teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each ten (10) children with a maximum group size of twenty (20).

005.06D If the programs serve children in the hours before or after the typical school day, at least one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate or be qualified as a teacher assistant. A paraeducator, a teacher assistant and/or an additional certificated teacher will be assigned to assure the ratios are consistent with 005.06A-005.06C of this chapter.

005.06E~~005.06D~~ In full-day programs where children nap, the certified teacher or teacher assistant may be out of the classroom during the nap period as long as the children are adequately supervised by other staff and the teacher or teacher assistant is readily available.

005.07 Facilities, Equipment, Health and Safety

005.07A Classroom settings will provide at least thirty-five (35) square feet per child of space usable by the children.

005.07B An outdoor play area that is protected by fences or physical barriers will be available which provides at least seventy-five (75) square feet per child of play space.

005.07B1 The fence or physical barrier will be of a type of structure that is a continuous barrier and is at least 36 inches in height, flush with the ground, and without any gaps that would allow a child to exit the protected area.

005.07C Each classroom setting and outdoor play area will be equipped with safe, durable, age-appropriate equipment and materials for indoor and outdoor activities.

005.07D If needed, modifications of the equipment, materials, and activities will be made to assure maximum participation in the ongoing activities of the program for children with disabilities attending the program.

005.07E Equipment and materials will be organized into clearly defined areas of interest that are arranged to encourage independent choice; cooperative activity; and alteration between quiet and active exploration and teacher-and child-initiated activities.

005.07F Each prekindergarten program will maintain safe, healthful, and sanitary conditions within the facilities used for the program and on the outdoor playground and meet applicable fire, safety, and health codes.

005.07G At least one (1) staff member per class who has received first aid and CPR training specifically designed for children will be on duty with the children at all times. Written verification of current training will be available.

005.08 Meals and/or Snacks. The program will provide all children in each class at least one meal and/or snack that meets USDA Child Nutrition Program guidelines each day. All tables used for meals and snack will be properly sanitized. Full day programs must provide at least one meal and one snack, or two meals each day that meet USDA Child Nutrition Program guidelines.

005.09 Immunizations. The school district will comply with all state statutes and regulations regarding the immunization status of all enrolled children.

005.10 Supervision. Adequate and appropriate supervision will be provided at all times children are in attendance, including during outdoor play and field trips. Adequate and appropriate supervision includes, but is not limited to, knowing the whereabouts and being within sight or sound of children at all times.

005.11 Toileting The program will ensure the toileting needs of all children are met immediately. The program will ensure wet and/or soiled clothing is changed immediately.

005.12 Infants and Toddlers. Programs serving children birth to age 3 will meet the following requirements:

005.12A The physical, emotional and social needs of infants and toddlers will be met consistently and promptly;

005.12B Formula and feeding schedules will be obtained from parents;

005.12C Infants will not sleep with bottles;

005.12D Bottles will not be propped;

005.12E If formula is used, it will be a commercially made product;

005.12F All breast milk and prepared formula will be refrigerated and clearly labeled with the child's name and discard date; and unused prepared formula will be discarded as indicated by the label;

005.12G Unfrozen breast milk will be discarded 48 hours after being expressed; and frozen breastmilk will be discarded three months after being expressed;

005.12H Only highchairs with three point safety straps will be used;

005.12I Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep except in cases where there is a medical reason the child will not sleep on its back; and written verification of the medical reason from the child's physician will be available;

005.12J Wet or soiled diapers will be changed immediately and disposed of in a sanitary manner;

005.12K Individual cleaning cloths will be used for diapering;

005.12L Diaper changing surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected after each use and staff will use proper hand washing techniques after each diaper change;

005.12M Toileting will be done in a manner agreed upon with the parent;

005.12N Potty chairs will be cleaned, disinfected, and properly stored away from play areas;

005.12O All cribs and playpens will meet federal safety standards as indicated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission; and

005.12P All cribs and playpens will not contain any soft objects, bumper pads, toys or loose bedding.

005.13 Sixpence Programs. School districts that receive Early Childhood Endowment birth to three grants, also referred to as Sixpence programs, may be required to meet additional grant-related program requirements established by the Endowment Board of Trustees.

006 Additional Program and Staff Requirements for Prekindergarten Programs Serving Children Birth to Compulsory Kindergarten-Entrance Eligibility Age in a Home-Based Program (Does not apply to or include special education services in the home under Rule 51 and Rule 52 (92 NAC 51 and 52) or Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESSA) Title I, Part C services.

006.01 Contact Hours in Home-Based Programs. Program staff will have contact with each enrolled family at least three (3) times each month and a minimum total of 180 minutes per month. A minimum of 120 minutes will be face-to-face contact with the family. Contact maybe completed by the home visiting specialist or the home visitor. If a school district or educational service unit contracts with another organization to provide early childhood services, the district or ESU will ensure the adequate number of hours are provided as required in this subsection.

006.02 Family Development and Support. Each home-based prekindergarten program will include the following, at a minimum:

006.02A Written information for families about the program's philosophy, policies, and procedures;

006.02B An orientation to the program for families; and

006.02C Delivery of services that are based on family needs and interests and that focus on the child's development and positive family outcomes. Services will be provided year round following a curriculum that meets the requirements of subsection 006.03 of this Chapter.

006.03 Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Curriculum, Practices, and Assessment in Home-Based Prekindergarten Programs. Each home-based prekindergarten program will provide curricula that are research-based and designed to work with families that facilitate the optimal growth and development of children, and that are culturally

appropriate for all families served. The program will also include a well-defined language development and early literacy emphasis, including the involvement of families in literacy activities.

006.03A Each program will have a written program plan that will include a description of program curriculum, practices and assessments used. This plan must be provided to all parents and be available to the Department upon request.

006.03B Use child assessment (evaluation) practices based on documentation gathered through an established system of ongoing observation and assessment to provide objective measures of each child's performance and progress in development and learning to meet the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards. The summary of these standards are contained in Appendix D of this Chapter. The assessment data will be used to plan and implement teaching strategies and activities to meet the individual needs of each child. Any formal assessment tools used will meet accepted standards of reliability and validity. Developmentally appropriate practices will be implemented for all children. Individualized support will be provided for children who are not progressing within age expectations for literacy/pre-reading and mathematics.

006.04 Evaluation and Quality Assurance. Each home-based program will participate in periodic program evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes. The evaluation process will be designed by the Department's Office of Early Childhood and will include, but not be limited to the following:

006.04A An assessment of program quality;

006.04B A report of child outcomes including at least one objective measure of child performance and progress; and

006.04C A written plan for dissemination of the results of the evaluation.

006.05 Program Staff. In order to provide home-based services, each home-based program will use one or more home visiting specialists and may in addition use one or more home visitors who meet the qualifications below:

006.05A Home Visiting Specialist. Any home visiting specialist in a

home-based program will have a bachelor's degree or higher in one of the following areas:

006.05A1 Early Childhood Education,

006.05A2 Early Childhood Special Education,

006.05A3 Child Development, or

006.05A4 Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology including at least twelve (12) graduate or undergraduate hours in any area of family-centered practices or child and youth development.

006.05B Home Visitor. Any home visitor will have at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in one or a combination of the following areas: (i) Early Childhood Education (ii) Early Childhood Special Education; (iii) Child Development; (iv) Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology, including coursework in the area of family centered practices or child and youth development.

006.05B1 The program may employ a home visitor who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the home visitor completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following:

006.05B1A Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

006.05B1B Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

006.05B1C Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of

experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

006.05B1D Holding a Nebraska Home Visitor certificate will be equivalent to three (3) semester hours.

006.05B1E Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department's of Education-Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.

006.05C Orientation. All staff working in the home-based program will be provided with an orientation prior to having direct responsibility for the care and teaching of children or for providing family and development services. The orientation will include job duties and responsibilities, home visiting safety procedures, information about the state law regarding reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect under Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-711, child assessment information, and information about the importance of family routines and schedules.

006.05D Staff Development Plan. There will be a written plan detailing staff development opportunities for all home visiting specialists and home visitors working in the home-based program who have regular contact with children and their families. The written plan will include a professional development goal, the strategies for meeting the goal and a timeline for completion. The written plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

006.05E Staff Development Hours. Home visiting specialists and home visitors who have regular contact with children in early childhood programs will participate annually in at least fifteen (15) clock hours of Early Childhood Training Center approved staff development. All staff development will relate to prekindergarten or child development.

006.05F Background checks. Home visiting specialists and home visitors who do not hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate and who have contact with children will be checked by program administration against the Nebraska Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect, and the Nebraska Adult Protective Services Registry and have a criminal background check before being hired. No person or persons may be hired or remain employed who has a

felony conviction nor any misdemeanor conviction involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct as further defined and identified in 92 NAC Chapter 21 subsections 003.12 and 003.13.

007 Early Childhood Education Grants for Prekindergarten Programs for Children Ages Three to Compulsory Kindergarten-Entrance Age.

Any school district, individually or in cooperation with other school districts or educational service units, working in cooperation with existing nonpublic programs meeting the requirements for approval in this Chapter may submit an application for an Early Childhood Education Grant for a prekindergarten program for children ages three (3) to compulsory kindergarten-entrance age that is established by the district and is approved by the Department pursuant to this Chapter. Administrative authority for Early Childhood Education Grants for prekindergarten programs for children from birth to age three (3) (Sixpence Grants) resides with the Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees.

007.01 Children Who May Be Served With Grant Funds.

007.01A All prekindergarten-age children, ages three (3) to compulsory kindergarten-entrance age, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or the social, linguistic, or economic diversity of the children's families are eligible to be served with grant funds awarded as provided in this Chapter.

007.01B Up to thirty percent of the funds granted for each prekindergarten program under this Chapter may be used to offset program costs for children who are not identified in the priorities specified in subdivisions (1)(b)(c), and (d) of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1103(t)(b), (c), and (d) or who are not supported through any of the funding sources listed in subsection 004.04 of this Chapter, in order to maximize the participation of children from diverse groups.

007.01C Early Childhood Education Grant funds will not be used to support the participation of children who are below age three or who are of compulsory kindergarten-entrance age. ~~eligible by age to enroll in kindergarten (those who reach age five by July 31 of the current year).~~

007.02 Grant Application Process.

007.02A Request For Proposals. For years in which grant funds are available, the Department will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for new or expansion grants for programs for children ages three to

kindergarten entrance age.

007.02B Forms. Each school district applying for new or expansion grant funding under this Chapter, individually or in cooperation with other school districts or educational service units, will submit an application in the Nebraska Department of Education Grants Management System, on the forms in Appendix B of this Chapter. The application process for continuation grants is established online and requires electronic submission of information identified in Appendix C of this Chapter.

007.02C Applications. Applications will be rated on the basis of conformance with the requirements of this Chapter.

007.02D Panel. The Commissioner or his or her designee will appoint a panel of persons knowledgeable in early childhood education to evaluate the applications and to recommend proposals for funding to the Commissioner.

007.02E Commissioner's Recommendation. Application funding recommendations by the Commissioner will be made at a meeting of the State Board of Education. Upon action by the Board, all applicants will be notified of the outcome.

007.02F Funding Distribution. Grant funds will be distributed by the Department using the priorities and limitations specified in subdivisions (1)(b), (1)(c), and (1)(d) of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 1103~~(1)~~; ~~(b)~~, ~~(c)~~, and ~~(d)~~. The Department will make an effort to fund programs across the state in both rural and urban areas.

007.03 Grant Funding.

007.03A Each prekindergarten program approved under the provisions of this Chapter will be eligible to apply for grant funding subject to the following:

007.03A1 Appropriation of the funds by the Legislature.

007.03A2 An annual review of compliance with the requirements of this Chapter and quality as measured over time by the program assessment tool pursuant to subsection 005.04A. Programs found with deficiencies as identified in the assessment tool must show measured progress annually.

008 Violations, Probation, or Loss of Program Approval and/or Loss of Grant Funds

008.01 Violations. When the Commissioner or his or her designee determines that the prekindergarten program is in violation of any requirement specified in this Chapter, written notice will be given to the school district or educational service unit. Any prekindergarten program in violation of any requirements specified in this Chapter will submit a written plan to the Commissioner or his or her designee describing how violations will be corrected prior to the beginning of the next school year.

008.02 Continued violation of any requirements indicated in this Chapter may result in probation, loss of approval and/or loss of grant funding as described in this Chapter. The Commissioner may, at his or her discretion, make recommendations to the ~~State Board~~ to end or deny program approval and/or grant funding or place a program on probation.

008.03 Recommendations from the Commissioner to the Board to either end or deny program approval pursuant to Sections 004, 005 and 006 or to end grant funding pursuant to Section 007 may be appealed by filing a petition and request for hearing with the ~~State Board of Education~~ pursuant to 92 NAC 61 no later than 15 calendar days after the date of receipt of written notice of the recommendation from the Commissioner or his or her designee. All hearings arising under this Chapter will be conducted in accordance with the hearing procedures of 92 NAC 61, including provisions of that Chapter relating to evidence.

008.04 When the Commissioner makes a recommendation to the Board to end or deny program approval or end grant funding, notice of the recommendation and of the right to request a hearing will be given by certified mail returned receipt requested sent at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the date of the Board meeting at which the recommendation is to be considered. The notice will be sent to the superintendent of the school district or head administrator of the educational service unit responsible for the program. The notice will specify the basis for the recommendation.

008.05 Upon review of the Commissioner's recommendation and following any hearing, the Board will make a determination regarding the program's approval or grant funding and will inform the superintendent of the school district or the head administrator of the educational service unit of the Board's decision in writing by certified

**NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
 APPLICATION for NEW or EXPANSION GRANTS**

Federal Application Number		U.S. Department District (if applicable)	
Address		City/State/Zip Code	
State Application Category: <input type="checkbox"/> For up to 100 children per classroom <input type="checkbox"/> For up to 100 children per classroom	Amount of State Funds Requested for Operating Budget	Amount of State Funds Requested for Startup Budget	Amount of Other State or Fed. Funds
Authorized Representative (AAR) certifies the Supplemental Title I Administrator is for the Authorized Representative:		Signature of Authorized Representative	
Telephone Number	FAX Number	E-mail Address	
Program Contact/Coordinator		Title	
Telephone Number	FAX Number	E-mail Address	
Principal Contact		Title	
Telephone Number	FAX Number	E-mail Address	

APPLICATION NARRATIVE

(PLEASE NOTE: Text boxes within the application template will automatically expand to include all necessary information.)

Grant Applications will be scored on a 100 point scale.

Application Summary

In one or two paragraphs, identify how the grant funds will be used (i.e., number of groups of children, number of children, number of staff and rooms).

Program Funding (Maximum 10 points)

1) Current Status: Provide information regarding the current status of preschool age children in the proposed service area.

- Number of licensed child care centers
 - Total licensed capacity
 - Number of licensed preschools
 - Total licensed capacity
 - Number of licensed family child care homes
 - Total licensed capacity
 - Number of licensed classrooms
 - Total funded capacity
 - Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Head Start
 - Number of children, age 3 & 4, with a verified disability
 - Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Title I, Part A services
 - Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Title I, Part C (Migrant services)
 - Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Title I, Homeless services
 - District-wide percentage of free & reduced lunch eligibility
 - District-wide percentage of English Language Learners
 - Total number of 3-year-old children
 - Total number of 4-year-old children
 - Out-of-district enrollment for the current school year
 - Anticipated kindergarten enrollment for the next school year
- Kindergarten is offered:
- All-Day Every-Day
 - Total number of hours per year
 - Half-Day Every-Day
 - Total number of hours per year

Define the proposed service area

PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Directions: This form should be completed by each local partner (agency, organization, etc.) including the applicant if applicable. Please make copies of this form for each partner to complete and submit with the application.

Partner Name		
Address	City	Zip Code
Contact Person	Title	
Telephone Number	Email Address	

As a partner in the program, this agency will commit the following resources, time, ongoing representation, etc. to assure that the program provides a high quality early childhood experience.

The partner's signature on this form verifies participation in the development of the grant application, a full awareness of the content of the grant application, and agreement to participate in the development of a written partnership agreement.

Signature of Partner	Date
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2) **Need:** Provide a justification of the need for an early childhood education program grant in the proposed service area. Describe the community's unmet needs for three- and four-year-old children. Describe the needs of working families and how the proposed program will impact these families. Describe the barriers to services.

3) **Community Characteristics:** Describe any significant characteristics of the community and/or changes in the community demographics (i.e., immigrant population, economic status).

Partnerships (Maximum 25 points)

1) **Partners:** Identify the partners with whom you have, or will have, a formal written partnership agreement. Check all that apply and include the name of the partner program as appropriate. A Partnership Statement of Commitment form must be included for each partner that is checked.

- Programs for Children with Disabilities (before 5 years of age) funded through the Special Education Act
- Early Intervention
- Head Start
- Early Childhood Center/Community-Based Center (before 5 years of age)
- Title I Part A
- Migrant (Title I, Part C)
- Title I Homeless
- Child Care Center
- Family Child Care Home
- Community Preschool
- Local School District
- Educational Service Unit
- Early Learning Connection Coordinator
- Health & Human Services
- Other
- Other

Describe the efforts to include community partners, especially any Head Start programs in the district. If community partners declined to participate, identify the partner and one the reason(s) for not participating. List the partners that participated in the program planning process and those partners submitting an attached Partnership Statement of Commitment.

Describe the participation of the partners in the program planning process. Describe how the partners will be involved in the start-up process and in the implementation of the early childhood education program.

Describe the plan for development of local written parent/ta agreements

2) **Advisory Committee:** Describe the plan for establishing the local early childhood advisory committee. Include a purpose statement and identify the roles and/or individuals to be represented. Describe the responsibilities of the committee members.

Program Description (Maximum 50 points)

1) **Staffing Plan:** Identify the anticipated activities and timeline for implementing the early childhood program. Describe the role of the classroom teacher in the start-up activities. Include the projected date the program will begin serving children.

2) **Program Details:** Identify the elements of the early childhood education program. Check all that apply.

Length of the Day:

- Part Day (less than 6 hours per session)
Number of hours per day
 Full Day (6 hours or more per session)
Number of hours per day

Days of operation:

- Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday

Length of program year:

- School Year (9 months)
Total number of hours per year
 Full Year (12 months)
Total number of hours per year

Classroom Ratio:

- Number of classroom groups of children
Number of children per classroom group
Number of staff per classroom group

Program Facility:

- Existing site
 New site
 Type of facility

3) **Student Population:** Identify the population of children who will be served in the early childhood education program. Check all that apply and add estimated numbers as appropriate.

- Children whose family income qualifies them for participation in the federal free or reduced lunch program
Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year

- Children who reside in a home where a language other than spoken English is used as the primary means of communication
Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year

- Children who were born prematurely or at low birth weight as verified by a physician
Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year

- Children whose parents are younger than eighteen or who have not completed high school
Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year.

- Children who have been verified with a disability
 Children who qualify for or who are enrolled in Title I
 Children who qualify for or who are enrolled in Title II
 Children who do not qualify for one of the above

- Estimated number of children who will participate in year 1 of the early childhood education program
Estimated total number of four-year-olds to be served (age 4 as of July 31)
Estimated number of three-year-olds to be served (age 3 as of July 31)

4) **Staff:** Describe how the program will recruit and assure that all teachers and paraprofessionals will meet the requirements of Rule 111 - Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants.

If staff (teacher and/or paraprofessionals) for the early childhood education program has been identified, provide the name, position, and teaching endorsement or qualifications, as applicable.

Describe how the early childhood staff will be supported to provide time for the teacher(s) and parent(s) to plan together for curriculum/instruction and assessment, as well as how staff will be supported through mentoring and/or coaching to promote best practices.

Describe the governance structure. Specifically identify who is responsible for supervising and evaluating staff in the early childhood education program. Identify the program coordinator/administrator and the number of early childhood credits earned by that person.

Describe how the program meets the applicable fire, safety, and health codes

Describe how the program will provide adequate space and appropriate equipment, both indoors and outdoors.

Meals and/or snacks/Approved USDA Solutions

- Breakfast provided
 Morning snack provided
 Lunch provided
 Afternoon snack provided
 Participate in School Lunch Program
 Participate in Child and Adult Care Food Program

Transportation:

- Provided for all enrolled children
 Provided for some enrolled children
 Not provided

Describe the family development and support activities, including family literacy activities. Identify a plan for conducting home visits. Describe how the program will meet the economic and logistical needs and circumstances of families.

Describe the written agreements with the local health department and, if needed, other community based early childhood education and care programs to provide high-quality learning experiences and a more supportive transition to kindergarten. Include information regarding how all early childhood stakeholders, community and school based, will be included in the process of these efforts to kindergarten.

Describe how the early childhood education program will be part of the district school continuous improvement process.

5) **Curriculum Framework:** Identify the curriculum framework selected for use in the early childhood education program.

