2023-2024

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

Evaluation Report

UNMC
MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE

Acknowledgements

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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

Guiding Values
- Quality
- Continuity
- Equity

Systems Focus
- District Infrastructure
- District Leaders
- School Leaders
- School and Childcare Staff
- Families and Community

Domains
- Leadership Effectiveness
- Instructional Excellence
- Family and Community Partnership Engagement

Initiatives
- District Organization and Capacity
- School Leadership
- Foundations for Early Learning
- Essential Child Experiences
- Family Focus
- Community-School Connections

Goal
Increase Learning Opportunities Birth to Grade 3

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

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".

Feeling safe: means feeling like teachers and school staff are there to take care of you and make everything okay.

Feeling like you belong: means you feel you're in a place where you are comfortable and fit in.

Being treated fairly: means everyone gets what they need to be successful.

Feeling proud: means you think your school is special and you are happy to be a part of it.

Item	Score
I like being in school	3.13±0.85
I feel safe when I am at school	3.66±0.61
I feel like I belong at this school	3.36±0.81
Teachers at my school are fair to me	3.54±0.79
I am proud to go to this school	3.62±0.69

Disagree A Lot (1) — Agree A Lot (4)

*These schools self-selected to complete this assessment measure based on actions plan goals related to student sense of belonging.
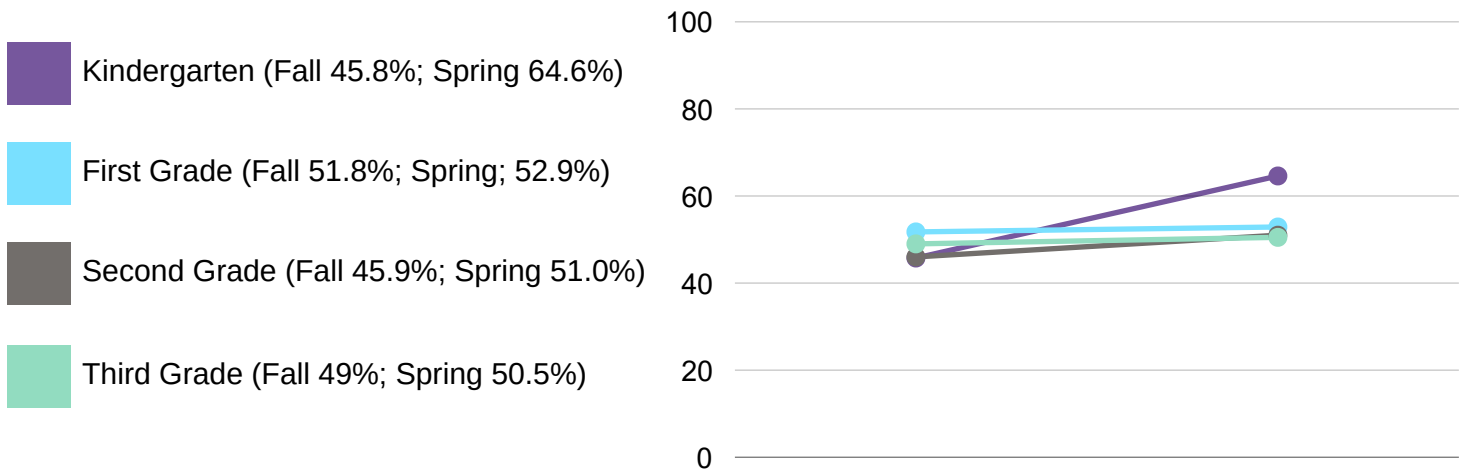
CHILD-LEVEL OUTCOMES