Describe how the selected curriculum provides a research-based and play-oriented learning environment which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials.

Describe how the Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards will be used to support the curriculum.

If applicable, describe how technology and interactive media will be integrated into the curriculum and will support the learning and development of the children.

6) **Child Assessment and Program Evaluation:** Describe how data from child assessments and program quality assessments will be used to correct assessment, curriculum, teaching strategies, and classroom practices to meet the group and individual needs of the children.

Check the box below to indicate the applicant's agreement to participate in a program evaluation process.

- The program agrees to participate in periodic evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes as part of the evaluation process designed by the Department of Education.

7) **Professional Development:** Describe how individual staff and program professional development needs will be determined.

Identify the training needed to implement the program and child assessments as well as the curriculum. Identify the training resources available within the partnership and the timeline for providing the training.

FISCAL IMPACT
STATEMENT

Agency: Nebraska Department of Education
 Prepared by: Melody Hobson
 Date Prepared: July 16, 2025
 Phone: 402-860-4055
 Title: 92
 Chapter: 11
 Name: Early Childhood Education Programs
 Statement Status: Public Hearing Draft

Type of Fiscal Impact:

	State Agency	Political Subdivision	Regulated Public
No Fiscal Impact			X
Increase Costs	Minimal		
Decrease Costs		Potential	
Increased Revenue			
Decreased Revenue			
Indeterminable			

Description of Impact:

State Agency: It will cost approximately \$650 to hold the hearing and print copies for distribution upon approval of the revised rule. The Legislature already provides funds to the Nebraska Department of Education for this program.

Political Subdivision: Allowing a Teacher Assistant, rather than requiring a Certified Teacher in infant and toddler classrooms and in the hours before and after school is in session has the potential to decrease costs for school districts and ESUs. The amount of reduction will be dependent on number of classrooms, types and operating hours of prekindergarten programs and cannot determined at this time

Regulated Public: There is no anticipated fiscal impact regarding the revisions of the rule on the public.



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Brad Dirksen, Accreditation, Certification, & Approval Administrator
Jim Kent, Educator Preparation Program Approval Director

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Proposed Revision of Rule 20 (92 NAC 20) Regulations for the Approval of Educator Preparation Programs (RR.032025.005)

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): rule

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The February 2025 Rules and Regulations Committee meeting included an overview of the educator preparation program approval process (RR.022025.004). A draft of the Rule 20 Implementation Guidance regarding the science of reading and the annual application for educator preparation programs was shared. Information was shared regarding how the Department is adjusting the annual application process to review science of reading and dyslexia requirements for the 2025-26 annual approval of educator preparation programs.

The committee identified the need to add a reference to Rule 20 regarding the dyslexia guidance document and an approval requirement that encompasses Nebraska revised state statute 79-11, 158 (course requirements regarding dyslexia). There was an expressed interest in how the Board could hold educator preparation programs more accountable and the possibility of identifying outstanding performance.

The committee requested a potential draft of Rule 20 to be provided to them by the June 2025 committee meeting. The public input draft was posted for input on July 8, 2025, and closed on July 22, 2025. Public input received was provided to the Board.

The Rules and Regulations Committee discussed public input received regarding the public input draft at their August 2025 meeting. The committee requested the Department staff to make revisions in accordance with the recommendations on the Rule 20 – Public Input Summary and Recommendations document from the August 2025 meeting. The revisions were incorporated into the public hearing draft of Rule 20 and a public hearing was held on October 24, 2025. There was no verbal public comment during the public comment; however, one letter of support was received and is attached.

Two scrivener's errors were found in the Rule 20 hearing draft, both in section 004.06B which referenced incorrect (outdated) sections of 92 NAC 21 (Rule21). The errors have been corrected in the draft being presented to the Board.

This agenda item allows for a potential approval vote on revisions to Rule 20 at the December 2025 Board meeting. The public hearing draft and summary of the changes are attached.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: \$0

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

**Updated 08.15.2023*

TITLE 92 - NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 20 - APPROVAL OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

001 General Information.

001.01 Statutory Authority. This chapter is adopted pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-318.

001.02 Scope and Application. This chapter provides procedures for the approval of educator preparation programs conducted in Nebraska standard institutions of higher education and designed for the purpose of certifying teachers and administrators and other professional school personnel requiring certification.

001.03 Related Regulations. Throughout this chapter reference is made to other Department of Education regulations relating to teachers and administrators. Procedures for the issuance of certificates to teach, counsel, or supervise in Nebraska schools are contained in Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC), Chapter 21. 92 NAC 24 contains regulations regarding the issuance of endorsements on teaching, administrative, or special services certificates in Nebraska. 92 NAC 27 contains regulations and standards for professional practices criteria. Electronic access to these regulations is available from the Department at <https://www.education.ne.gov/legal/current-nde-rules-regulations/>.

001.04 Implementation Date. The implementation date of this chapter will be the effective date of approval.

001.05 Technical assistance document for dyslexia. Electronic access to the document is available from the Department at <https://education.ne.gov/ela/dyslexia-guide/>.

002 Definition of Terms. As used in this chapter:

002.01 Academic year means a school year which consists of two (2) regular consecutive semesters that occur from fall through spring.

002.02 Accreditation means the status of public recognition that an accrediting agency grants to an educational institution and is recognized by the United States Department of Education.

002.03 Advanced program means a program at the postbaccalaureate level for (a) educators who have previously completed initial

preparation or (b) the preparation of other school professionals.

002.04 Board means the State Board of Education.

002.05 Candidate means an individual admitted to, or enrolled in, a program for the initial or advanced preparation or the continuing professional development of educators.

002.06 Certificate means a teaching, administrative, or special services certificate issued by the Department pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

002.07 Clinical practice means a culminating, supervised experience that provides a candidate with opportunities to demonstrate competence in the professional role for which the candidate is preparing and that includes student teaching or an internship.

002.08 Commissioner means the State Commissioner of Education.

002.09 Cooperating educator means an educator employed in a setting utilized for a clinical practice who has the appropriate certification and experience to perform observation, coaching, mentoring, and/or evaluation of a candidate.

002.10 Coursework means the experiences required to complete the preparation program and may include class instruction, field experiences, or other required activities.

002.11 Credit hour means the equivalent of fifteen (15) instructional class periods of fifty (50) minutes or more.

002.12 Department means the State Department of Education, which is comprised of the Board and the Commissioner.

002.13 Diversity means differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and/or geographical areas.

002.14 Educator means a holder of a teaching, administrative or special services certificate.

002.15 Educator certificate means a certificate issued pursuant to standards comparable and equivalent to those in 92 NAC 21.

002.16 Educator preparation program means the system of procedures,

coursework, and activities in a college, school, or department of an approved standard institution of higher education that result in the initial or advanced preparation of teachers, administrators, and other school professionals.

002.17 Endorsement means an area of specialization indicated on a certificate issued pursuant to 92 NAC 21 signifying that the individual has met specific content preparation requirements contained in 92 NAC 24.

002.18 Exceptional expertise requirement means documented scholarship, skill, or experience in the priorities set by the educator preparation program, such as content specialization, diversity, assessment, or technology.

002.19 Evidence-based practices means program or instructional practices that are backed by reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence. For reading instruction, this means a systematic, sequential, research-based system of explicit literacy instruction.

002.20~~19~~ Faculty means all professional education faculty, including adjunct faculty and graduate students, employed by a standard institution of higher education who teach one or more courses in professional education and/or supervise field experiences.

002.21~~20~~ Field experience means an opportunity for candidates to observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research to develop professional education knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Field experiences include practicum and clinical practice requirements. Field experiences are designed and implemented through collaboration with school partners and faculty and occur in school systems or other settings serving students.

~~002.21 Human relations requirement has the same meaning as human relations training in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-807 and as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-808.~~

002.22 Initial program means a program at the baccalaureate or postbaccalaureate level that prepares candidates for their first certificate. They include five-year programs, master s programs, and other postbaccalaureate and alternate route programs that prepare individuals for their first certificate.

002.23 Internship means a clinical practice in which candidates practice

and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required for advanced programs.

002.24 Practicum means a field experience completed prior to a candidate's clinical practice.

002.25 Professional dispositions means candidate attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated in interactions with students, families, educators, and communities consistent with ethical performance criteria contained in 92 NAC 27.

002.26 Professional education coursework means coursework, including field experience, designed to develop educator competencies, including, but not limited to, student development, learning differences, learning environments, content knowledge and its application, assessment, planning for instruction, instructional strategies, collaboration, and ethical practice.

002.27 School partner means school systems and other education programs that collaborate with the educator preparation program in designing, developing, and implementing field experiences, delivery of instruction, and research.

002.28 School system means an institution that is accredited or approved by the Department to provide instruction at any level PK-Grade 12, including an educational service unit accredited by the Department.

002.29 Science of reading means a vast interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.

002.30~~29~~ Special authorization means a process by which the Department may grant approval for a standard institution of higher education to offer a pilot endorsement program.

~~002.30 Special education requirement has the same meaning as special education training in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-807 and as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-809.~~

002.31 Standard institution of higher education, or institution has the same meaning as in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-807.

002.32 Student teaching means a clinical practice in a school system

which provides an initial preparation candidate with an experience to demonstrate competence in the professional role for which the candidate is preparing.

002.33 Terminal degree means the highest degree available in a specific field of preparation or recognized by the profession.

003 Requirements for Educator Preparation Program Approval

003.01 Original Educator Preparation Program Approval

003.01A Letter of Application and Institutional Planning Report. Any Nebraska institution of higher education may apply for approval of its educator preparation program by submitting a letter of intent to seek approval and an Institutional Planning Report (IPR) signed by the chief academic officer of the institution on behalf of the governing board of the institution. These documents must be received by the Commissioner on or before January 15 of the calendar year in which the institution seeks to begin the approval process.

003.01B Governing Board Approval. The IPR must include documentation that the governing board of the institution has approved the plans and a time table whereby the institution will meet each of the requirements to become a standard institution of higher education within four (4) years.

003.01C Chapter 20 Compliance. The IPR must include the procedures and time table for compliance with the requirements in Sections 004 through 007 of this chapter.

003.01D Collaboration and Support of School Systems. The IPR must contain statements of support from school systems documenting their collaboration and assistance in planning to provide field experiences which meet the requirements of this chapter and 92 NAC 24.

003.01E The IPR must contain documentation that the institution is accredited.

003.02 Initial Provisional Approval

003.02A The Commissioner, after receiving the institution's request to begin the process of becoming a standard institution of higher

education, must appoint a team to visit the institution and report on the institution's ability to comply with the provisions of this chapter.

003.02A1 The team must schedule a visit to the institution within sixty (60) days after receiving the IPR.

003.02A2 The team must file a recommendation with the Commissioner within sixty (60) days after the scheduled visit to the institution.

003.02A3 Following a review of the institutional visit report, the Commissioner must file a recommendation with the Board regarding the application and notify the institution of the recommendations. Notification must be sent by certified mail to the chief academic officer of the institution. The institution will have thirty (30) days after receipt of the recommendation to request an opportunity for a hearing before the Board as provided in Section 008 of this chapter.

003.02A4 Following a review of the Commissioner's recommendation, and after giving the institution an opportunity for a hearing, if requested, the Board must either approve or deny the institution's implementation of the plan under provisional approval. Provisional approval permits the institution to phase in an educator preparation program, excluding clinical practice, over a period of time not to exceed three (3) years.

003.03 Continuing Provisional Approval

003.03A Provisional Approval Report. By March 1 of each year during provisional approval, the institution must file the Provisional Approval Report with the Commissioner which includes:

003.03A1 Documentation of written notification made to all candidates taking education courses that the institution has provisional approval, but is not yet approved for recommending certification;

003.03A2 Statements of continuing participation by the school systems in which the institution is placing candidates for field experiences; and

003.03A3 Documentation of the degree to which the institution

is in compliance with all applicable sections of this chapter , excluding clinical practice; 92 NAC 23; and 92 NAC 24. The Provisional Approval Report must also indicate how, in each succeeding year, the institution is progressing toward total compliance, excluding clinical practice.

003.03B The Commissioner may respond each year with a scheduled visit by a team or staff, to the institution within sixty (60) days after receiving the Provisional Approval Report.

003.03C The team or staff conducting such a visit must file a recommendation with the Commissioner within thirty (30) days after a scheduled visit.

003.03D Following a review of the report, the Commissioner must file a recommendation with the Board regarding the application and notify the institution of the recommendations. Notification must be sent by certified mail to the chief academic officer of the institution. The institution will have thirty (30) days after receipt of the recommendation to request an opportunity for a hearing before the Board as provided in Section 008 of this chapter.

003.03E Following a review of the Commissioner's recommendation, and after giving the institution an opportunity for a hearing, if requested, the Board must either approve or deny continuation of provisional or recommend temporary approval.

003.04 Temporary Approval to Offer an Educator Preparation Program
If the Commissioner recommends and the Board concurs, the institution may be granted a one (1) year temporary approval. Temporary approval allows the institution to place candidates and to recommend graduates of the program to the Department for certification. Temporary approval may be renewed on a yearly basis for a maximum of three (3) years, using the process found in Sections 003.04A through 003.04F of this chapter for each of these years.

003.04A By March 1 of each year in which the institution is operating with temporary approval, the institution must file a Temporary Approval Report with the Commissioner. The Temporary Approval Report must document complete compliance with all applicable sections of this chapter and 92 NAC 24.

003.04B The Commissioner may respond with a scheduled visit by a team or staff, to the institution within sixty (60) days after

receiving the Temporary Approval Report.

003.04C The team or staff conducting such a visit must file a recommendation with the Commissioner within thirty (30) days after the scheduled visit.

003.04D Following a review of the report, the Commissioner must file a recommendation with the Board regarding the application and notify the institution of the recommendations. Notification must be sent by certified mail to the chief academic officer of the institution. The institution will have thirty (30) days after receipt of the recommendation to request an opportunity for a hearing before the Board as provided in Section 008 of this chapter.

003.04E Following a review of the Commissioner's recommendation, and after giving the institution an opportunity for a hearing, if requested, the Board must exercise one of the following options: (a) approve the institution as a standard institution of higher education, (b) grant it temporary approval for another year, or (c) deny the institution further status as an educator preparation program.

003.04F Once the Board has approved the institution as a standard institution of higher education, the institution is subject to the provisions in Section 003.05 of this chapter.

003.05 Continuing Approval of an Educator Preparation Program.

Continuing approval will be for the period of August 1 through July 31 of the next year and will be conditional upon the institution's compliance with the requirements in Sections 003 through 007 of this chapter. An institution's failure to meet a numbered regulation will be considered a violation and will be subject to the provisions of Section 003.05E of this chapter.

003.05A Annual Board Approval. The institution must submit a list of endorsements offered, program outcomes, assurance of compliance, and correction of areas of non-compliance, if applicable, by May 15 of each year. Recommended forms may be found on the NDE Educator Preparation website.

003.05B Site Review. The State Department of Education staff may conduct periodic onsite visits to educator preparation programs to review and determine compliance with the provisions of this Chapter and other Department of Education regulations relating to teachers and

administrators.

003.05BC State Program Review. At least once every seven (7) years, the Commissioner must conduct a full review of the educator preparation program, including both an offsite and an onsite component, to determine compliance with all applicable provisions of this chapter and 92 NAC 24.

003.05BC1 The state program review must be conducted by a state team, appointed by the Commissioner, which includes representation from the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education (NCTE), persons with content knowledge in the endorsement areas offered by the educator preparation program, and Department staff.

003.05BC2 For institutions participating in a national accreditation review of educator preparation programs, the state program review must be conducted to coordinate with the national accreditation process.

003.05BC3 Offsite Review

003.05BC3a Institutional Report. Qualitative and quantitative information regarding compliance with the requirements of Sections 004 through 007 of this chapter must be submitted on a schedule established by the Commissioner. Recommended forms may be found on the NDE Educator Preparation website.

003.05BC3b Endorsement Program Folios. Information regarding each endorsement program offered by the institution must be submitted on a schedule established by the Commissioner. Recommended forms may be found on the NDE Educator Preparation website. Folio information must include:

003.05BC3b1 Documentation of compliance with the endorsement requirements in 92 NAC 24;

003.05BC3b2 Quantitative and qualitative candidate assessment and performance information; and

003.05BC3b3 Changes made in response to data regarding candidate or graduate performance and/or

in response to the needs of school systems.

003.05B**C4** Onsite Review. An onsite review must be conducted to validate information submitted by the institution in response to Section 003.05B3 of this chapter or to acquire additional information to determine compliance with the provisions of this chapter and 92 NAC 24.

003.05B**C5** Results of the state program review must be reported to the Board during the annual approval meeting.

003.05**E****D** Correction of Areas of Noncompliance. Upon confirmation of an area of noncompliance, the institution will have 30 days to submit an initial plan of correction. The institution will have six months from the date of confirmation of an area of noncompliance to provide evidence of compliance or evidence of significant progress toward compliance. The institution must submit evidence of compliance within one year from the date of confirmation of an area of noncompliance. ~~The institution will have until May 1 of the year following the Board's annual approval decision to correct areas of noncompliance identified in Section 003.05 of this chapter.~~

003.05**E****D****1** Approval on Probation. The Commissioner may recommend to the Board approval on probation for an institution with an uncorrected areas of noncompliance anytime after one year from the date of confirmation of an area of noncompliance or if the institution has not provided evidence of significant progress toward compliance within six months from the date of confirmation of an area of noncompliance or if the institution does not submit an initial plan of correction within 30 days of confirmation of an area of noncompliance. ~~as of May 1 of the first year following the Board's annual approval decision.~~

003.05**D****1a** Notification to Students. The Board may require an institution to notify current and prospective students of the approval on probation designation. Such notification must be sent to students within 30 days of the requirement being imposed by the Board. The notification must indicate the program will not lead toward certification if there is a denial of approval.

003.05**D****2** Suspension of Approval. The Commissioner may recommend to the Board the suspension of approval for an institution with an uncorrected area of noncompliance after one year following a

designation of approval on probation.

003.05D2a Notification to Students. Institutions must, within 30 days of receiving notice of a suspension of approval by the Board, notify current and prospective students of the suspension of approval. The notification must indicate the program will not lead toward certification if there is a denial of approval. For students whose acceptance into the educator preparation program occurs while a suspension of approval is in effect, professional education credits earned at the institution in the educator preparation program while the institution is on suspension will not be recognized for purposes of certification or endorsements.

003.05D3 Denial of Approval. The Commissioner may recommend to the Board denial of approval for an institution with uncorrected areas of noncompliance ~~as of May 1 of the~~ after one year following notice of a designation of approval on probation or suspension of approval.

003.05D4 Notification and Appeal. The Commissioner must notify the chief academic officer of the institution of a recommendation for an approval on probation, suspension of approval, or denial of approval in writing by certified mail. The institution will have thirty (30) days after receipt of the recommendation to request an opportunity for a hearing as provided in Section 008 of this chapter.

003.06 Special Endorsement Authorization. A Nebraska standard institution of higher education may apply for approval of a special authorization to offer an endorsement program not included in 92 NAC 24.

003.06A Application for Approval. An application must be received by the Commissioner on or before January 15 of the calendar year in which the institution seeks to begin the new endorsement program.

003.06A1 The application must include justification of interest and need for the proposed new endorsement program, educator competencies appropriate for the proposed new endorsement program, a list of the required courses that will address the competencies and accompanying syllabi, and the timetable for candidates' completion of the proposed new endorsement program.

003.06A2 The application must contain statements of support from school systems documenting the school systems collaboration and assistance in planning to provide field experience placements which meet the requirements of this chapter and 92 NAC 24.

003.06A3 Within thirty (30) days from receipt of the application, the Commissioner must assign a team to assess the information provided in the application, which may include a visit to the institution. The team must include members representing the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education (NCTE) and persons with content knowledge in the proposed endorsement area.

003.06A4 The team must file a recommendation with the Commissioner for denial of the application or provisional approval.

003.06A5 The Commissioner must provide written notification by certified mail of the decision to the chief academic officer of the institution by May 1. The institution will have thirty (30) days after receipt of the notification to request a meeting with the Commissioner if the decision is to deny approval. Following the meeting, the Commissioner must inform the institution in writing if the decision to deny is upheld.

003.06B Provisional Approval of a Special Endorsement Authorization.

003.06B1 Following provisional approval by the Commissioner, the institution may phase in the new endorsement program, excluding clinical practice, over a period of time not to exceed three (3) years.

003.06B2 By March 1 of each year following provisional approval, the institution must file a written progress report on the program with the Commissioner which must include:

003.06B2a Enrollment data and documentation of written notification to the candidates stating that the institution has provisional approval and describing candidate recourse if the program is eliminated;

003.06B2b Statements of continuing participation from

school systems for placement of candidates for field experiences; and

003.06B2c Reaffirmation or updated information regarding elements in Sections 003.06A1 and 003.06A2 of this chapter.

003.06B3 The review team identified in Section 003.06A3 of this chapter must review the progress report, which may include an onsite visit, and file a recommendation of denial, continued provisional approval, or temporary approval with the Commissioner within thirty (30) days following the review.

003.06B4 The Commissioner must provide written notification by certified mail of the decision to the chief academic officer of the institution by May 1. The institution will have thirty (30) days after receipt of the notification to request a meeting with the Commissioner if the decision is to deny approval. Following the meeting, the Commissioner must inform the institution in writing if the subsequent decision to deny is upheld.

003.06C Temporary Approval of a Special Endorsement Authorization.

003.06C1 Following temporary approval by the Commissioner, the endorsement program may place candidates and recommend completers of the program for certification by the Department.

003.06C2 By March 1 of each year following temporary approval, the institution must file a written progress report on the program with the Commissioner. The progress report must include:

003.06C2a Enrollment data and documentation of written notification to the candidates stating that the institution has temporary approval and describing candidate recourse if the program is eliminated;

003.06C2b Statements of continuing participation from school systems for placement of candidates for field experiences; and

003.06C2c Reaffirmation or updated information regarding

elements in Sections 003.06A1 and 003.06A2 of this chapter.

003.06C3 The review team identified in Section 003.06A3 of this chapter must review the progress report, which may include an onsite visit, and file a recommendation with the Commissioner to (a) continue temporary approval until the endorsement is placed in 92 NAC 24, (b) return to provisional status, or (c) deny any further approval.

003.06C4 By May 1, the Commissioner must consider the team's recommendation and provide written notification by certified mail to the chief academic officer of the institution of the decision to (a) renew temporary approval for a period not to exceed three (3) years, (b) return the endorsement to provisional status, (c) deny further approval and the reasons for the decision, or (d) recommend the special authorization be moved forward for inclusion in 92 NAC 24.

003.06C5 The institution will have thirty (30) days after receipt of the notification to request a meeting with the Commissioner if the decision is to deny approval. Following the meeting, the Commissioner must inform the institution in writing if the decision to deny is upheld.

004 Educator Preparation Program Requirements.

004.01 General Policy Statements. The institution must have a written policy stating its objectives which delineates its goals and commitment to the preparation of educators. Not all of the programs for the preparation of school personnel need to be administratively located within the educator preparation program; however all professional education programs must be organized and coordinated by the educator preparation program.

004.02 Personnel Requirements.

004.02A Program Administrator. The institution must designate an individual to administer the professional educator preparation program. This individual is required to hold, qualify for, or have held an educator certificate.

004.02B Certification Officer. The institution must designate a faculty or staff member to receive correspondence regarding this

chapter and to oversee the submission of certified records, transcripts, reports, and/or recommendations to the Department for the purpose of certification and/or endorsement.

004.02C Field Experience Coordinator. The institution must designate a faculty or staff member to coordinate field experience requirements contained in this chapter.

004.02D Cooperating Educators. The institution must ensure that cooperating educators employed by school systems or other field-based settings have a minimum of three (3) years of education employment experience and hold an appropriate certificate with an endorsement in the area or level they are supervising.

004.03 Educator Preparation Program Faculty Requirements.

004.03A Minimum Required Faculty

004.03A1 Undergraduate faculty. There must be a minimum of three (3) full-time professional education faculty.

004.03A2 Graduate faculty. Each advanced degree program leading to the doctorate must have at least three (3) full-time professional education faculty members who have earned the doctorate in the field of specialization for which the degree is offered.

004.03B Faculty Qualifications

004.03B1 All professional education faculty must hold a graduate degree or a professional degree from a college or university accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education.

004.03B2 The preparation, research, and experience of each faculty member must be in the field in which the faculty member teaches.

004.03B3 All professional education faculty, hired after July 1, 1994, must have two (2) years of PK-12 teaching experience in elementary or secondary schools approved or accredited by a state or in similarly constituted and governed schools in a state where non-public schools are not recognized by the state. Faculty who do not possess two (2) years of PK-12 teaching

experience must meet the exceptional expertise requirement.

004.03B4 At least one-third of the full-time undergraduate faculty must hold a terminal degree.

004.03B5 At least one-half of full-time graduate faculty must hold a terminal degree.

004.03B6 All faculty in programs which grant the sixth year specialist s certificate or doctorate degree must hold the doctorate and have two (2) years of teaching or school administration experience.

004.03B7 Faculty who do not possess a terminal degree must meet the exceptional expertise requirement.

004.03B8 Adjunct faculty utilized for clinical experience supervision must hold or have held appropriate certification for the area or level which they are supervising.

004.03C Faculty Load

004.03C1 For undergraduate faculty, assignments for teaching, supervision of clinical experience, and administration must not exceed twenty-four (24) credit hours within the same academic year for a full-time equivalent undergraduate faculty member except as provided in Section 004.03C3 of this chapter.

004.03C2 For graduate faculty, assignments for teaching, supervision of clinical experience, and administration must not exceed eighteen (18) credit hours within the same academic year for a full-time equivalent graduate faculty member with the exception stated in Section 004.03C3 of this chapter.

004.03C3 For faculty teaching a combination of undergraduate and graduate assignments, the load may be a proration of **twelve (12)** ~~nine (9)~~ undergraduate and **nine (9)** ~~twelve (12)~~ graduate credit hours, with total hours assigned within the same academic year not to exceed twenty-one (21) hours.

004.03C4 Supervision of clinical experiences must not exceed a ratio of eighteen (18) full-time equivalent candidates to one (1) full-time equivalent faculty member within one (1) semester.

004.04 Minimum Endorsement Offering Requirements. The institution must offer courses for a minimum of eight (8) approved subject and/or field endorsements contained in 92 NAC 24 and have on file a plan of study documenting that required courses are offered on a schedule to enable candidates access to the coursework in a four (4) year period.

004.05 Library Requirements. Library holdings, curriculum materials, and related technology resources must provide adequate scope, breadth, and currency to support education candidates and faculty. The institution must employ staff to work collaboratively with the educator preparation program to acquire relevant and current resources and to provide support services for material utilization.

004.06 Policies for Program Admission, Progression, and Completion. The institution must have on file, and systematically communicate to all candidates, specific requirements regarding candidate admission, progression, and completion of the educator preparation program, including:

004.06A Disclosure. The institution must require the prospective candidate to disclose all criminal convictions, except traffic offenses.

004.06B Notice Regarding Convictions. The institution must inform all persons who apply for admission to its program that persons who have felony convictions or misdemeanor convictions involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct, as outlined in 92 NAC 21, Section ~~003.14~~ ~~003.12~~, may only be considered for certification, or participation in field experiences, with the approval of the Department. A person with a felony conviction or a misdemeanor conviction involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct may request the approval of the Department using the procedures set forth in 92 NAC 21, Sections ~~010.02~~ ~~009.02~~ through ~~010.04~~ ~~009.04~~.

004.06C Criminal Background Check. The institution must conduct or verify an official criminal background check on candidates prior to admission to an initial teacher educator preparation program.

004.06D Grade Point Average.

004.06D1 Candidates must hold a cumulative GPA, as measured by the institution, of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent for admission to an educator preparation program.

004.06D2 Candidates for admission to clinical practice must hold a cumulative GPA, as measured by the institution, of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent.

004.06E Application. Candidates for admission to an educator preparation program must complete an application process which includes consideration of components identified in Section 004.06 of this chapter and other institution-determined criteria for selection, such as recommendations from professional educators, interviews, or essays.

004.06F Performance Assessments. The institution must identify the performance standards and assessments for successful progression and completion of the education programs offered by the educator preparation program.

005 Teacher Preparation Academic Program Requirements.

005.01 General Education Requirements. The institution must require all candidates meet the institution's general education requirements, which may also be used to meet endorsement requirements.

005.02 Professional Education Requirements. The educator preparation program must identify required coursework and/or competency leading to candidate demonstration of the following:

005.02A Student Development. The candidate understands how students grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences;

005.02B Learning Differences. The candidate uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each student to meet high standards;

005.02C Learning Environments. The candidate works with others to create environments supporting individual and collaborative learning, and encouraging positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation;

005.02D Content Knowledge. The candidate understands the

central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for students to assure mastery of the content, including the ability to integrate the Nebraska Content Standards (92 NAC 10 Appendices A-D) into instruction;

005.02E Application of Content. The candidate understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage students in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues;

005.02F Assessment. The candidate understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage students in their own growth, to monitor student progress, and to guide the candidate's and student's decision making;

005.02G Planning for Instruction. The candidate plans instruction supporting every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, technology, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of the student and the community context;

005.02H Instructional Strategies. The candidate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, build reading and writing skills, ~~through the application of the science of reading,~~ and to apply knowledge in meaningful ways. This includes developing competency for utilizing technology for instruction, assessment, and communication;

005.02I Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. The candidate engages in ongoing professional learning, models ethical professional practice, and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each student;

005.02J Leadership and Collaboration. The candidate seeks opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with students, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure student growth, and to advance the profession;

005.02K Human Relations. The candidate has met the human relations requirement as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-807 and as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-808; and

005.02L Special Education. The candidate has met the special education requirement. Special education requirement has the same meaning as special education training in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-807 and as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-809;

005.02M Foundational Literacy. The candidate will have developed consistent, systematic, and explicit routines grounded in the science of reading to ensure the delivery of evidence-based practices for all learners organized into two categories - *Foundational Skills* and *Language Comprehension* - that can be used across all tiers of instruction within a locally determined curriculum aligned to Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts.

005.02N Instruction in Dyslexia. The candidate has met the instruction in dyslexia requirement as required in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-11,158.

005.03 Field Experience. The educator preparation program must require practicum and clinical experiences that provide candidates opportunities to work with students and school partners to develop knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. Field experiences are central to candidate preparation and must provide opportunities to work with diverse students which may include, but is not limited to, differences based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, and language. These experiences range from candidate interaction with students to assuming responsibility for instructional planning and implementation, and assessment of student learning.

005.03A Practicum experience consists of a minimum of one hundred (100) clock hours of contact with students. Field-based practicum experiences are completed prior to clinical practice and provide opportunities for candidates to observe, assist, tutor, instruct, or conduct research. Practicum experiences may occur in settings such as school systems, or other settings serving students.

005.03B Clinical Practice. The educator preparation program must require a clinical practice experience for initial teacher certification in which candidates demonstrate knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions by assuming responsibility for whole class instruction in the area of the endorsement and within the grade

level for which they are preparing.

005.03B1 The educator preparation program must have a clear statement of policies and procedures relating to clinical practice available, together with the Standards for Professional Practices Criteria in 92 NAC 27, to all persons involved in the clinical practice experience.

005.03B2 All clinical practice must be conducted in a Nebraska school system, or in an approved, accredited, or otherwise legally operated school in another state or country where teachers and administrators in the school are required by law or regulation to be certificated by the state or nation s educational authority.

005.03B3 The educator preparation program must engage with school partners on a regular and ongoing basis to develop and communicate the roles and responsibilities of candidates, college supervisors, cooperating educators, and other school personnel; to provide opportunities for school partners to provide input to the program regarding candidate placements, candidate performance, and program improvement; and to develop opportunities for faculty and school-based educators to work collaboratively to enhance candidate development.

005.03B3a The educator preparation program must negotiate written agreements delineating the roles and responsibilities of candidates in clinical practice, college supervisors, and the cooperating educators.

005.03B4 The educator preparation program must require a clinical practice experience equivalent to:

005.03B4a A minimum of one (1) semester (at least fourteen (14) full-day weeks) for one (1) field endorsement; one (1) field endorsement and one (1) subject endorsement which is a content area specified in the field endorsement and is at the same grade level; or up to two (2) subject endorsements at the same grade level;

005.03B4b A minimum of eighteen (18) full-day weeks for two (2) field endorsements; one (1) field endorsement and one (1) subject endorsement which is not a content area specified in the field endorsement; one (1) field

endorsement and one (1) subject endorsement which is a content area specified in the field endorsement but is not at the same grade level; or two (2) subject endorsements which are not at the same grade level; and

005.03B4c A minimum of an additional nine (9) full-day weeks for each field or subject endorsement added to those described in Section 005.03B4a or Section 005.03B4b of this chapter.

005.03B5 The educator preparation program must ensure that a minimum of five (5) formal observations by faculty are conducted during clinical practice for candidates preparing for initial level teaching certification. Two (2) observations must be onsite and three (3) of the observations may be conducted utilizing technology which allows for visual contact between the parties.

005.03C Speech Language Pathology and School Psychologist Preparation Programs at the Initial Teacher Certification Level Field Experience. The educator preparation program must ensure that a minimum of three (3) formal onsite observations by faculty are conducted.

006 Administrator Program Academic Requirements.

006.01 Education Preparation Administrative Academic Program Requirements. The educator preparation program must identify required coursework and/or competency leading to candidate demonstration of the following:

006.01A Mission, Vision and Core Values. The candidate develops, advocates, and enacts the shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education, academic success, and the well-being of each student.

006.01B Ethics and Professional Norms. The candidate acts ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01C Equity and Cultural Responsiveness. The candidate strives for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01D Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. The candidate develops and supports intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01E Community of Care and Support for Students. The candidate develops and supports intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01F Professional Capacity of School Personnel. The candidate develops the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01G Professional Community for Teachers and Staff. The candidate fosters a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01H Meaningful Engagement of Family and Community. The candidate engages families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01I Operations and Management. The candidate manages school operations and resources to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.01J School Improvement. The candidate acts as an agent of continuous improvement to promote each student s academic success and well-being.

006.02 Advanced Program Field Experience.

006.02A The educator preparation program must have a clear statement of policies and procedures relating to field experiences which shall be made available, together with the Standards for Professional Practices Criteria in 92 NAC 27, to all persons involved in the field experience.

006.02B The educator preparation program must require field experiences for advanced certification programs.

006.02C All clinical practice must be conducted in a Nebraska school system, or in an approved, accredited or otherwise legally operated school in another state or an English-speaking school in another country where teachers and administrators in the school are required by law or regulation to be certificated by the state or nation s educational authority.

006.02D The educator preparation program must engage with school partners on a regular and ongoing basis to develop and communicate the roles and responsibilities of candidates, college supervisors, cooperating educators, and other school personnel; to provide opportunities for school partners to provide input to the program regarding candidate placements, candidate performance, and program improvement; and to develop the skills of faculty and school-based educators to work collaboratively to enhance candidate development.

007 Program Quality Indicators. The educator preparation program must establish a systematic process to address and document the following program quality indicators:

007.01 Candidate Admission and Completion. The educator preparation program utilizes information related to candidate admission, progression, completion, and graduate employment to document the institution s continuing and purposeful expectations for candidate quality;

007.02 Content Knowledge. The educator preparation program utilizes candidate performance information ~~from content tests, as set forth in 92 NAC 24,~~ to determine potential areas for improvement in content knowledge preparation of candidates;

007.03 Program Completer Follow-up. The educator preparation program utilizes a graduate follow-up process to obtain program completer input regarding satisfaction, relevance and effectiveness of their preparation for professional roles and responsibilities.

007.04 Employer Follow-up. The educator preparation program utilizes a process for collecting information from employers regarding satisfaction with the program and program completers;

007.05 Program Completer Support. The educator preparation program makes resources available to support its completers who are within the education profession; and

007.06 Continuous Program Improvement. The educator preparation program initiates continuous program improvement strategies based on regular analysis of data, current research, and/or as the result of engagement with PK-12 education partners regarding initiatives and challenges of PK-12 education.

008 Provisions for Notice and Hearing.

008.01 When the Commissioner makes a recommendation to the Board for ~~an institution to be placed on~~ **approval on** probation, **suspension of approval**, or for the denial of ~~continuing~~ approval, notice of the recommendation and of the right to request a hearing within thirty (30) days after receipt must be given to the institution by certified mail. Copies must be sent to the certification officer and the chief executive officer, if known. This notice must specify the basis for the recommendation and the tentative date the Board will consider the recommendation unless a formal hearing is requested.

008.02 If the institution files a request for a formal hearing within thirty (30) days after receipt of the recommendation, the Board must schedule a hearing date. If no formal hearing is requested, the recommendation must be considered by the Board and adopted or modified by order of the Board.

008.03 All hearings arising under this chapter must be conducted in accordance with the hearing procedures of Chapter 61 of Title 92 of the Nebraska Administrative Code.

009 Pilot Programs and Processes. An educator preparation program may submit a request to the Board for a pilot program or process to provide flexibility related to one or more regulations found in Sections 004.01 to 004.05, 004.06D to 004.06F, 005, and 006 of this chapter.

009.01 The rationale for a request for a pilot program or process may be to:

009.01A Better meet local goals;

009.01B Create an innovative solution to an unmet need; or

009.01C Respond to extenuating circumstances that cause the educator preparation program to be unable to meet one or more requirement of any section of this chapter.

009.02 The request for a pilot program or process must include at least the following:

009.02A An explanation of the circumstances leading to the request;

009.02B A description of how the pilot program or process will substitute for one or more existing regulations;

009.02C An explanation of how the program or process will provide equivalent or improved opportunities for candidates;

009.02D If appropriate, how resources will be reallocated or used differently to provide programs or services;

009.02E The length of time, not to exceed three (3) years, requested for the pilot program or process; and

009.02F Procedures for providing an annual progress report to the Board.

009.03 The Board may approve the requested pilot program or process for up three (3) years if the plan demonstrates a high likelihood that the requested flexibility related to applicable regulations of this Chapter will promote quality learning, equity, and/or accountability. The Board must reject the pilot program or process if the plan does not demonstrate a high likelihood that the requested flexibility will not promote quality learning, equity, and/or accountability.

009.04 At the end of the approved time period for the pilot program or process, the educator preparation program may request, and be granted, Board approval to continue the pilot program for a period of up to three (3) additional years if the educator preparation program demonstrates that the pilot program or process is meeting the objectives for which flexibility related to applicable regulations of this Chapter was granted.

DATE: November 19, 2025

RE: **Executive Summary** of Proposed Revisions of Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 20 (Rule 20) Regulations for the Approval of Educator Preparation Programs.

Attached for your review is a copy of Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 20 (Rule 20), *Regulations for the Approval of Educator Preparation Programs*. An executive summary of the process and substantive revisions are below.

The State Board of Education approved revisions to Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 20, *Regulations for the Approval of Educator Preparation Programs* (Rule 20) in June of 2023 which became effective in June of 2024. In February of 2025, the Rules and Regulations Committee of the State Board of Education signaled a need for additional revisions to approval regulations and has had ongoing conversations. The Nebraska Department of Education received input from educator preparation program professionals, teachers, administrators, and other interested parties to identify policy issues and explore solutions since March of 2025.

The Department has utilized the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education (NCTE) as an advisory group to aid in the identification of policy issues, propose solutions, and provide feedback to potential revisions. NCTE is an advisory group that includes equal representation of teachers, educator preparation programs, and governance groups, a total of 48 members (16 members per group). NCTE has met twice since March of 2025 and has provided substantial feedback to the revision process. Additionally, department staff formed an advisory group to discuss and provide feedback regarding potential revisions. This group met in March and July of 2025.

Based on stakeholder discussions and direction from the Rules and Regulations committee, Department staff created a public input draft of Rule 20. The public input draft was posted on the department website on July 8, 2025, which allowed for public input through July 22, 2025. The feedback from the public input draft, including NCTE, was discussed at the August 2025 Rules and Regulations Committee meeting of the State Board of Education.

Revisions to Rule 20 were made based on the public input received as directed by the State Board Rules and Regulations Committee. The purpose of the proposed revisions to Rule 20 are to (1) align Rule 20 with statutes and Rules 24 revisions, (2) increase and clarify accountability, and (3) clarify literacy requirements. The current version of Rule 20 was last updated June 4, 2024. Substantive changes contained in the draft rule revision include:

1. A reference to the technical assistance document for dyslexia;
2. Add definitions for “evidence-based practices” and “science of reading”;
3. Add authority to conduct site reviews to aid in assuring compliance;
4. Clarify and increase accountability related to noncompliance;
5. Correct an error related to faculty load requirements;

6. Revise approval requirements regarding literacy;
7. Add an approval requirement related to dyslexia as outlined in Neb. Rev. Stat.79-11,158; and
8. Update program quality indicators to reflect changes in Rule 24 related to content tests.

The Department, with input from stakeholders, has identified a couple scrivener's errors in section 004.06B. The references to sections in Rule 21 have been updated due to recent Rule 21 revisions.



10/23/2025

Dear Education Committee,

My name is Michael Chartier, Legislative Director in the Midwest for [ExcelinEd in Action](#). Our organization works with state policymakers and partner organizations to support legislation that empowers families with educational opportunities, prepares students for college and career, prioritizes K-12 literacy grounded in the science of reading, expands innovation and strengthens school performance.

I am writing to express ExcelinEd in Action's support for the amendments to [Legislative Rule 20](#). The amendments to Rule 20 ensure that Nebraska's teacher candidates are provided with training on instructional practices grounded in the science of reading as well as knowledge around identifying and providing interventions for students with characteristics of dyslexia. Further, the amendments implement a strong review process for educator preparation programs, including a one-year period to rectify areas of noncompliance and notification to students if their program was denied approval.

Supporting the preparation of our educators is crucial, as they play a vital role in shaping the minds and futures of our children. By prioritizing the amendments above, we ensure continuity and quality in education, allowing students to benefit from experienced and motivated teachers who can provide consistent, high-quality instruction.

We urge you to adopt the amendments to Rule 20 to support training in the science of reading, intervention for students with characteristics of dyslexia and a strong review process for educator preparation programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Michael Chartier
Legislative Director, Midwest
ExcelinEd in Action



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 19, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Dr. Katie Graham
Administrator, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Action Item: Approve Revisions to Rule 47 (92 NAC 47) Regulations for Career Academy Programs Established by School Districts

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Rule

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Rule 47 contains regulations for career academy programs established by school districts. The rule impacts school districts that establish career academy programs and students who participate in those programs.

Chapter 47 is authorized pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-777 and 79-318. Section 79-777 requires the State Department of Education to define standards and criteria related to career academies and authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt rules and regulations to carry out those requirements. Section 79-318 contains general authority for the State Board of Education to adopt rules and regulations.

Specifically, the State Department of Education must define standards and criteria for:

- a) The establishment, evaluation, and continuing approval of career academies,
- b) Career-based curriculum utilized by career academies,
- c) The necessary data elements and collection of data pertaining to career academies, including, but not limited to, the number of students enrolled in a career academy and their grade levels, and
- d) The establishment of advisory boards consisting of business and education representatives to provide guidance and direction for the operation of career academies.

The last revisions to Rule 47 approved by the State Board of Education became effective in November of 2013.

In March of 2025, the Rules and Regulations Committee of the State Board of Education discussed policy issues and the need for revisions to Rule 47. Department of Education staff sought input from a broad range of stakeholders to identify additional policy issues and explore solutions. Stakeholders included those who would be directly impacted by any revisions to Rule 47. An Internal Advisory Group and Wiring Group were created to lead the revisions, along with an External Advisory Group inclusive of those currently involved in

the administration and implementation of Rule 47 Career Academies, which included school, district, and ESU administrators and personnel. Engagement took place between March and August 2025 and included virtual meetings and email correspondence.

The proposed revisions included updates to language for clarity and consistency, removal of outdated deadlines and references that no longer apply, and the application of minor formatting or phrasing adjustments to align with current practice. **No substantive changes to policy intent or program requirements were introduced with this revision.**

Based on the proposed revisions and Advisory Group input, a revised draft of Rule 47 was created and presented to the Rules and Regulations Committee at their August 2025 meeting. The Rules and Regulations Committee approved the draft to move forward as a Hearing Draft and directed Department staff to move forward with a Public Hearing. The Hearing Draft was reviewed and approved by the Commissioner on October 10, 2025. A public hearing was scheduled for November 24, 2025 at 9:00AM. Results of the public hearing will be shared with Board members prior to the December 2025 State Board of Education meeting.

This agenda item allows for a potential approval vote on revisions to Rule 47 at the December 2025 Board meeting. The public hearing draft with noted revisions is attached.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025

ESTIMATED COST: The fiscal impact on the Nebraska Department of Education is approximately \$650 for filing of a public hearing notice and printing of the rule once adopted. There is no fiscal impact on K-12 school districts. There is also no fiscal impact on students, parents, or teachers.

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: N/A
- New or Renewal: N/A
- If renewal, date of first approval: N/A

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for method of procurement: N/A
- Rationale for contractor selection: N/A

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: N/A

TITLE 92 - NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 47 - REGULATIONS FOR CAREER ACADEMY PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

001 General Provisions

001.01 Statutory Authority. This Chapter is adopted pursuant to **Neb. Rev. Stat. §§** ~~Section 79-777; and 79-318 of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska (R.R.S.).~~

001.02 Scope and Application of this Rule. This Chapter governs the (a) establishment, evaluation and continuing approval of Career Academy Programs; (b) career based curriculum utilized by the Career Academy Programs; (c) necessary data elements and collection of data pertaining to Career Academy Programs including but not limited to, the number of students enrolled in ~~a~~ Career Academy Programs and their grade levels; and (d) the establishment of **an** advisory ~~boards~~ **committee** consisting of business and education representatives to provide guidance and direction for the operation of Career Academy Programs under the provisions of **Neb. Rev. Stat. §§** ~~Sections 79-777; and 79-318 R.R.S.~~

001.03 Intent. This Chapter provides for the approval and continued operation of any Career Academy Program that is established by a school district.

001.04 Related Regulations. In addition to the requirements of this Chapter, public school districts are also governed by regulations contained in Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC), Chapter 10, dealing with the accreditation of schools; 92 NAC Chapters 21 and 24 dealing with teacher certification and endorsement; and 92 NAC Chapter 51 dealing with special education programs.

002 Definitions.

002.01 Academic Courses include **English**/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies/~~History~~.

002.02 Advisory Board **Committee** means a group of business and education representatives who provide guidance and direction for the operation of Career Academy Programs.

002.03 Career Academy Program means a sequence of credit bearing

academic and ~~Career and career technical~~ **Technical Education** courses which reflect a **career cluster** ~~Career Cluster~~ selected in response to local, regional or state employment needs and demand for expertise.

002.04 Career Cluster means **an industry sector defined by groupings from Standard Occupational Classification and North American Industry Classification System codes and** ~~a grouping of career pathways and occupations identified by the Nebraska Career~~ **and Technical Education Model** contained in Appendix A.

002.05 Career Readiness Standards means the Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education on December 8, 2011 ~~Checklist~~ (contained in Appendix B).

002.06 Career **and Technical** Student Organization(s) means an organization for individuals enrolled in a **Career** ~~career~~ and **Technical** ~~technical~~ **Education** education program that engages **Career** ~~career~~ and **Technical Education** ~~technical education~~ activities as an integral part of the instructional program. The following organizations are recognized as **authorized Nebraska** ~~Career~~ **and Technical** Student Organizations: Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA); Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA); **Educators Rising**; ~~Future Educators of America (FEA)~~; HOSA/~~Future Health Professionals (HOSA)~~; Nebraska Association of DECA; Nebraska FFA Association and Nebraska SkillsUSA.

002.07 Career **and** Technical Education means educational programs that support the development of knowledge and skills **in a specific career cluster**, ~~in the following areas: agriculture, food, and natural resources; architecture and construction; arts, audiovisual, technology, and communication; business management and administration; education and training; finance; government and public administration; health science; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, and security; marketing; manufacturing; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and transportation, distribution, and logistics;~~ **as** organized by the Nebraska Career **and** **Technical Education Model**, which includes **Career and Technical Student Organizations**, ~~career student organizations;~~ **career development and** guidance, and work-based learning. Career **and** Technical Education may begin in **elementary** ~~middle~~ grades continuing through secondary education and ~~may include postsecondary education~~ **ultimately culminates in a postsecondary credential or degree.**

002.08 Commissioner means the State Commissioner of Education.

002.09 Course means a particular subject, subject area or defined sequence of learning experiences scheduled during the school day with a certified teacher assigned and with one or more students enrolled and in attendance.

002.10 Department means the State Department of Education, which is comprised of the State Board of Education and Commissioner.

002.11 Expanded ~~Extended~~ Learning means activities and programs that expand opportunities for students to participate in educational and/or experiential activities outside the normal classroom.

002.12 Industry Certification means a credential awarded by an industry association or independent agency that requires passage of an examination benchmarked to predetermined occupational or professional standards.

002.13 Learning Community means a political subdivision which shares the territory of member school districts and is governed by a Learning Community Coordinating Council and which is established pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § ~~Section 79-2102 R.R.S.~~

002.14 Middle Grades means grade(s) designated by the school district as middle and may include any grades from four through nine. The middle grades typically include at least grades seven and eight. Common middle grade configurations are grades six through eight or seven through nine.

002.15 Nebraska Career and Technical Education Model is the organizing structure of occupational knowledge and skills adopted by the Nebraska Department of Education (~~see Appendix A~~).

002.16 Personal Learning Plan means a student tool used to identify coursework and activities for the purpose of high school and postsecondary planning.

002.17 Private Entity means a business, industry, nonprofit organization or individual.

002.18 Program of Study means a coordinated non-duplicative sequence of courses within a career cluster that aligns secondary academic and Career and Technical Education ~~career technical education~~ with postsecondary education and that are listed as a Nebraska State Model Program of Study by the Department ~~at~~

<http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/>.

002.19 Postsecondary Education includes apprenticeship, workforce or employment training programs, community colleges, baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate opportunities.

002.20 Postsecondary Educational Institution means an accredited community college, state college, university or non-profit private postsecondary institution.

002.21 School District means the territory under the jurisdiction of a single public school board as authorized in Chapter 79 of the **Nebraska Revised Statutes of Nebraska**.

002.22 Teacher means a person who is certificated pursuant to 92 NAC 21 to teach.

002.23 Work-Based Learning means an educational strategy that provides a range **continuum** of experiences that are intentionally designed to help students to extend and deepen classroom instruction through experiences in the employment sector.

003 Specific Requirements for Initial Approval and Continued Operation of Career Academy Programs Established by School Districts.

003.01 Planning for Initial Approval. Each school district establishing a Career Academy Program shall conduct a planning process to be completed prior to submitting the application for initial approval. The planning process shall include the following:

003.01A Establish a Career Academy Program Taskforce consisting of representatives of education, business, industry and the community to assist in conducting the planning process which shall include but is not limited to:

003.01A1 Evaluation of the applicant district's current **Career and Technical Education** ~~career technical education~~ Program of Study offerings, career **development and** guidance **activities**, and **expanded** ~~extended~~ learning opportunities.

003.01A2 Identification of needed Career Academy Program's Program(s) of Study based on regional and state workforce and economic development needs.

003.01A3 Identification of technical skill assessment, industry certifications, work-based learning, **Career and Technical Student Organization**, ~~career student organization and expanded~~ ~~extended~~ learning opportunities that could be available through a Career Academy Program's Program of Study.

003.01A4 Identification of the potential for alignment of **Career Academy** ~~career academy Program(s)~~ of Study to postsecondary educational institution(s) offering instruction in the same **career cluster** ~~Career Cluster~~.

003.01A5 Identification of needed staffing and professional development.

003.01A6 Identification of private entity partners and potential resources.

003.01A7 Identification of the opportunities for collaboration with other district(s), Educational Service Unit(s), Learning **Communities** ~~Community~~, postsecondary educational institution(s) or private entity(s) in the establishment and operation of the Career Academy Program.

003.02 Required Career Academy Program Components.

003.02A Curriculum. Career Academy Program curriculum shall include the following courses:

003.02A1 A credit-bearing career exploration course which introduces students to the Nebraska Career **and Technical Education Model** in preparation for a Career Academy Program, and

003.02A2 A Program of Study that includes:

003.02A2a A credit-bearing introductory course within the scope of the Career Academy Program's Program of Study, and

003.02A2b A minimum of two credit-bearing **Career and Technical Education** ~~career technical education~~ courses to develop the appropriate knowledge and skills in preparation for employment or entrepreneurship in the

Career Academy Program s Program of Study, and

003.02A2c One or more academic courses offered for credit with the course content taught in the context of the Career Academy Program s Program of Study.

003.02B Career Development. A Career Academy Program shall include a program of career development including but not limited to:

003.02B1 Career information including career interests and aptitude assessments, labor market data, and postsecondary education and training options.

003.02B2 Career exploration and planning activities.

003.02B3 Personal Learning Plans.

003.02B4 Opportunities to learn and practice the Nebraska **Career Readiness** ~~Standards for Career Ready Practice as standards adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education.~~

003.02C Career **and Technical** Student Organizations. A Career Academy Program shall include a district level chapter of the **Career and Technical Student Organization** ~~career student organization~~ aligned to the focus of the Career Academy Program s Program of Study.

003.02D Work-Based Learning. Career Academy Programs shall include work-based learning that provides a range of experiences that are intentionally designed to help students to extend and deepen classroom instruction through experiences in the employment sector that may include but are not limited to internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, or business/industry visits and explorations.

003.02E Recruitment of Students. The school district, collaborating with identified Career Academy Program s partners, shall develop a process for the recruitment of students. The process shall include the following components:

003.02E1 Communication and **outreach** ~~marketing~~ efforts in the district to parents, students, community members and non-

academy ~~staff~~ teachers;

003.02E2 Student career interest and aptitude surveys or assessments; and

003.02E3 Student application and acceptance policies determined by the school district.

003.02F Instructors. The school district shall secure the services of teachers who meet the requirements of Nebraska Department of Education, Title 92, Chapters 21 and 24. Teachers shall hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate.

003.03 Participation. Participation of students in any Career Academy Program approved under this Chapter shall be voluntary.

003.04 Advisory ~~Committee~~ Board. A local Career Academy Program advisory board shall be established with membership representing key stakeholders from education and business.

003.04A The advisory ~~committee~~ board shall be comprised of no less than fifty-one percent (51%) business members not currently employed by the school district.

003.04B The advisory ~~committee~~ board shall meet a minimum of one time during a school year.

003.04C The advisory ~~committee~~ board shall provide guidance and direction for the operation of the Career Academy Program including but not limited to:

003.04C1 Aligning the Career Academy Program to economic and labor market needs;

003.04C2 Identifying external partners;

003.04C3 Securing and allocating financial, material and personnel resources;

003.04C4 Aligning curriculum and instruction including, but not limited to coursework, graduation requirements; ~~Career Academy Program~~ ~~career academy program~~ exit requirements, and postsecondary requirements; educational institution(s) entrance

003.04C5 Securing work-based learning opportunities;

003.04C6 Identifying needed professional development; and

003.04C7 Evaluating the Career Academy Program s effectiveness;

004 Career Academy Program Initial Approval Process.

004.01 Career Academy Program Initial Application. Each school district establishing a Career Academy Program under this chapter shall submit an application electronically via to the Department portal by ~~September 1 of the school year preceding the start of the Career Academy Program.~~ The Career Academy Program application must document each of the following components:

004.01A Planning as required in 003.01A1 003.01A7;

004.01B Curriculum as required in 003.02A;

004.01C Career Development as required in 003.02B;

004.01D Career and Technical Student Organization as required in 003.02C;

004.01E Work-Based Learning as required in 003.02D;

004.01F Recruitment of Students as required in 003.02E;

004.01G Instructors as required in 003.02F; and

004.01H Advisory Committee ~~Board~~ as required in 003.04.

004.02 Career Academy Program Approval. Career Academy Programs established by the school district shall be approved by the Commissioner for initial and continued operation pursuant to this Chapter.

004.03 Approval Requirements. Approval requires compliance with the requirements identified in Sections 003.01 through 003.04 of this Chapter.

004.04 Initial Career Academy Program Approval. Initial Career Academy Program approval may be granted by the Commissioner for one school year beginning on July 1 of the school year (July 1

June 30) in which the Career Academy Program is to begin.

005 Career Academy Program Approval for Continued Operation.

005.01 Career Academy Program Annual Report. An Annual Career Academy Program Report ~~Form~~ shall be submitted ~~to~~ electronically via the Department ~~portal~~ by the district by August 1.

005.01A The report shall include the following information from the prior school year:

005.01A1 Compliance with Career Academy Program required components as defined in Section 003.02 of this Chapter.

005.01A2 Description of Career Academy Program accomplishments that may include student and stakeholder satisfaction.

005.02 Improvement Plan. When the ~~annual~~ Annual Career Academy Program Annual Report reflects failure to comply with the requirements of Section 003.02, (as required in Subsection 005.01A1) it shall be accompanied by an improvement plan submitted ~~to the Department electronically via the Department portal~~. The Improvement Plan must detail the actions and timeline that are planned to bring the Career Academy Program back into compliance with Section 003.02;.

005.03 Loss of Approval for Continued Operation. A Career Academy Program not in compliance with the requirements of this Chapter may be subject to loss of Career Academy Program approval for continued operation. The Commissioner may, at his or her discretion, deny Career Academy Program approval.

005.03A Notification When the Commissioner intends to deny program approval or continued operation, notice shall be given ~~via~~ ~~by certified~~ mail to the head administrator of the school district prior to the effective date of the denial. The notice shall specify the basis for the Commissioner's decision.

005.04 Appeal. The school district will have a maximum of thirty (30) calendar days from ~~the notice~~ receipt of ~~determination~~ ~~the certified letter~~ to appeal the decision of the Commissioner to the State Board of Education. Denial of Career Academy Program approval or continued operation by the Commissioner, pursuant to Section 005 of this Chapter, may be appealed to the State Board of Education under 92

NAC 61. All hearings arising under this Chapter shall be conducted in accordance with the hearing procedures of 92 NAC 61, including provisions of that Chapter relating to evidence.

Appendix A

Appendix B



From: Troy L. Hawk, Legal Counsel

Date: November 26, 2025

Re: Summary of Rulemaking Hearing on the Proposed Revisions of 92 NAC 47

On November 24, 2025, a hearing on the proposed revision of Title 92, *Nebraska Administrative Code*, Chapter 47 (Rule 47), *Regulations for Career Academy Programs Established by School Districts*. Legal Counsel Troy Hawk served as the hearing officer. A recording of the hearing is available at: <https://www.education.ne.gov/legal/rule-hearings/>.

Summary of Oral Testimony on the Proposed Revision of 92 NAC 47

Troy Hawk called the hearing to order, introduced himself, introduced the subject of the hearing, read into the record information about the legal notice of the hearing, outlined the procedures for the hearing and for receiving written testimony, and received testimony on revisions to Title 92 *Nebraska Administrative Code* Chapter 47.

Katie Graham, Administrator for Career, Technical, & Adult Education for the Nebraska Department of Education, presented a summary of the proposed changes to Rule 47:

- Rule 47 contains regulations for career academy programs established by school districts. The rule impacts school districts that establish career academy programs and students who participate in those programs.
- Rule 47 is authorized pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statutes 79-777 and 79-318. Section 79-777 requires the State Department of Education to define standards and criteria related to career academies and authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt rules and regulations to carry out those requirements.
- Specifically, the State Department of Education must define standards and criteria for:
 - The establishment, evaluation, and continuing approval of career academies,
 - Career-based curriculum utilized by career academies,
 - The necessary data elements and collection of data pertaining to career academies, including, but not limited to, the number of students enrolled in a career academy and their grade levels, and

- The establishment of advisory boards consisting of business and education representatives to provide guidance and direction for the operation of career academies.
- Rule 47 was approved by the State Board of Education and became effective in November of 2013.
- In March of 2025, the Rules and Regulations Committee of the State Board of Education discussed policy issues and the need for revisions to Rule 47. Department of Education staff sought input from a broad range of stakeholders to identify additional policy issues and explore solutions. Stakeholders included those who would be directly impacted by any revisions to Rule 47. An Internal Advisory Group and Wiring Group were created to lead the revisions, along with an External Advisory Group inclusive of those currently involved in the administration and implementation of Rule 47 Career Academies, which included school, district, and ESU administrators and personnel. Engagement took place between March and August 2025 and included virtual meetings and email correspondence.
- The proposed revisions made based on stakeholder input included
 - Updates to language for clarity and consistency,
 - Removal of outdated deadlines and references that no longer apply, and
 - The application of minor formatting or phrasing adjustments to align with current practice.
- No substantive changes to policy intent or program requirements were introduced with this revision.

Oral Testimony

There was no oral testimony

Written Testimony

There was no written testimony submitted.

Katie Graham of the Nebraska Department of Education thanked everyone.

Troy Hawk thanked everyone for their time and effort and closed the hearing on Rule 47.

Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-777 and 79-318

79-777. Career academy; establishment and operation; duties; funding; department; define standards and criteria.

(1) Any school district, with the approval of the State Department of Education, may establish and operate a career academy. The purpose of a career academy is to provide students with a career-based educational curriculum. A school district may partner with another school district, an educational service unit, a learning community, a postsecondary educational institution, or a private entity in the establishment and operation of a career academy.

(2) A career academy established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall:

(a) Recruit students who seek a career-based curriculum, which curriculum shall be based on criteria determined by the department;

(b) Recruit and hire instructors based on their expertise in career-based education; and

(c) Provide a rigorous academic curriculum with a transition component to prepare students for the workforce, including, but not limited to, internships, job training, and skills training.

(3) In addition to funding from the establishing school district or any of the district's partners, a career academy may also receive private donations for operating expenses.

(4) The department shall define standards and criteria for (a) the establishment, evaluation, and continuing approval of career academies, (b) career-based curriculum utilized by career academies, (c) the necessary data elements and collection of data pertaining to career academies, including, but not limited to, the number of students enrolled in a career academy and their grade levels, and (d) the establishment of advisory boards consisting of business and education representatives to provide guidance and direction for the operation of career academies.

(5) The State Board of Education may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out this section.

Source: Laws 2012, LB870, § 4.

79-318. State Board of Education; powers; duties.

The State Board of Education shall:

(1) Appoint and fix the compensation of the Commissioner of Education;

(2) Remove the commissioner from office at any time for conviction of any crime involving moral turpitude or felonious act, for inefficiency, or for willful and continuous disregard of his or her duties as commissioner or of the directives of the board;

(3) Upon recommendation of the commissioner, appoint and fix the compensation of all new professional positions in the department, including any deputy commissioners;

(4) Organize the State Department of Education into such divisions, branches, or sections as may be necessary or desirable to perform all its proper functions and to render maximum service to the board and to the state school system;

(5) Provide, through the commissioner and his or her professional staff, enlightened professional leadership, guidance, and supervision of the state school system, including educational service units. In order that the commissioner and his or her staff may carry out their duties, the board shall, through the commissioner: (a) Provide supervisory and consultation services to the schools of the state; (b) issue materials helpful in the development, maintenance, and improvement of educational facilities and programs; (c) establish rules and regulations which govern standards and procedures for the approval and legal operation of all schools in the state and for the accreditation of all schools requesting state accreditation. All public, private, denominational, or parochial schools shall either comply with the accreditation or approval requirements prescribed in this section and section 79-703 or, for those schools which elect not to meet accreditation or approval requirements, the requirements prescribed in subsections (2) through (6) of section 79-1601. Standards and procedures for approval and accreditation shall be based upon the program of studies, guidance services, the number and preparation of teachers in relation to the curriculum and enrollment, instructional materials and equipment, science facilities and equipment, library facilities and materials, and health and safety factors in buildings and grounds. Rules and regulations which govern standards and procedures for private, denominational, and parochial schools which elect, pursuant to the procedures prescribed in subsections (2) through (6) of section 79-1601, not to meet state accreditation or approval requirements shall be as described in such section; (d) institute a statewide system of testing to determine the degree of achievement and accomplishment of all the students within the state's school systems if it determines such testing would be advisable; (e) prescribe a uniform system of records and accounting for keeping adequate educational and financial records, for gathering and reporting necessary educational data, and for evaluating educational progress; (f) cause to be published laws, rules, and regulations governing the schools and the school lands and funds with explanatory notes for the guidance of those charged with the administration of the schools of the state; (g) approve teacher education programs conducted in Nebraska postsecondary educational institutions designed for the purpose of certificating teachers and administrators, except that such approval shall not require a statewide examination as an entrance requirement related to basic skills competency; (h) approve certificated-employee evaluation policies and procedures developed by school districts and educational service units; and (i) approve general plans and adopt educational policies, standards, rules, and regulations for carrying out the board's responsibilities and those assigned to the State Department of Education by the Legislature;

(6) Adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for the guidance, supervision, accreditation, and coordination of educational service units. Such rules and regulations for accreditation shall include, but not be limited to, (a) a requirement that programs and services offered to school districts by each educational service unit shall be evaluated on a regular basis, but not less than every seven years, to assure that educational service units remain responsive to school district needs and (b) guidelines for the use and management of funds generated from the property tax levy and from other sources of revenue as may be available to the educational service units, to assure that public funds are used to accomplish the purposes and goals assigned to the educational service units by section 79-1204. The State Board of Education shall establish procedures to encourage the coordination of activities among educational service units and to encourage effective and efficient educational service delivery on a statewide basis;

(7) Prepare and distribute reports designed to acquaint school district officers, teachers, and patrons of the schools with the conditions and needs of the schools;

(8) Provide for consultation with professional educators and lay leaders for the purpose of securing advice deemed necessary in the formulation of policies and in the effectual discharge of its duties;

(9) Make studies, investigations, and reports and assemble information as necessary for the formulation of policies, for making plans, for evaluating the state school program, and for making essential and adequate reports;

(10) Submit to the Governor and the Legislature a budget necessary to finance the state school program under its jurisdiction, including the internal operation and maintenance of the State Department of Education;

(11) Interpret its own policies, standards, rules, and regulations and, upon reasonable request, hear complaints and disputes arising therefrom;

(12) With the advice of the Department of Motor Vehicles, adopt and promulgate rules and regulations containing reasonable standards, not inconsistent with existing statutes, governing: (a) The general design, equipment, color, operation, and maintenance of any vehicle with a manufacturer's rated seating capacity of eleven or more passengers used for the transportation of public, private, denominational, or parochial school students; and (b) the equipment, operation, and maintenance of any vehicle with a capacity of ten or less passengers used for the transportation of public, private, denominational, or parochial school students, when such vehicles are owned, operated, or owned and operated by any public, private, denominational, or parochial school or privately owned or operated under contract with any such school in this state, except for vehicles owned by individuals operating a school which elects pursuant to section 79-1601 not to meet accreditation or approval requirements. Similar rules and regulations shall be adopted and promulgated for operators of such vehicles as provided in section 79-607;

(13) Accept, on behalf of the Nebraska Center for the Education of Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired, devises of real property or donations or bequests of other property, or

both, if in its judgment any such devise, donation, or bequest is for the best interest of the center or the students receiving services from the center, or both, and irrigate or otherwise improve any such real estate when in the board's judgment it would be advisable to do so; and

(14) Upon acceptance of any devise, donation, or bequest as provided in this section, administer and carry out such devise, donation, or bequest in accordance with the terms and conditions thereof. If not prohibited by the terms and conditions of any such devise, donation, or bequest, the board may sell, convey, exchange, or lease property so devised, donated, or bequeathed upon such terms and conditions as it deems best and remit all money derived from any such sale or lease to the State Treasurer for credit to the State Department of Education Trust Fund.

None of the duties prescribed in this section shall prevent the board from exercising such other duties as in its judgment may be necessary for the proper and legal exercise of its obligations.

Source: Laws 1953, c. 320, § 8, p. 1056; Laws 1955, c. 306, § 1, p. 947; Laws 1959, c. 383, § 1, p. 1328; Laws 1967, c. 528, § 2, p. 1753; Laws 1969, c. 707, § 2, p. 2712; Laws 1969, c. 708, § 1, p. 2716; Laws 1971, LB 292, § 5; Laws 1974, LB 863, § 8; Laws 1977, LB 205, § 1; Laws 1979, LB 322, § 37; Laws 1981, LB 316, § 1; Laws 1981, LB 545, § 27; Laws 1984, LB 928, § 2; Laws 1984, LB 994, § 6; Laws 1986, LB 1177, § 36; Laws 1987, LB 688, § 11; Laws 1989, LB 15, § 1; Laws 1989, LB 285, § 141; Laws 1990, LB 980, § 34; Laws 1994, LB 858, § 3; R.S.1943, (1994), § 79-328; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 146; Laws 1999, LB 813, § 6; Laws 2009, LB549, § 18; Laws 2010, LB1071, § 5; Laws 2011, LB575, § 8; Laws 2012, LB782, § 148; Laws 2013, LB222, § 32; Laws 2015, LB525, § 9; Laws 2019, LB675, § 2; Laws 2022, LB1218, § 10.

Cross References

Gifts, devises, and bequests, loans to needy students, see section 79-2,106.

Private, denominational, or parochial schools, election not to meet approval or accreditation requirements, see section 79-1601 et seq.

Annotations

The state, having a high responsibility for the education of its citizens, has the power to impose reasonable regulations for the control and duration of basic education. Parents have a right to send their children to private schools but do not have the right to be completely unfettered by reasonable government regulations as to the quality of the education furnished and the maintenance of minimum standards. *State ex rel. Douglas v. Faith Baptist Church of Louisville*, 207 Neb. 802, 301 N.W.2d 571 (1981).

Adequate standards are provided by this section to authorize transfer of land from a nonaccredited to an accredited high school district. *De Jonge v. School Dist. of Bloomington*, 179 Neb. 539, 139 N.W.2d 296 (1966).

Matters to be considered in promulgating rules and regulations are specified. School Dist. No. 8 of Sherman County v. State Board of Education, 176 Neb. 722, 127 N.W.2d 458 (1964).

Standards were not effective until filed with Secretary of State. School Dist. No. 228 of Holt County v. State Board of Education, 164 Neb. 148, 82 N.W.2d 8 (1957).

This section was not applicable to supply standards in cases arising before its enactment. School Dist. No. 39 of Washington County v. Decker, 159 Neb. 693, 68 N.W.2d 354 (1955).



PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

DATE: November 21, 2025

TO: Dr. Brian L. Maher
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Dorann Avey
Digital Learning Director
Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Action Item: Adopt proposed revision of Rule 89 Regulations and Procedures to Incentivize Distance Education

AGENDA ITEM TYPE (contract/grant/rule/program/other): Rule

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Rule 89 provides the regulations and procedures for the administration of incentives for distance education process and the updates align with legislative changes and update its provisions. These revisions are the first to Rule 89, originally enacted in 2007. The provisions of the Rule will apply to Nebraska school districts and education service units.

Duties of the State Board of Education:

LB1337, states:

“For fiscal years 2007-08 through 2028-29, the State Department of Education shall provide distance education incentives to school districts and educational service units for qualified distance education courses coordinated through the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council as provided in this section. For fiscal years 2016-17 through 2023-24, funding for such distance education incentives shall come from the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund. For fiscal years 2024-25 through 2028-29, funding for such distance education incentives shall come from transfers pursuant to section [79-3501](#).”

- Proposed revisions were developed through an iterative drafting process involving the Department.

Proposed Revisions:

- Removal of outdated sections of the Rule no longer supported in legislation
 - Ensure all districts are meeting minimum standards set forth in the legislation to qualify for distance education incentives.

- Provides consistency when evaluating distance education incentive application and allocation of funds.
- Ensures alignment with Rule 10 policy for distance education courses and credits.
- Aligns practices of funding distribution to the legislation

The revisions led to the Rule 89 public hearing draft which was reviewed by the Commissioner and the Rules and Regulations Committee before the public hearing was scheduled for November 6, 2025, at 11:00AM. There was no public feedback at the public hearing.

This agenda item allows for a potential approval vote on revisions to Rule 89 at the December 2025 Board meeting. The public hearing drafts and summaries are attached.

PROPOSED BOARD MEETING (MONTH/YEAR): December 2025 - Approval

ESTIMATED COST: \$650 – public hearing costs

FOR CONTRACTS AND GRANTS:

- Indicate the Funding Source: *N/A*
- New or Renewal: *N/A*
- If renewal, date of first approval: *N/A*

FOR NEW CONTRACTS OR OTHER CONTRACTS REQUIRING PROCUREMENT:

- Indicate the method of procurement: *N/A*
- Rationale for method of procurement: *N/A*
- Rationale for contractor selection: *N/A*

FOR GRANT SUBAWARDS:

- Describe the grantee selection process: *N/A*

**Updated 08.15.2025*

TITLE 92 - NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 89 - REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES **TO INCENTIVIZE** ~~FOR THE EDUCATION INNOVATION FUND PROGRAM—DISTANCE~~ ~~EDUCATION EQUIPMENT REIMBURSEMENT AND INCENTIVES~~

001 General Provisions

001.01 Statutory Authority. This chapter is adopted pursuant to **Neb. Rev. Stat. §** ~~section 79-1331, 79-1333, 79-1336, and 79-1337~~ of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska (R.R.S.).

001.02 Scope of This Chapter. This chapter provides **regulations and** ~~the criteria, standards, and procedures for the selection and administration of~~ **incentives for** ~~distance education programs funded from the Education Innovation Fund.~~

~~001.03 Allocation of Funds.~~

~~001.03A For fiscal year 2005-06, the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated as follows: The first one million dollars shall be transferred to the School District Reorganization Fund, and the remaining amount shall be allocated to the General Fund after operating expenses for the Excellence in Education Council are deducted.~~

~~001.03B For fiscal year 2006-07, the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated as follows: The first two hundred fifty thousand dollars shall be transferred to the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Cash Fund to fund the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Act, the next one million dollars shall be transferred to the School District Reorganization Fund, and the amount remaining in the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated, after administrative expenses, for distance education equipment and incentives pursuant to sections 79-1336 and 79-1337 R.R.S.~~

~~001.03C For fiscal year 2007-08, the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated as follows: The first five hundred thousand dollars shall be transferred to the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Cash Fund to fund the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Act, and the amount remaining in the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated, after administrative expenses, for distance education equipment and incentives pursuant to sections 79-1336 and 79-1337 R.R.S.~~

~~001.03D For fiscal year 2008-09, the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated as follows: The first seven hundred fifty thousand dollars shall be transferred to the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Cash Fund to fund the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Act, and the amount remaining in the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated, after administrative expenses, for distance education equipment and incentives pursuant to sections 79-1336 and 79-1337 R.R.S.~~

~~001.03E For fiscal years 2009-10 through 2015-16, the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated as follows: The first one million dollars shall be transferred to the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Cash Fund to fund the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Act, and the amount remaining in the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated, after administrative expenses, for distance education equipment and incentives pursuant to sections 79-1336 and 79-1337 R.R.S.~~

~~001.03F For fiscal year 2016-17 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Education Innovation Fund shall be allocated, after administrative expenses, for education purposes as provided by the Legislature.~~

002 Definitions. As used in this Chapter:

~~002.01 Annual curriculum reports~~ **means** ~~shall mean the reports submitted to the~~ **department** ~~Department by school districts as NDE form 02-015 under the authority of~~ **Neb. Rev. Stat. §§** ~~sections 79-302 and 79-318(5) R.R.S.~~

~~002.02 Board~~ **means** ~~shall mean the State Board of Education.~~

~~002.03 Commissioner~~ **means** ~~shall mean the State Commissioner of Education.~~

~~002.04 Council~~ ~~shall mean the Distance Education Council created pursuant to section 79-1333 R.R.S.~~

~~002.04~~~~002.05 Course~~ **means** ~~shall mean a particular subject, subject area, or defined sequence of learning experiences with one or more students enrolled and in attendance.~~

~~002.05 Department~~ **means** ~~shall mean the State Department of Education, which is comprised of the~~ **board** ~~Board and the Commissioner.~~

~~002.06~~ ~~002.07~~ Distance education course **means** shall mean a course with at least one student in any of grades kindergarten through twelve who is in a different location than the teacher and taught by a teacher employed by an educational entity either utilizing two-way interactive video or the Internet without two-way interactive video. Distance education course includes a dual-enrollment course with at least one student who is in a different location than the teacher and taught by a teacher employed by an educational entity utilizing either two-way interactive video or the Internet without two-way interactive video.

~~002.08~~ Distance education course received shall mean a course as defined by section ~~002.07~~ of this Chapter that has at least one student enrolled and participating in the course:

~~002.09~~ Distance Education Equipment shall mean the basic distance education hardware (e.g. video displays, video and document cameras, audio input/output devices, codecs, routers, switches and instructor equipment (e.g. computer, associated printer, system control), console, and ancillary items (e.g. cables, connectors, and echo canceller) that are on location at the school site to capture, display, and transport and route audio and video data over Network Nebraska.

~~002.07~~ ~~002.10~~ Educational entity **means** shall mean a school district, a private, denominational, or parochial school approved or accredited under 92 NAC 10, or 92 NAC 14, an educational service unit, a community college, a state college, the University of Nebraska, or a nonprofit private postsecondary educational institution.

~~002.08~~ ~~002.11~~ Fiscal year **means** shall mean a period that **commences** shall commence on July 1 in **one** each year and **ends** end on June 30 of the following in each year.

~~002.09~~ ~~002.12~~ Fund **means** shall mean the **Nebraska** Education **Improvement** Innovation Fund created pursuant to section 9-812 R.R.S.

~~002.13~~ Hardware shall mean the physical part of a computer, including the digital circuitry, as distinguished from the computer software that executes within the hardware, video displays, video and document cameras, audio input/output devices, codecs (e.g. hardware and software for coding and decoding information), routers, switches and instructor equipment (e.g. computer, associated printer, system control), console, and ancillary items (e.g. cables, connectors, and echo canceller) that are on location at the school site to capture, display,

~~transport and route audio and video data over Network Nebraska.~~

~~002.14 High school building shall mean any school district building housing instructional programs for grades seven through twelve, nine through twelve, or ten through twelve.~~

~~002.15 Installation charges or costs shall mean the fees for the placing, affixing, or attaching of the equipment as well as the initial, one-time connection charges.~~

~~002.10~~002.16 Network Nebraska shall mean the network created pursuant to 86-5,100 R.R.S.

~~002.17 NITC shall mean the Nebraska Information Technology Commission created pursuant to section 86-515 R.R.S.~~

002.11002.18 Qualified distance education course means shall mean a distance education course meeting the requirements of 92 NAC 10, which is offered for one semester of high school credit or the equivalent, and for which all of the participating educational entities are required to have access to Network Nebraska and which:

002.11A002.18A provides instruction for a particular subject, subject area, or defined sequence of learning experiences scheduled during the school day with a certificated teacher assigned and with one or more students enrolled and in attendance.

002.11A1002.18A1 For the purposes of this section, one semester of high school credit means shall mean five or more instructional units, and

002.11A2002.18A2 Instructional unit means shall mean 15 clock hours (900 minutes) of classroom instruction in a course offered in the secondary school. As an example, a one semester course which meets for 50 minutes a day for 90 days generates 5 instructional units. Instructional units are computed to the nearest one-tenth.

002.12002.19 School district means shall mean a public school system organized to provide education in elementary and/or secondary grades and accredited under Title 92 of the Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC), Chapter 10.

~~002.20 Software shall mean the programs, routines, and symbolic languages that control the functioning of the hardware and direct its operation.~~

~~002.13~~002.21 Students in membership **means** shall mean the count of students registered to attend school (present and absent) at a point in time during the school year.

~~002.22 Technical standards shall mean the protocols developed by the NITC technical panel, pursuant to section 86-521 R.R.S., as statewide requirements to achieve interoperability among distance education sites.~~

~~002.14~~002.23 Two-way interactive video distance education course **means** shall mean a distance education course in which a teacher delivers instruction to students in a different location than the teacher using two-way interactive video on at least two different days per week during the course.

~~**003 Distance Education Council.** Pursuant to section 79-1333 R.R.S., the Council shall coordinate distance education in Nebraska. The Council shall be composed of one administrator or his or her designee from each educational service unit.~~

~~003.01 The Council shall hire an administrator and such other personnel as necessary to carry out the functions of the Council.~~

~~003.02 The Council shall be funded from appropriations by the Legislature and fees established for services provided to educational entities.~~

~~003.03 The powers and duties of the Distance Education Council include but are not limited to:~~

~~003.03A Providing public access to lists of qualified distance education courses;~~

~~003.03B Collecting and providing school schedules for participating educational entities;~~

~~003.03C Facilitation of scheduling for qualified distance education courses;~~

~~003.03D Brokering of qualified distance education courses to be~~

~~purchased by educational entities;~~

~~003.03E Assessment of distance education needs and evaluation of distance education services;~~

~~003.03F Compliance with technical standards as set forth by the Nebraska Information Technology Commission and academic standards as set forth by the State Department of Education related to distance education;~~

~~003.03G Establishment of a system for prioritizing courses if the demand for Network Nebraska exceeds the capacity available for distance education and for choosing receiving educational entities when the demand for a course exceeds the capacity as determined by either the technology available or the course provider;~~

~~003.03H Scheduling and prioritization for access to Network Nebraska by educational entities in cooperation with the Chief Information Officer and using scheduling software or scheduling services which meet any applicable standards established by the commission;~~

~~003.03I Administration of learning management systems that are in compliance with any applicable standards of the commission either through the staff of the council or by delegation to an appropriate educational entity with the funding for such systems provided by participating educational entities; and 003.03J Coordination with educational service units and postsecondary educational institutions to provide assistance for instructional design for both two-way interactive video distance education courses and the offering of graduate credit courses in distance education.~~

~~003.04 The Distance Education Council shall only provide assistance in brokering or scheduling courses to educational entities that have access to Network Nebraska.~~

~~003.04A All costs to the council associated with assisting private, denominational, or parochial schools and private postsecondary educational institutions shall be paid by such private, denominational, or parochial school or private postsecondary educational institution.~~

~~003.04B Any services of the council may also be offered to other public entities with access to Network Nebraska on a contractual~~

basis.—

~~003.04C~~ The Council shall not approve technology purchases for the council in excess of ten thousand dollars without approval of the technical panel of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission that the purchases are in compliance with any applicable commission standards.—

004 Reimbursement for Purchase of Hardware and Software

~~004.01~~ For fiscal years 2007-08 through 2013-14, the State Department of Education shall provide distance education equipment reimbursement to school districts and educational service units from the Education Innovation Fund as provided in section 79-1336 R.R.S. Such reimbursements shall be for hardware or software purchased after July 14, 2006 for use in distance education and shall be limited to a total through fiscal year 2013-14 of twenty thousand dollars multiplied by the number of high school buildings for each school district and twenty thousand dollars for each educational service unit.—

~~004.02~~ The reimbursements may include installation costs for such hardware or software. Applications shall be accepted by the department beginning in the first year that the school district or the educational service unit accesses Network Nebraska and ending June 30, 2013.—

~~004.03~~ Applications shall be submitted on or before July 1 of each year on a form specified by the department (available at <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/TECHGEN/DistanceEducation.html> and reproduced in Appendix C of this Chapter) and shall include:—

~~004.03A~~ A description of the hardware or software purchased and how the hardware or software will be used for distance education;—

~~004.03B~~ Copies of receipts for the purchases to be reimbursed; and—

~~004.03C~~ For school districts, a commitment to either send or receive two-way interactive video distance education courses through the Distance Education Council each semester, or the equivalent of two semester courses each year, for four years and to apply for distance education incentives pursuant to section 79-1337 R.R.S. and—

~~004.03D~~ An assurance that the district will retain all records of

~~distance education courses sent or received for five years after termination of reimbursement provided an audit under section 79-1089 R.R.S. has been completed to show that the commitment was met.~~

~~004.04 On or before August 1 of each year, the department shall certify the reimbursements to be paid to each school district or educational service unit on or before September 1 of each year, along with notice of denial of any requested reimbursement to the affected school districts or educational service units and the reasons therefor.~~

~~004.05 The department shall use the applications for distance education incentives submitted pursuant to section 79-1337 R.R.S to verify that each school district that received a reimbursement completes the commitment to either send or receive two-way interactive video distance education courses through the Distance Education Council for four years. Any school district failing to complete such commitment shall repay the Education Innovation Fund for the amount of any reimbursements received pursuant to section 79-1336 R.R.S. Districts and educational service units shall also report school and teacher identification, the distance education course name, the grade in which the course is taught, the number of semesters taught, the number of sessions per year, and the total number of students taught through the utilization of online scheduling software coordinated by the Distance Education Council. Access to this data will be provided to the department electronically by the Distance Education Council.~~

~~004.06 On or before September 1 of each year, the department shall notify any school district failing to complete the commitment for the prior school year that repayment of the reimbursement is required and the amount of such repayment. Repayments shall be due on or before the immediately following December 31. Late repayments shall accrue interest at the rate prescribed in section 45-104.02 R.R.S. from the date of the initial reimbursement.~~

~~004.06A Such notification will be in writing and notification shall be considered accomplished on the date of mailing or facsimile transmission.~~

~~004.07 On or before October 1 of each year, a school district or educational service unit may appeal the denial of reimbursements or a school district may appeal the requirement to repay reimbursements to the State Board of Education.~~

~~004.07A~~ The board shall allow a representative of the school district or educational service unit an opportunity to present information concerning the appeal to the board at the November board meeting.

~~004.07B~~ If the board finds that the department denied the reimbursement in error, the department shall pay the district or educational service unit from the Education Innovation Fund as soon as practical the amount which was denied in error.

~~004.07C~~ If the board finds that the department erred in notifying a school district that a reimbursement is required to be repaid, such notification shall be void.

~~004.07D~~ Appeals under this section shall be filed with the State Board on the form in Appendix A. The service of such appeal, as indicated in the certificate of service, shall be no later than October 1.

003005 Incentives for Distance Education. For any fiscal year for which funds are available for distance education incentives pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1337, years 2007-08 through 2015-16, the department will State Department of Education shall provide distance education incentives from the Education Innovation Fund to school districts and educational service units for qualified distance education courses and coordinated through the Distance Education Council as provided in section 79-1337 R.R.S.

~~003.01005.01~~ School districts and educational service units may shall apply for incentives annually to the department on or before August 1 on a form specified by the department. The application must comply with subdivision (2)(a) or (2)(b) of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1337. shall:

~~005.01A~~ For school districts, specify:

~~005.01A1~~ the qualified distance education courses which were received by students in the membership of the district in the then-current school fiscal year and which were not taught by a teacher employed by the school district; and

~~005.01A2~~ for each such course

~~005.01A2a~~ the number of students in the membership of the district who received the course,

~~005.01A2b the educational entity employing the teacher, and~~

~~005.01A2c whether the course was a two-way interactive video distance education course; and~~

~~005.01B For school districts and educational service units, specify:~~

~~-~~

~~005.01B1 the qualified distance education courses which were received by students in the membership of another educational entity in the then-current school fiscal year and which were taught by a teacher employed by the school district or educational service unit,~~

~~005.01B2 for each such course for school districts, the number of students in the membership of the district who received the course, and~~

~~005.01B3 for each such course~~

~~005.01B3a the other educational entities in which students received the course and how many students received the course at such educational entities,~~

~~005.01B3b any school districts in the sparse cost grouping or the very sparse cost grouping as described in section 79-1007.02 R.R.S. that had at least one student in the membership who received the course, and~~

~~005.01B3c whether the course was a two-way interactive video distance education course.~~

~~005.01C The required form is available at the department and at <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/TECHGEN/DistanceEducation.html> and reproduced in Appendix D of this Chapter.~~

003.02005.02 On or before September 1 of each year, the department **will** ~~shall~~ certify the incentives to be paid to each school district and educational service unit on or before October 1 of each year. The incentives for each district **will** ~~shall~~ be calculated **pursuant to subsections (3) and (4) of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1337.** ~~as follows:~~

~~005.02A Each district shall receive distance education units for~~

~~each qualified distance education course as follows:—~~

~~005.02A1 One distance education unit for each qualified distance education course received as reported pursuant to section 79-1337(2)(a) R.R.S. if the course was a two-way interactive video distance education course;~~

~~005.02A2 One distance education unit for each qualified distance education course sent as reported pursuant to section 79-1337(2)(b) R.R.S if the course was not received by at least one student who was in the membership of another school district which was in the sparse cost grouping or the very sparse cost grouping;—~~

~~005.02A3 One distance education unit for each qualified distance education course sent as reported pursuant to section 79-1337(2)(b) R.R.S. if the course was received by at least one student who was in the membership of another school district which was in the sparse cost grouping or the very sparse cost grouping, but the course was not a two-way interactive video distance education course; and~~

~~005.02A4 Two distance education units for each qualified distance education course sent as reported pursuant to section 79-1337(2)(b) R.R.S. if the course was received by at least one student who was in the membership of another school district which was in the sparse cost grouping or the very sparse cost grouping and the course was a two-way interactive video distance education course;—~~

~~005.02B The difference of the amount available for distribution in the Education Innovation Fund on the August 1 when the applications were due minus any amount to be paid to school districts pursuant to section 79-1336 R.R.S. shall be divided by the number of distance education units to determine the incentive per distance education unit, except that the incentive per distance education unit shall not equal an amount greater than one thousand dollars; and—~~

~~005.02C The incentives for each school district shall equal the number of distance education units calculated for the school district multiplied by the incentive per distance education unit.—~~

003.03005.03 The department may verify any or all application

information using annual curriculum reports ~~and may request such verification from the Distance Education Council.~~

~~003.04~~~~005.04~~ On or before October 1 of each year, a school district or educational service unit may appeal the denial of incentives for any course by the department to the ~~board~~ State Board of Education.

~~003.04A~~~~005.04A~~ The board ~~must~~ ~~shall~~ allow a representative of the school district or educational service unit an opportunity to present information concerning the appeal to the board at the November board meeting.

~~003.04B~~~~005.02B~~ If the board finds that the course meets the requirements of this section, the department ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ pay the district from the ~~fund~~ Education Innovation ~~and~~ as soon as practical in an amount for which the district or educational service unit should have qualified based on the incentive per distance education unit used in the original certification of incentives pursuant to this section.

~~003.04C~~~~005.04C~~ Appeals under this section ~~must~~ ~~shall~~ be filed with the ~~board~~ State Board on the forms ~~specified by the Commissioner~~ in Appendix B of this Chapter. The service of such appeal, as indicated in the certificate of service, ~~must~~ ~~shall~~ be no later than October 1.

~~**APPENDIX A: Petition Form for Appeal under 92 NAC 89, 79-1336**~~
~~**R.R.S.**~~

~~**APPENDIX B: Petition Form for Appeal Under 92 NAC 89; 79-1337
R.R.S.**~~

~~**APPENDIX C: Reimbursement Application Materials, Page 1**~~

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APPENDIX D: Incentives Application Materials, Page 1

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From: Troy L. Hawk, Legal Counsel

Date: November 18, 2025

Re: Summary of Rulemaking Hearing on the Proposed Revisions of 92 NAC 89

On November 6, 2025, a hearing on the proposed revision of Title 92, *Nebraska Administrative Code*, Chapter 89 (Rule 89), *Regulations and Procedures to Incentivize Distance Education*. Legal Counsel Troy Hawk served as the hearing officer. A recording of the hearing is available at: <https://www.education.ne.gov/legal/rule-hearings/>.

Summary of Oral Testimony on the Proposed Revision of 92 NAC 89

Troy Hawk called the hearing to order, introduced himself, introduced the subject of the hearing, read into the record information about the legal notice of the hearing, outlined the procedures for the hearing and for receiving written testimony, and received testimony on revisions to Title 92 *Nebraska Administrative Code* Chapter 89.

Dorann Avey, Digital Learning Director the Nebraska Department of Education, presented a summary of the proposed changes to Rule 89:

- Rule 89 provides the regulations and procedures for the administration of incentives for distance education process and the updates align with legislative changes and update its provisions. These revisions are the first to Rule 89, originally enacted in 2007. The provisions of the Rule will apply to Nebraska school districts and education service units.
- Duties of the State Board of Education:
 - LB1337, states:
 - “For fiscal years 2007-08 through 2028-29, the State Department of Education shall provide distance education incentives to school districts and educational service units for qualified distance education courses coordinated through the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council as provided in this section. For fiscal years 2016-17 through 2023-24, funding for such distance education incentives shall come from the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund. For fiscal years 2024-25 through 2028-29, funding for such distance education incentives shall come from transfers pursuant to section 79-3501.”

- Proposed revisions were developed through an iterative drafting process involving the Department.
- Proposed Revisions:
 - Removal of outdated sections of the Rule no longer supported in legislation
 - Ensure all districts are meeting minimum standards set forth in the legislation to qualify for distance education incentives.
 - Provides consistency when evaluating distance education incentive application and allocation of funds.
 - Ensures alignment with Rule 10 policy for distance education courses and credits.
 - Aligns practices of funding distribution to the legislation
- The department is requesting the state board adopt proposed revisions to Rule 89 (92 NAC 89), *Regulations and Procedures to Incentivize Distance Education*.

Oral Testimony

There was no oral testimony

Written Testimony

There was no written testimony submitted.

Dorann Avey of the Nebraska Department of Education thanked everyone for the assistance in revising Rule 89.

Troy Hawk thanked everyone for their time and effort and closed the hearing on Rule 89.

NDE CONTRACTS

DATE REC'D	CONTRACT #	AMENDMENT #	CONTRACT NAME	MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT	START DATE	ENDING DATE	FUNDING SOURCE	SCOPE OF SERVICES	CONTACT PERSON
1/2/2025	45217		Share Collaborative	\$10,000	2/3/2025	12/19/2025	Federal	Provide training.	Lindy Foley
1/2/2025	45187	AM#1	Security Equipment Incorporated					Increase amount/scope.	Joel Scherling
1/2/2025	44316	AM#1	Office Innovations					Extend date.	Joel Scherling
1/6/2025	45219		Hendrickson Leadership Group	\$4,450	4/1/2025	6/5/2025	General	Conduct training.	Katie Graham
1/6/2025	44245	AM#2	ESU 4					Increase amount/scope.	Zainab Rida
1/6/2025	45216		Abigail Fiske	\$23,000	1/1/2025	12/31/2025	Federal	Serve as 2025 FCCLA State Officer Coordinator.	Katie Graham
1/7/2025	45199		Peru State College	\$83,997	11/15/2024	6/30/2027	Federal	Lower finance barrier for teaching candidates.	Brad Dirksen
1/13/2025	45213		UNL	\$700,000	11/15/2024	6/30/2027	Federal/General	Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Grant.	Brad Dirksen
1/15/2025	42127	AM#3	UNL					Extend date.	Zainab Rida
								Carry out Nebraska Teacher Apprenticeship Act & administer State	
1/17/2025	45212		Chadron State College	\$100,000	11/15/2024	6/30/2027	Federal/General	Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Grant.	Brad Dirksen
1/22/2025	45225		Kimberly Sanderson	\$15,000	1/15/2025	1/14/2026	Federal/General	Coaching/training services.	Melody Hobson
1/23/2025	45220		Hayes & Associates	\$54,848	1/15/2025	9/30/2025	Federal	Child & Adult Care Food Program audits of for-profit centers.	Zainab Rida
1/23/2025	45223		Dick Meyer	\$15,000	1/24/2025	6/30/2025	General	Provide consultation/facilitation.	Shirley Vargas
1/23/2025	45224		HHS	\$29,406	1/21/2025	1/20/2026	Federal	Provide information on TBI individuals.	Lindy Foley
1/24/2025	45222		UNL	\$6,414	2/1/2025	1/31/2026	Federal	Support NDE transition program by maintaining website.	Amy Rhone
1/30/2025	45227		Smarter Learning Group	\$20,000	1/21/2025	3/31/2025	Federal	Develop Family Literacy Implementation Guide for schools.	Zainab Rida
1/31/2025	45226		Brain & Body Balancing	\$17,000	2/1/2025	1/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching/training services.	Melody Hobson
2/3/2025	45221		Renner's Cleaning Service	\$2,130	2/1/2025	4/30/2025	Federal	Cleaning service for Norfolk VR office.	Lindy Foley
2/3/2025	45075	AM#2	ESUCC					Reduce amount.	Zainab Rida
2/4/2025	45214		Nebraska Appleseed	\$9,500	1/31/2025	1/30/2026	Federal	Support Nebraska School Breakfast Challenge.	Zainab Rida
2/4/2025	45195		Wayne State College	\$200,000	11/15/2024	6/30/2027	Federal	Lower finance barrier for teaching candidates.	Brad Dirksen
2/10/2025	44054	AM#2	NE State College System					Extend date.	Lane Carr
2/10/2025	45110	AM#1	ESU 2					Adjust contract amount.	Lindy Foley
2/10/2025	45231		Irene Jo Smith	\$9,000	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching/training services.	Melody Hobson
2/13/2025	45175	AM#1	K Crom Saunders					Funding change.	Amy Rhone
2/13/2025	45234		Say Hey There	\$9,000	3/1/2025	8/31/2025	General	Create advertising campaigns and posts for Safe2Help NE social media platforms.	Zainab Rida
2/13/2025	45236		Emspace	\$49,500	2/10/2025	2/9/2026	Federal/General	Assist NDE in expanding the awareness and use of local specialty crops with materials development as part of a Dept of Agriculture grant as well as educational and culinary resources.	Zainab Rida
2/13/2025	45199	AM#1	Peru State College					Scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
2/14/2025	45065	AM#1	NE Children & Families Foundation					Increase amount.	Zainab Rida
2/14/2025	45202	AM#1	College of Saint Mary					Scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
2/14/2025	45196	AM#1	Midland University					Increase amount/scope.	Brad Dirksen
2/14/2025	45240		Tanya's Childcare	\$3,000	3/1/2025	2/27/2026	General	Use of classroom.	Melody Hobson
2/14/2025	44370	AM#1	ESU 7					Scope.	Zainab Rida
2/14/2025	45195	AM#1	Wayne State College					Scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
2/14/2025	45235		ESU 9	\$25,000	2/14/2025	4/30/2025	Federal	Execute Deaf & Hard of Hearing Statewide Conference.	Amy Rhone
2/18/2025	45239		Easter Seals of NE	\$7,860.70	3/1/2025	12/31/2025	Federal	Provide training.	Lindy Foley
2/18/2025	45241		Creative Press & Design	\$15,000	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	General	Produce and ship signage for Step Up to Quality.	Melody Hobson
2/18/2025	45229		UNL	\$48,591	4/1/2025	3/31/2026	Federal	Assist with meeting Federal post-school outcome data reporting requirements.	Amy Rhone
2/18/2025	45185		Children's Hospital & Medical Center	\$83,500	12/1/2024	11/30/2025	Federal	Provide technical assistance with School Mental Health.	Zainab Rida
2/18/2025	45237		Heather Schmidt	\$10,000	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching services.	Melody Hobson
2/20/2025	45238		Kansas State School for the Deaf	\$10,000	1/8/2025	5/22/2025	General	Pay for residential costs associated with the student enrollment.	Amy Rhone
2/20/2025	45232		Kids Can Community Center	\$3,000	2/15/2025	2/14/2026	General	Use of classroom.	Melody Hobson
2/24/2025	45194	AM#1	UNO					Scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
2/25/2025	45233		Partners for Insightful Evaluation	\$49,650	2/5/2025	2/4/2026	Federal	Summarize findings, create report, analyze after-school pre and post surveys.	Zainab Rida
								Assist in development and evaluation of Farm to School and Early Care Education and Harvest of the Month resources.	
2/25/2025	45243		Black Chick Farm	\$15,000	3/7/2025	3/6/2026	Federal		Zainab Rida
2/25/2025	45242		NCBVI	\$24,999.99	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	Federal	Provide installation of equipment and individualized consumer training.	Lindy Foley
2/27/2025	45192		A1 Media	\$49,999	1/17/2025	1/16/2027	Federal	Provide simple and efficient video caption for virtual NDE conferences.	Kristin Yates
2/28/2025	45050	AM#1	Center for Rural Affairs					Increase amount.	Zainab Rida
2/28/2025	45188	AM#1	UNK					Scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
2/28/2025	45244		Tasha Jedlicka	\$13,000	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	Federal/General	Conduct rating reviews for Step Up to Quality.	Melody Hobson
3/3/2025	45027	AM#1	Saffron Buettner					Consideration.	Melody Hobson
3/3/2025	45245		Susan Borchert	\$4,500	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	General	Provide training.	Melody Hobson
3/3/2025	45247		Janice Lee	\$4,500	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	General	Provide training.	Melody Hobson
3/3/2025	45248		Suzanne Schneider	\$5,000	4/1/2025	3/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching and training services.	Melody Hobson
3/3/2025	45250		UNL	\$30,683	3/17/2025	3/16/2026	Federal	Assist schools in increasing awareness of the MyPlate symbol, resources and the nutritional quality of schoolmeals among key audiences.	Zainab Rida
3/5/2025	45228		UNL	\$49,634.50	1/27/2025	5/30/2026	General	Establish a Networked Improvement Community with pilot rural high schools with high rates of chronic absenteeism.	Shirley Vargas

NDE CONTRACTS

DATE REC'D	CONTRACT #	AMENDMENT #	CONTRACT NAME	MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT	START DATE	ENDING DATE	FUNDING SOURCE	SCOPE OF SERVICES	CONTACT PERSON
3/5/2025	45252		Amara Munoz	\$15,000	3/15/2025	3/14/2026	General	Provide spanish translation of trainings and other documents.	Melody Hobson
3/5/2025	45254		Primrose School of Lincoln	\$3,000	4/1/2025	3/31/2026	General	Provide classrooms for program quality assessment observations.	Melody Hobson
3/6/2025	46000		Eagle Delivery Service	\$17,446.08	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Mail services.	Krysti Michl
3/6/2025	45253		Missouri Rehab Association	\$2,700	5/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Mail services.	Krysti Michl
3/7/2025	45246		Jeanne Fielder	\$4,500	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	General	Provide training.	Melody Hobson
3/7/2025	45149	AM#2	LINQ					Increase amount/scope.	Zainab Rida
3/10/2025	45251		Jennifer Snyder	\$4,500	3/1/2025	2/28/2026	General	Provide training.	Melody Hobson
3/12/2025	45255		Monarch Psychological Svcs	\$33,000	3/25/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
3/18/2025	45258		Smarter Learning Group	\$48,000	3/17/2025	9/15/2025	Federal/General	Support the development of Nebraska attendance action plan.	Zainab Rida
3/19/2025	45275		CodeHS Inc	\$1,275,000	3/14/2025	6/30/2026	General	Develop computer science and technology education teacher professional learning.	Katie Graham
3/19/2025	45256		Margaret Donovan	\$33,000	3/25/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
3/19/2025	45264		ESU 1	\$37,525.37	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/19/2025	45259		World Speaks	\$33,660	3/15/2025	3/14/2026	Federal/General	Provide oral interpretation and written translation for NDE Early Childhood training and training materials.	Melody Hobson
3/20/2025	45265		ESU 6	\$23,044.68	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/20/2025	45162	AM#1	NE Children & Families Foundation					Extend date.	Lane Carr
3/20/2025	45263		Beatrice YMCA	\$7,457.98	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/21/2025	45276		Madonna School & Comm Based Svcs	\$22,736.56	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/21/2025	45277		Omaha Goodwill	\$46,556.64	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/21/2025	45271		Norris Public Schools	\$16,246.43	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/21/2025	45279		Cambridge Public Schools	\$48,156.17	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/21/2025	45268		The Arc of Lincoln	\$20,554.08	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/21/2025	45270		Grand Island Public Schools	\$48,885.34	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/21/2025	45283		Transunion Risk & Alternative Data Solutions	\$2,040	4/1/2025	3/31/2026	General	Subscription service to proprietary public record databases.	Ami Huff
3/25/2025	45037	AM#1	Donelle Wolters					Extend date/increase amount/scope.	Katie Graham
3/25/2025	45107	AM#1	District Management Group					Consideration.	Shirley Vargas
3/25/2025	45186		Dyslexico	\$499,985.12	3/21/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	Conduct research to design a new method leveraging A1 technology to identify, correct and categorize errors and patterns in student writing.	Allison DenBeste
3/25/2025	45262		ESU 13	\$16,424.02	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/25/2025	45274		ESUCC	\$250,000	6/6/2025	11/15/2026	Federal	Develop pilot program to make menstrual products available to each school district.	Zainab Rida
3/25/2025	45269		District OR1 Public School	\$18,312.25	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/25/2025	45267		Angel Guardians	\$48,984.97	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/25/2025	45278		CASA of South Central NE	\$48,999.99	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/25/2025	45273		Diller O'Dell Public Schools	\$10,811.97	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/26/2025	45258	AM#1	Smarter Learning Group					Other	Zainab Rida
3/26/2025	45285		Community Language Cooperative	\$48,000	5/13/2025	5/12/2026	Federal/General	Translation of materials.	Melody Hobson
3/26/2025	45230		HHS	\$10,500	4/5/2025	4/4/2026	Federal	Conduct facilitation/presentation.	Amy Rhone
3/27/2025	45257		Green School Farms	\$16,800	3/26/2025	3/25/2026	Federal	Assist with planning and implementation of the Heartland Farm to School & ECC Institute.	Zainab Rida
3/27/2025	45281		LPS	\$34,871.23	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/27/2025	45266		Whispering Acres Trails & Treasures	\$46,175.90	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/27/2025	45280		Novak Educational Consulting	\$7,000	6/3/2025	6/3/2025	Federal	Keynote speaker.	Allison DenBeste
3/28/2025	45287		Linda Villagomez	\$9,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide training in Spanish.	Melody Hobson
3/28/2025	45272		Seward Public Schools	\$20,081.44	4/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Provide summer transition program for youth ages 14-21.	Lindy Foley
3/28/2025	45282		Linda Meyers	\$19,500	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	General	Provide training and classroom quality observations.	Melody Hobson
3/28/2025	45261		Corinne Combs	\$10,335.25	3/26/2025	7/1/2025	Federal	Serve as SkillsUSA Nebraska State Leadership & Skills Conference Coordinator.	Katie Graham
3/28/2025	45260		Delivery Associates	\$49,000	3/10/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	Strategic planning with apprenticeship stakeholders to grow registered apprenticeships in Nebraska.	Brad Dirksen
3/28/2025	45289		ESUCC	\$2,750	3/1/2025	3/1/2026	Federal	Pay for annual renewal of the Nebraska OER Commons site which is a shared expense.	Allison DenBeste
3/31/2025	42127	AM#4	UNL					Extend date.	Zainab Rida
3/31/2025	44323	AM#2	OCIO-Sreekanth Pall					Extend date/increase amount.	Kristin Yates
4/1/2025	45227	AM#1	Smarter Learning Group					Extend date/increase amount.	Zainab Rida
4/3/2025	45290		Value-Up	\$39,000	4/1/2025	12/17/2025	Federal	Provide training.	Zainab Rida
4/9/2025	45284		National Financial Educators	\$8,500	3/20/2025	9/30/2025	Federal	Provide opening keynote at Nebraska Get Connected conference.	Zainab Rida
4/9/2025	45070	AM#1	District Management Group					Scope.	Shirley Vargas
4/9/2025	45114	AM#1	Avenue Scholars					Amount change.	Shirley Vargas
4/9/2025	45115	AM#1	Central Plains Center for Services					Amount change.	Shirley Vargas
4/9/2025	45116	AM#1	College Possible					Amount change.	Shirley Vargas
4/9/2025	45294		Campbell Cleaning Svc	\$11,560	4/1/2025	3/31/2026	Federal	Cleaning service for Kearney VR Office.	Lindy Foley
4/9/2025	45292		Rapport International	\$10,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal	Interpreting Services.	Lindy Foley
4/9/2025	45286		Cynthia Villanueva	\$9,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide training in Spanish.	Melody Hobson
4/9/2025	45249		UNL	\$12,100	4/1/2025	3/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide training and CDA observations.	Melody Hobson

NDE CONTRACTS

DATE REC'D	CONTRACT #	AMENDMENT #	CONTRACT NAME	MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT	START DATE	ENDING DATE	FUNDING SOURCE	SCOPE OF SERVICES	CONTACT PERSON
4/9/2025	46003		Kathryn Benes	\$126,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46001		Kathleen Barrett	\$126,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46015		Kevin Coughlin	\$151,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46010		Helen Montoya	\$91,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46008		Surgical Care	\$176,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46017		Lee Branham	\$61,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46009		Patricia Newman Consulting	\$205,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46018		Margaret Donovan	\$126,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46012		Kevin Wycoff	\$151,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46014		Daniel Cronk	\$205,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46019		Monarch Psychological Svcs	\$126,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46005		Alexandra Suslow-Geditz	\$181,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46002		Bradford Brabec	\$205,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46016		Dianna Clyne	\$136,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46007		Joanell Wheeler	\$126,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46011		Jerry Tanner	\$205,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46013		Thomas Martin	\$126,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46006		Terri Vontz	\$61,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/9/2025	46004		Child & Family Services	\$176,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Medical consultative services.	Krysti Michl
4/10/2025	45293		Michelle Rupiper	\$16,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal	Provide coaching/training and curriculum development.	Melody Hobson
4/14/2025	45189	AM#1	Geonasha Agbeletey					Increase amount/scope.	Lane Carr
4/14/2025	45291		TNTP	\$36,193	4/1/2025	6/1/2025	General	Design/present professional learning session.	Shirley Vargas
4/14/2025	45288		Fremont YMCA	\$3,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide classrooms.	Melody Hobson
4/14/2025	45296		Meghan Gibbons	\$12,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching/training services.	Melody Hobson
4/15/2025	45300		Vivayic	\$22,500	4/7/2025	9/30/2025	Federal	Build online learning module.	Zainab Rida
4/16/2025	46020		Lorenzo Brown	\$11,000	7/15/2025	7/16/2025	Federal	Provide keynote presentation for VR's 2025 State Staff Conference.	Lindy Foley
4/16/2025	45298		Danielle Bettmann	\$8,000	6/7/2025	6/6/2026	Federal	Review and approve independent study documentatn via NECPRS.	Melody Hobson
4/17/2025	45297		Mobility Motoring	\$115,290	4/1/2025	12/31/2025	Federal	Provide installation of an ATC Accessibility Vehicle Modification.	Lindy Foley
4/17/2025	45304		Dyane Smokorowski	\$2,500	6/2/2025	6/3/2025	Federal	Speaker at Future Ready conference.	Allyson DenBeste
4/17/2025	45301		Megan Shepherd	\$48,900	6/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal	Make changes/edits to Early Childhood online course on the Learning Management System.	Melody Hobson
4/17/2025	45303		ESU 9	\$37,705	4/21/2025	9/30/2025	Federal	Deliver high quality professional development to teachers and school leaders.	Katie Graham
4/21/2025	45076	AM#1	Emspace					Scope/consideration.	Melody Hobson
4/21/2025	45299		Emily Aksamit	\$14,500	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide CLASS and ERS observations for Step Up to Quality.	Melody Hobson
4/21/2025	45306		Student1	\$40,000	5/1/2025	8/31/2025	Federal	Maintain and transfer the Early Childhood resource and referral website.	Melody Hobson
4/21/2025	44036	AM#1	Utah State University					Other.	Amy Rhone
4/21/2025	45213	AM#1	UNL					Amount change/scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
4/22/2025	45305		Taryn Brown	\$25,557	4/21/2025	3/31/2026	Federal	Serve as HOSA State Officer Coordinator.	Katie Graham
4/22/2025	45308		Ali Hearn Coaching & Consulting	\$49,500	5/20/2025	5/19/2026	Federal	Provide training and support in the implementation of advanced restorative practices.	Amy Rhone
4/22/2025	46021		Barbara Davidson	\$5,000	8/4/2025	8/5/2025	Federal	Keynote speaker.	Allyson DenBeste
4/28/2025	44379	AM#1	Kristi Albrecht					Increase amount.	Melody Hobson
4/30/2025	44314	AM#3	Edwise					Increase amount.	Kristin Yates
5/1/2025	45312		Vivayic	\$30,000	4/28/2025	9/15/2025	Federal	Update psychological safety and suicide prevention toolkits.	Zainab Rida
5/1/2025	46022		Illumination Group	\$11,500	7/14/2025	7/16/2025	Federal	Provide keynote presentation for VR's 2025 State Staff Conference.	Lindy Foley
5/1/2025	45201	AM#1	Teachstone					Scope/consideration.	Melody Hobson
5/1/2025	45313		NE Dept of Environment and Energy	\$12,000	6/1/2025	8/31/2025	Federal	Conduct health inspections.	Zainab Rida
5/2/2025	45310		Reed Family Learning Academy	\$3,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide classrooms used for ERS/CLASS observations.	Melody Hobson
5/5/2025	45309		NE Chamber of Commerce	\$42,000	4/25/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Coordinate efforts surrounding education and the workforce.	Ryan Foor
5/5/2025	45311		ESU 2	\$49,800	3/12/2025	9/11/2025	Federal	Conduct training.	Zainab Rida
5/5/2025	45316		ESU 9	\$12,000	4/28/2025	9/15/2025	Federal	Conduct training.	Zainab Rida
5/6/2025	45307		Sparq Data Solutions	\$2,600	4/23/2025	3/31/2026	General	Electronic meeting service.	Elizabeth Tegtmeier
5/7/2025	45295		Douglas Co Health Dept	\$8,000	6/1/2025	9/30/2025	Federal	Conduct health inspections.	Zainab Rida
5/7/2025	45302		Lori Chleborad	\$7,000	5/1/2025	4/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching and training services.	Melody Hobson
5/7/2025	45034	AM#1	State of Iowa-Dept of Ed					Other.	Amy Rhone
5/12/2025	45318		ESU 6	\$15,120	5/5/2025	9/15/2025	Federal	Conduct training.	Zainab Rida
5/12/2025	46023		Teaching Strategies	\$48,258	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide training.	Melody Hobson
5/13/2025	45317		Brenda Saxe	\$14,000	6/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching/training services.	Melody Hobson
5/14/2025	45324		Eric Knoll	\$6,000	5/15/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Plan and conduct CTE Jumpstart Summer professional development workshop.	Katie Graham
5/15/2025	45315		Nikki Robertson-Griffin	\$5,500	6/2/2025	6/3/2025	Federal	Present at Future Ready conference.	Allyson DenBeste
5/16/2025	45062	AM#1	Nicole Long					Increase amount.	Melody Hobson
5/16/2025	45321		Southeast Comm College	\$18,368	5/31/2025	6/26/2025	Federal	Deliver high quality technical skill workshops.	Katie Graham
5/19/2025	45314		John Mlinar	\$11,976	5/19/2025	9/30/2025	General	Process application and communicate with applicants.	Brad Dirksen
5/19/2025	45239	AM#1	Easter Seals of NE					Consideration.	Lindy Foley

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DATE REC'D	CONTRACT #	AMENDMENT #	CONTRACT NAME	MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT	START DATE	ENDING DATE	FUNDING SOURCE	SCOPE OF SERVICES	CONTACT PERSON
5/19/2025	45320		Central Comm College	\$15,211	5/15/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	Deliver high quality technical skill workshops.	Katie Graham
5/19/2025	45325		ESU 6	\$13,500	6/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide 1/2 price Early Learning Guidelines training registrations.	Melody Hobson
5/19/2025	46024		ESU 4	\$4,445,600	7/1/2025	6/30/2027	General	Operate NCECBVI.	Amy Rhone
5/19/2025	46027		NWEA	\$7,598,321.97	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	General	Provide statewide assessments.	Allyson DenBeste
5/19/2025	45328		Student1	\$45,000	5/15/2025	6/30/2025	General	Technical assistance for systems-involved youth data system planning.	Kristin Yates
5/19/2025	45326		Foundry Community	\$2,600	5/15/2025	6/30/2025	Federal	System alignment for apprenticeship expansion in partnership with NDOL and other stakeholders.	Lane Carr
5/19/2025	45323		Paula Thompson	\$3,000	6/1/2025	7/31/2025	Federal	Complete Nebraska Head Start Collaboration Office needs assessment and 5-year strategic plan development.	Melody Hobson
5/20/2025	45040	AM#2	Bartle & Geier Law Firm					Increase amount.	Amy Rhone
5/20/2025	45052	AM#1	Sandra Miller					Consideration.	Melody Hobson
5/20/2025	46029		Teaching Strategies	\$40,000	8/1/2025	7/31/2027	Federal	Provide access and technical support to NDE as well as subscripton programs for the Teaching Strategic GOLD online platform.	Amy Rhone
5/20/2025	46028		UNMC	\$78,484	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Support NDE in working with the child outcomes process for Results Matter.	Amy Rhone
5/22/2025	45189	AM#2	Geonasha Agbeletey					Increase amount/scope/consideration.	Lane Carr
5/22/2025	45330		ESU 3	\$15,000	6/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide training.	Melody Hobson
5/28/2025	45322		Marna Stack	\$10,000	5/26/2025	5/25/2026	Federal	Support for local food for schools.	Zainab Rida
5/28/2025	45334		ESU 2	\$42,700	5/27/2025	9/11/2025	Federal	Conduct trainings.	Zainab Rida
5/28/2025	46030		Kansas State School for the Deaf	\$20,000/student	8/1/2025	7/31/2026	General	Allow Nebraska students to attend.	Amy Rhone
5/28/2025	46034		SPED Strategies	\$75,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Expand support to schools.	Amy Rhone
5/28/2025	45331		Susan Wiggins	\$6,500	6/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal	Support Bellevue Public schools.	Amy Rhone
5/29/2025	45333		ESU 7	\$12,660	5/28/2025	9/15/2025	Federal	Conduct training.	Zainab Rida
5/29/2025	45332		Nancy Woodhams	6,500	6/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal	Support Bellevue Public schools.	Amy Rhone
6/2/2025	45338		Laurel Wheeler	\$8,000	6/1/2025	8/15/2025	Federal	Support for local food for schools.	Zainab Rida
6/4/2025	44387	AM#1	UNO					Increase amount/scope.	Shirley Vargas
6/6/2025	45319		Midland University	\$1,620,921	5/9/2025	6/30/2027	Federal	Award State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula grant funds.	Brad Dirksen
6/10/2025	45339		ESU 10	\$6,400	6/9/2025	9/15/2025	Federal	Conduct trainings.	Zainab Rida
6/10/2025	45336		Jackson Lewis PC	\$15,960	5/23/2025	12/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide professional legal services.	Kristin Yates
6/10/2025	46032		NCSA	\$24,000	7/1/2025	9/30/2025	General	Administrator Days Conference.	Ryan Foor
6/10/2025	46025		Kimberly Jacobson	\$36,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Provide guidance & support in mental health psychological first aid for schools and suicide prevention awareness/response.	Zainab Rida
6/10/2025	46026		Sally Carlson	\$36,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Provide guidance & support in mental health psychological first aid for schools and suicide prevention awareness/response.	Zainab Rida
6/10/2025	45262	AM#1	ESU 13					Scope.	Lindy Foley
6/10/2025	45076	AM#2	Emspace					Increase amount.	Melody Hobson
6/10/2025	45036	AM#1	Traci Strazdas					Consideration.	Melody Hobson
6/10/2025	43084	AM#3	ACERI Partners					Consideration.	Amy Rhone
6/10/2025	43085	AM#4	Data Driven Enterprises					Consideration.	Amy Rhone
6/10/2025	43087	AM#3	Nicole Stewart					Consideration.	Amy Rhone
6/10/2025	46038		Traci Strazdas	\$76,600	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as program quality tool statewide anchor, complete observations and provide training.	Melody Hobson
6/10/2025	46046		ESU 9	\$852,913.80	7/1/2025	6/30/2027	General	Provide professional development.	Amy Rhone
6/10/2025	46043		ESU 9	\$609,122.70	7/1/2025	6/30/2027	General	Provide staff--Statewide Coordinator.	Amy Rhone
6/10/2025	46047		ESU 7	\$503,710.90	7/1/2025	6/30/2027	General	Provide professional development.	Amy Rhone
6/11/2025	46035		Therapeutic Play	\$9,100	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Provide training.	Amy Rhone
6/12/2025	45312	AM#1	Vivavis					Increase amount/scope/consideration.	Zainab Rida
6/12/2025	45337		Firespring	\$20,400	6/15/2025	6/14/2026	Federal/General	Manage website.	Melody Hobson
6/12/2025	45327		ESU 7	\$4,200	6/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide training registrations.	Melody Hobson
6/13/2025	45041	AM#2	Anderson & Creager & Wittstruck					Increase amount/consideration.	Amy Rhone
6/13/2025	45305	AM#1	Taryn Brown					Consideration.	Katie Graham
6/13/2025	46033		TNTP	\$49,780	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Ensure students with disabilities receive support.	Amy Rhone
6/16/2025	46037		Education First Consulting	\$120,000	7/1/025	6/30/2026	Federal	Carry out grant activities.	Allyson DenBeste
6/16/2025	46036		State of Iowa-Dept of Ed	\$119,657/student	7/1/2025	6/3/2026	General	Provide services to children & youth with hearing impairments.	Amy Rhone
6/17/2025	45150	AM#2	CN Resource					Increase amount/scope.	Zainab Rida
6/17/2025	42219	AM#5	ACT					Other.	Allyson DenBeste
6/17/2025	45319	AM#1	Midland University					Consideration.	Brad Dirksen
6/17/2025	46041		SB Consulting	\$36,500	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching, training and completion of program quality observations.	Melody Hobson
6/17/2025	46044		ESU 3	\$1,244,826.70	7/1/2025	6/30/2027	General	Provide professional development.	Amy Rhone
6/30/2025	46048		Literacy Pro	\$47,831	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Serve as the National Reporting System online student data management system.	Katie Graham
6/30/2025	46050		George Toman	\$30,000	7/8/2025	7/7/2026	Federal	Provide consultation.	Amy Rhone
6/30/2025	46045		ESU 18	\$602,719.90	7/1/2025	6/30/2027	General	Provide professional development.	Amy Rhone
6/30/2025	45340		Instruction Partners	\$34,000	6/13/2025	12/31/2025	General	Develop training materials.	Allyson DenBeste
6/30/2025	45329		UNMC	\$34,254	6/20/2025	9/29/2025	Federal	Create content development plan.	Zainab Rida
6/30/2025	46052		ESU 1	\$8,100	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide half-priced registration fees for Early Learning Guidelines training.	Melody Hobson
6/30/2025	45039	AM#1	Amanda Hoffmann					Consideration.	Katie Graham

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DATE REC'D	CONTRACT #	AMENDMENT #	CONTRACT NAME	MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT	START DATE	ENDING DATE	FUNDING SOURCE	SCOPE OF SERVICES	CONTACT PERSON
6/30/2025	45049	AM#1	SPED Strategies					Increase amount.	Amy Rhone
6/30/2025	46039		Sandra Miller	\$23,600	8/1/2025	7/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching, training and completion of program quality observations.	Melody Hobson
6/30/2026	45335		Nebraska Expressive Arts Therapy Foundation	\$11,300	5/19/2025	5/18/2026	Federal	Provide training.	Zainab Rida
6/30/2025	46040		Rebecca Dunlap-Morton	\$8,200	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide training and complete program quality observations.	Melody Hobson
6/30/2025	46042		Kayla Parr	\$6,800	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide training.	Melody Hobson
7/1/2025	46049		Boys Town	\$845,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	General	Host anonymous report line.	Zainab Rida
7/1/2025	46055		FSU 10	\$97,492	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Provide staff, equipment and facility to support ATP activities.	Lindy Foley
7/1/2025	45341		National Assoc of State Head Injury Admin	\$49,000	6/30/2025	6/29/2026	Federal	Develop curriculum/content for training staff.	Lindy Foley
7/7/2025	45261	AM#1	Corinne Combs					Extend date/scope.	Katie Graham
7/7/2025	45029	AM#1	Leah Merkwan					Consideration.	Melody Hobson
7/7/2025	45267	AM#1	Angel Guardians					Consideration.	Lindy Foley
7/7/2025	45328	AM#1	Student1					Extend date.	Kristin Yates
7/7/2025	45213	AM#2	UNL					Decrease amount.	Brad Dirksen
7/8/2025	45040	AM#3	Bartle & Geier Law Firm					Increase amount.	Lindy Foley/Amy Rhone
7/9/2025	44248	AM#2	OCIO-Mike Eckel					Increase amount/extend date.	Kristin Yates
7/10/2025	45195	AM#2	Wayne State College					Decrease amount/scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
7/14/2025	45202	AM#2	College of Saint Mary					Decrease amount/scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
7/14/2025	46056		NTI Assoc of Head Injury Admin	\$49,000	7/14/2025	7/13/2026	Federal	Provide technical assistance and support.	Lindy Foley
7/15/2025	45236	AM#1	Emspace					Increase amount/scope/consideration.	Zainab Rida
7/18/2025	46064		Stephanie Winter	\$16,000	7/3/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Interpreting Services.	Lindy Foley
7/18/2025	46020	AM#1	Lorenzo Brown					Extend date/increase amount/scope.	Lindy Foley
7/21/2025	46058		Brain Injury Association of NE	\$48,891.02	7/14/2025	7/13/2026	Federal	Expand access to and increase availability of Peer to Peer Support for Nebraskans.	Lindy Foley
7/22/2025	46063		Beth Townsend	\$16,000	7/7/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Interpreting Services.	Lindy Foley
7/22/2025	46066		June Analco	\$16,000	7/7/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Interpreting Services.	Lindy Foley
7/24/2025	46076		Ben Sparks	\$16,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Interpreting Services.	Lindy Foley
7/24/2025	44054	AM#3	NE State College System					Extend date/consideration.	Lane Carr
7/24/2025	45065	AM#2	NE Children & Families Foundation					Increase amount/scope/consideration.	Zainab Rida
7/24/2025	46053		Inlumon	\$175,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	General	Secure hosting NE Educator licensure system.	Brad Dirksen
7/24/2025	46067		EdCount	\$49,000	8/1/2025	12/31/2025	Federal	Ensure grant activities move forward without delay.	Allyson DenBeste
7/29/2025	46065		Gerieanne Knoebel	\$16,000	7/7/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Interpreting Services.	Lindy Foley
7/31/2025	46051		Westminster	\$3,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide classrooms.	Melody Hobson
8/1/2025	46054		ACTFL	\$3,000	9/1/2025	10/10/2025	General	Provide workshops.	Allyson DenBeste
8/4/2025	46062		Leah Merkwan	\$28,000	8/1/2025	7/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching/trng.	Melody Hobson
8/4/2025	46071		Kristi Albrecht	\$21,000	8/1/2025	7/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching/trng.	Melody Hobson
8/4/2025	46072		Center for Rural Affairs	\$49,999	8/15/2025	8/14/2026	Federal	Assist w/Harvest of the Month program.	Zainab Rida
8/4/2025	45188	AM#2	UNK					Decrease amount/scope/consideration.	Brad Dirksen
8/5/2025	46060		Nicole Long	\$9,200	8/1/2025	7/31/2026	Federal	Provide quality observations.	Melody Hobson
8/5/2025	46061		Diane Ellis	\$8,100	8/1/2025	7/31/2026	Federal	Provide quality observations.	Melody Hobson
8/6/2025	46050	AM#1	George Toman					Increase amount.	Amy Rhone
8/7/2025	46075		Margaret Propp	\$16,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Interpreting Services.	Lindy Foley
8/8/2025	46059		LaSonja Kirksey	\$17,000	8/1/2025	7/31/2026	Federal	Provide program quality observations.	Melody Hobson
8/11/2025	46070		SRI	\$64,600	7/14/2025	12/31/2026	Federal	Assess comprehensive literacy state development grant.	Allyson DenBeste
8/11/2025	46078		Utah State University	\$18,200	8/26/2025	8/27/2025	Federal	Provide training.	Allyson DenBeste
8/11/2025	46042	AM#1	Kayla Parr					Increase amount/scope/consideration.	Melody Hobson
8/11/2025	45151	AM#1	Lacey Sateren					Increase amount.	Melody Hobson
8/11/2025	46077		Kathleen Miller	\$20,000	9/1/2025	8/31/2026	Federal	Conduct training.	Melody Hobson
8/13/2025	46076	AM#1	Ben Sparks					Extend date/increase amount.	Lindy Foley
8/13/2025	46074		National Council for Behavioral Health	\$26,000	8/1/2025	9/30/2025	Federal	Provide training on youth mental health first aid.	Zainab Rida
8/13/2025	46079		Emspace	\$200,000	9/1/2025	8/31/2026	Federal	Continuation of statewide communication and public engagement project.	Melody Hobson
8/15/2025	46068		Bartle & Geier Law Firm	\$25,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Serve as hearing officer.	Amy Rhone
8/18/2025	46082		META Associates	\$19,500	8/18/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Provide annual external evaluation for 2024-25.	Beth Wooster
8/25/2025	46073		Nebraska Chamber of Commerce	\$75,000	7/30/2025	6/30/2026	General	Ensure alignment between PK-16 pathways employer needs statewide talent, education goals, stronger connections across education and workforce systems.	Lane Carr
8/25/2025	46087		Central Plains Center for Services	\$41,519.16	8/25/2025	6/30/2026	General	Provide educational services to low-income and underrepresented students in high school and postsecondary education.	Shirley Vargas
8/26/2025	46075	AM#1	Margaret Propp					Extend date/increase amount.	Lindy Foley
8/26/2025	45338	AM#1	Laurel Wheeler					Extend date/increase amount.	Zainab Rida
8/27/2025	46083		Partners for Insightful Evaluation	\$32,000	9/1/2025	10/31/2026	Federal	Provide performance evaluation services for NE VR's Traumatic Brain Injury State Demonstration Grant Program.	Lindy Foley
8/28/2025	42405	AM#6	Ben Baumfalk					Extend date.	Kristin Yates
8/28/2025	46095		Emspace	\$49,840	9/5/2025	9/4/2026	Federal	Design and develop digital assets.	Zainab Rida
9/3/2025	46081		Rita Porter	\$25,000	8/10/2025	6/30/2026	General	Serve as Nebraska IT Initiative Project Manager.	Katie Graham
9/3/2025	46094		Say Hey There	\$18,000	9/1/2025	8/31/2026	General	Promotion of SafeHelp on social media.	Zainab Rida
9/3/2025	46084		Jennifer Burkey	\$25,000	10/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching and training services.	Melody Hobson

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9/3/2025	46085		Larissa Besendiz de Moguel	\$21,000	10/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching and training services.	Melody Hobson
9/3/2025	45328	AM#2	Student1					Extend date.	Kristin Yates
9/4/2025	46089		Avenue Scholars	\$261,573.71	8/11/2025	6/30/2026	General	Provide educational services to low-income and underrepresented students in high school and postsecondary education.	Shirley Vargas
9/4/2025	46088		College Possible	\$112,102.73	8/25/2025	6/30/2026	General	Provide educational services to low-income and underrepresented students in high school and postsecondary education.	Shirley Vargas
9/8/2025	46086		UNL	\$3,300	9/1/2025	5/31/2026	Federal	Participate in Heartland Farm to School and Early Care & Education Institute.	Zainab Rida
9/9/2025	46043	AM#1	ESU 9					Consideration.	Amy Rhone
9/9/2025	46091		Nicole Stewart	\$49,999	8/8/2025	8/7/2026	Federal	Conduct rule complaint investigation.	Amy Rhone
9/9/2025	46090		Torsch	\$49,808.20	9/18/2025	9/17/2026	Federal	Provide licenses to Talend Premium & Network Architecture.	Amy Rhone
9/9/2025	46093		Data Driven Enterprises	\$49,999	8/8/2025	8/7/2026	Federal	Conduct rule complaint investigation.	Amy Rhone
9/9/2025	46092		ACERI Partners	\$49,999	8/8/2025	8/7/2026	Federal	Conduct rule complaint investigation.	Amy Rhone
9/10/2025	46101		Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather	\$150,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Ami Huff
9/10/2025	46106		Bartle & Geier Law Firm	\$150,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Ami Huff
9/10/2025	46098		National Assoc of State Directors of Career Technical Consortium	\$49,000	9/8/2025	11/30/2026	Federal	Update and develop Nebraska nontraditional occupations by gender list.	Katie Graham
9/10/2025	46105		Kuder	\$175,000	9/10/2025	8/31/2026	General	Annual statewide license for comprehensive online college and career planning system.	Katie Graham
9/10/2025	46104		Peetz Koerwitz & Lafleur	\$150,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Ami Huff
9/15/2025	42361	AM#2	NE Chamber of Commerce					Increase amount.	Lane Carr
9/15/2025	45309	AM#1	NE Chamber of Commerce					Increase amount.	Lane Carr
9/15/2025	46109		ESU 13	\$90,000	9/2/2025	8/28/2026	Federal	Assist with implementation of the statewide educator effectiveness system.	Shirley Vargas
9/15/2025	46099		NE Children & Families Foundation	\$45,000	9/8/2025	8/31/2026	Federal	Coordinate and implement the Boys in HEAL Professional project.	Katie Graham
9/16/2025	45171	AM#1	Dawn Murphy					Increase amount.	Melody Hobson
9/16/2025	46108		NCSA	\$40,000	9/15/2025	8/31/2026	Federal	Provide conference management services.	Katie Graham
9/16/2025	46100		Andori	\$3,180	9/1/2025	8/31/2026	Federal	Provide cleaning services.	Lindy Foley
9/16/2025	46102		Koukol Johnson Schmit & Milone	\$150,000	7/1/2025	6/3/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Ami Huff
9/17/2025	45342		Genesis Contracting Group	\$85,770.38	3/11/2025	3/10/2026	Trust Fund	Complete repairs at NCECBVI.	Amy Rhone
9/19/2025	46103		Mattson Ricketts Law Firm	\$150,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Ami Huff
9/19/2025	46070	AM#1	SRI					Other.	Allison DenBeste
9/22/2025	46111		ESU 10	\$55,500	10/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide hosting/maintenance for website.	Lindy Foley
9/22/2025	46112		Susan Jensen	\$14,134	10/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal/General	Conduct rating reviews.	Melody Hobson
9/23/2025	46110		Cidi Labs	\$20,600	9/1/2025	7/31/2027	Federal	Purchase software application. Provide ability to convert casvas course content into required accessibility guidelines format.	Allison DenBeste
9/25/2025	46107		Anderson & Creager & Wittstruck	\$150,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Ami Huff
9/26/2025	46118		Deaf Services Unlimited	\$15,000	10/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide video remote interpreting & CART captioning services.	Lindy Foley
9/26/2025	46114		University of Massachusetts-Boston	\$373,445	10/1/2025	8/31/2026	Federal	Serve as independent evaluator.	Lindy Foley
9/29/2025	45149	AM#3	LINQ					Increase amount from \$296,112.80 to \$371,112.80.	Zainab Rida
9/29/2025	42219	AM#6	ACT					Increase amount from \$8,210,022 to \$8,215,022.	Allison DenBeste
9/29/2025	46123		ESU 6	\$11,229.30	10/1/2025	5/17/2026	Federal	Conduct a job expo.	Lindy Foley
9/29/2025	46121		ESU 2	\$12,000	10/1/2025	5/15/2026	Federal	Conduct a job expo.	Lindy Foley
9/29/2025	46113		Ben Baumfalk	\$144,836.32	10/3/2025	6/30/2026	General	Serve as ECIDS Project Lead.	Melody Hobson
9/30/2025	46097		UNL	\$56,547	8/29/2025	12/15/2025	General	Conduct psychometric review of Nebraska Reading Improvement Act Assessments.	Allison DenBeste
10/1/2025	45319	AM#2	Midland University					Decrease amount from \$1,620,921 to \$1,540,647.	Brad Dirksen
10/2/2025	45275	AM#1	CodeHS Inc					\$190,000 will be moved from expenses to services. Total contract amount does not change.	Katie Graham
10/2/2025	46116		Lacey Sateren	\$16,000	11/1/2025	10/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide program quality observations.	Melody Hobson
10/3/2025	46069		Anderson & Creager & Wittstruck	\$25,000	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Serve as hearing officer.	Amy Rhone
10/3/2025	46131		UNMC	\$44,153	10/1/2025	12/31/2025	Federal	Continue providing statewide evaluation services for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers.	Zainab Rida
10/8/2025	46130		Smarter Learning Group	\$6,000	10/1/2025	12/31/2025	Federal	Complete phase 3 of the chronic absenteeism work.	Zainab Rida
10/9/2025	46117		LINQ	\$303,693.44	10/6/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Maintenance agreement for CNP system.	Zainab Rida
10/9/2025	46115		MTW Solutions	\$291,429	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Continue support for NE GMS.	Bryce Wilson
10/9/2025	46124		ESU 7	\$4,266	10/1/2025	5/16/2026	Federal	Conduct a job expo.	Lindy Foley
10/9/2025	46122		ESU 3	\$6,161.32	10/1/2025	5/17/2026	Federal	Conduct a job expo.	Lindy Foley
10/9/2025	46120		ESU 1	\$10,193.04	10/1/2025	5/15/2026	Federal	Conduct a job expo.	Lindy Foley
10/9/2025	46125		Bryan Hermesen	\$25,000	10/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide updates and maintenance to ATP's database ATTIE.	Lindy Foley
10/9/2025	46132		Education Resource Strategies	\$301,000	10/6/2025	6/30/2026	General	Design a statewide secondary instructional planning guide and provide support to a high school redesign and strategy planning cohort.	Shirley Vargas
10/10/2025	46137		Gerald Gill Strait	\$14,400	10/15/2025	3/31/2026	Federal	Provide professional training.	Zainab Rida
10/10/2025	46135		District Management Group	\$133,000	10/6/2025	6/30/2026	General	Implement Breakthrough Results program.	Shirley Vargas
10/10/2025	46138		Deanne Mueller	\$20,000	11/15/2025	11/14/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching services.	Melody Hobson
10/10/2025	46136		Erica Timperley	\$75,000	11/7/2025	11/6/2026	Federal/General	Serve as ERS Anchor.	Melody Hobson
10/10/2025	46126		Four Monkeys Press	\$31,000	11/1/2025	10/31/2026	Federal	Provide program quality observations.	Melody Hobson
10/15/2025	46127		OCIO (Swetha Manne)	\$28,068.24	10/1/2025	12/15/2025	Federal	Provide NECPRS developer.	Melody Hobson

NDE CONTRACTS

DATE REC'D	CONTRACT #	AMENDMENT #	CONTRACT NAME	MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT	START DATE	ENDING DATE	FUNDING SOURCE	SCOPE OF SERVICES	CONTACT PERSON
10/15/2025	46128		OCIO (Sushmitha Sayempu)	\$32,348.24	10/1/2025	12/15/2025	Federal	Provide NECPRS developer.	Melody Hobson
10/15/2025	46096		UNMC	\$47,234	9/1/2025	12/31/2025	Federal	Provide training.	Zainab Rida
10/15/2025	46129		OCIO (Eric Tomasek)	\$43,048.24	10/1/2025	12/15/2025	Federal	Provide application development support.	Amy Rhone
10/17/2025	46119		UNL	\$245,000	9/30/2025	9/29/2026	Federal	Provide support for AWARE project.	Zainab Rida
10/20/2025	46088	AM#1	College Possible					Consideration--Correct flat fee invoice amount.	Shirley Vargas
10/20/2025	46097	AM#1	UNL					Extend date and increase amount (include two additional vendors in scope). Increase amount/consideration (cover additional caseload for Hearing Officer work).	Allyson DenBeste
10/20/2025	46068	AM#1	Bartle & Geier Law Firm						Amy Rhone
10/21/2025	46140		Edwise	\$430,425	7/1/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Continue portal development and support.	Jill Aurand
10/24/2025	46139		Dawn Murphy	\$18,600	12/1/2025	11/30/2026	Federal/General	Provide program quality observations.	Melody Hobson
10/24/2025	46034	AM#1	SPED Strategies					Scope modifications and budget increase.	Amy Rhone
10/24/2025	46144		Sara Voss	\$41,000	12/1/2025	11/30/2026	General	Step Up to Quality coach/observer.	Melody Hobson
10/24/2025	46142		Amanda Palmer	\$100,000	10/31/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Amy Rhone
10/24/2025	46146		Concord Mediation Center	\$3,000	11/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide mediation services and/or outreach/training.	Amy Rhone
10/27/2025	45185	AM#1	Children's Nebraska					Extend ending date.	Zainab Rida
10/28/2025	46143		Amanda Palmer	\$49,999.99	10/31/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer. Provide technical assistance to 21st Century Community Learning Centers	Ami Huff
10/29/2025	46134		NE Children & Families Foundation	\$45,000	10/10/2025	10/9/2026	Federal	Program Directors.	Zainab Rida
10/29/2025	46069	AM#1	Anderson & Creager & Wittstruck					Increase/consideration (cover additional case workload).	Ami Huff
10/29/2025	46150		The Resolution Center	\$3,000	11/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide mediation services and/or outreach/training.	Amy Rhone
10/29/2025	46145		Central Mediation Center	\$3,000	11/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide mediation services and/or outreach/training.	Amy Rhone
11/3/2025	46141		EconSys	\$49,930	11/1/2025	4/1/2026	Federal	Conduct a cost study benefits.	Lindy Foley
11/3/2025	46147		Mediation West	\$3,000	11/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide mediation services and/or outreach/training.	Amy Rhone
11/5/2025	46133		Child Trends	\$172,546	10/29/2025	6/30/2026	General	Provide support to school building leaders.	Shirley Vargas
11/5/2025	46149		The Mediation Center	\$3,000	11/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide mediation services and/or outreach/training.	Amy Rhone
11/6/2025	46134	AM#1	NE Children & Families Foundation					Consideration (adjusting budget line items to better allocate funds).	Zainab Rida
11/10/2025	46148		Nebraska Mediation Center	\$3,000	11/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide mediation services and/or outreach/training.	Amy Rhone
11/13/2025	45215	AM#1	Grafton & Associates					Increase amount (online licenses have increased).	Katie Graham
11/13/2025	46151		NE Mediation Association	\$5,000	11/1/2025	9/30/2026	Federal	Provide mediation services and/or outreach/training.	Amy Rhone
11/13/2025	45233	AM#1	Partners for Insightful Evaluation					Increase amount (allow for additional supplies/purchases).	Zainab Rida
11/13/2025	46170		ESU 9	\$25,289.25	11/7/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Provide high quality professional development for teachers/school leaders.	Katie Graham
11/13/2025	46168		Vivavic	\$34,250	11/10/2025	4/10/2026	Federal	Develop and build a module in the Canvas Learning Management system.	Zainab Rida
11/13/2025	46171		Leadership Harbor	\$11,570	11/10/2025	6/30/2026	Federal	Deliver a high-energy interactive leadership development series.	Katie Graham
11/13/2025	46169		Gee Whiz Education	\$15,000	11/15/2025	11/14/2026	Federal	Provide annual subscription to the Gee Whiz Education online curriculum.	Melody Hobson
11/13/2025	46166		Rapport International	\$8,500	11/1/2025	10/31/2026	Federal	Provide interpretation and translation services.	Lindy Foley
11/14/2025	46153		Baylor Evnen Wolfe & Tannehill	\$49,999.99	11/5/2025	6/30/2026	Federal/General	Serve as hearing officer.	Ami Huff
11/14/2025	46154		Nancy Carlev	\$14,134	12/1/2025	11/30/2026	Federal/General	Conduct rating reviews.	Melody Hobson
11/17/2025	46167		Lois Hixson	\$35,508.92	11/15/2025	10/31/2026	Federal	Support and coordinate FBIA competitive events.	Katie Graham
11/17/2025	46172		ESU 10	\$2,160	12/1/2025	11/30/2026	General	Provide Early Learning Guidelines training.	Melody Hobson
11/17/2025	45210	AM#1	Event Combo					Increase amount/scope/consideration.	David Jespersen
11/18/2025	46174		Stephanie McDonald	\$37,000	1/1/2026	12/31/2026	Federal/General	Provide coaching services and develop and deliver training.	Melody Hobson