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.
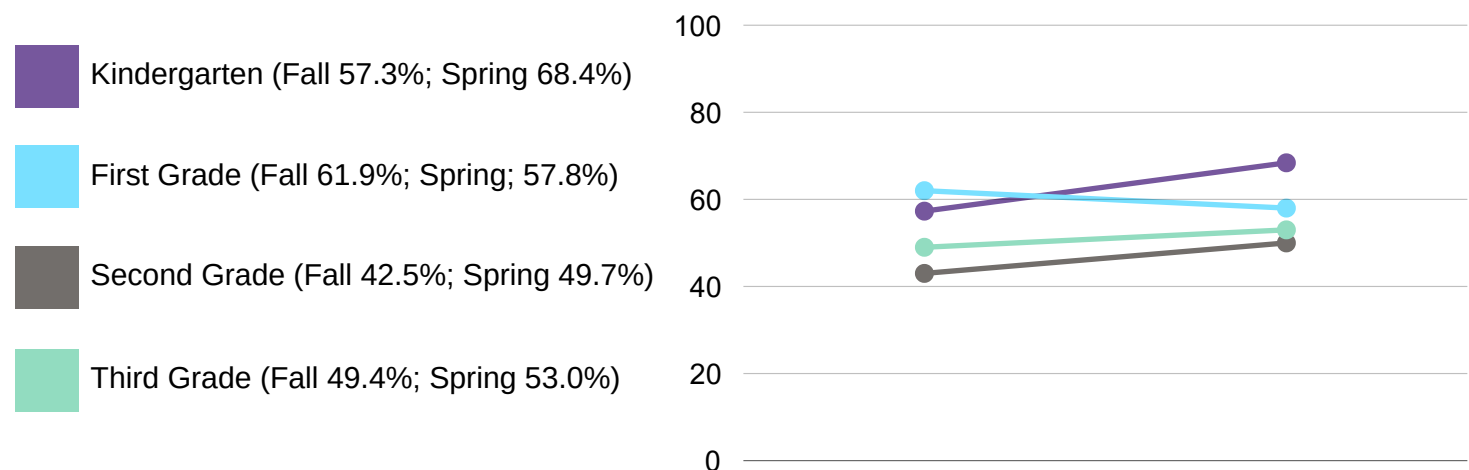
Percentage of Students On Track for Reading by Grade Level

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.

Kindergarten (Fall 45.8%; Spring 64.6%)

First Grade (Fall 51.8%; Spring; 52.9%)

Second Grade (Fall 45.9%; Spring 51.0%)

Third Grade (Fall 49%; Spring 50.5%)

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.

Kindergarten (Fall 57.3%; Spring 68.4%)

First Grade (Fall 61.9%; Spring; 57.8%)

Second Grade (Fall 42.5%; Spring 49.7%)

Third Grade (Fall 49.4%; Spring 53.0%)

*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.
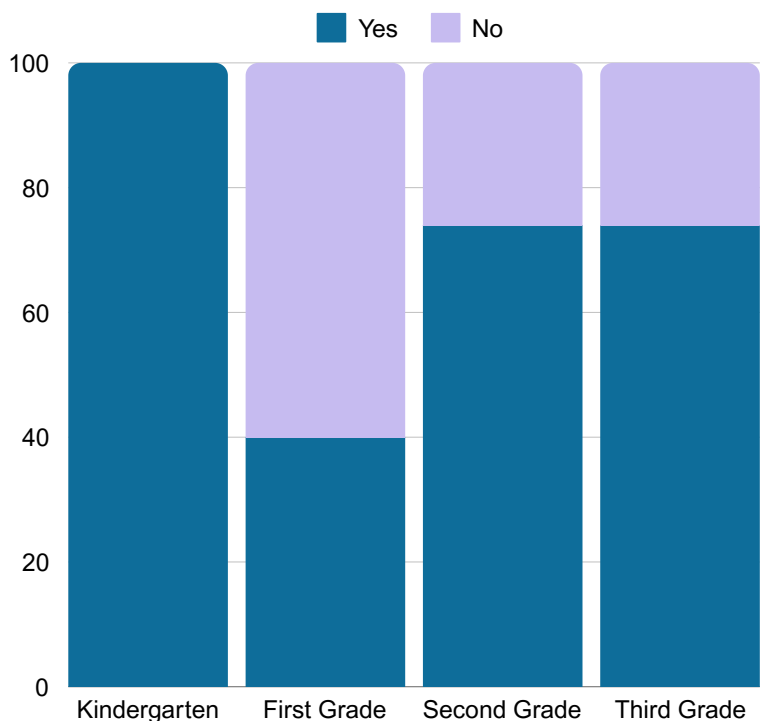
Reading and Writing

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.
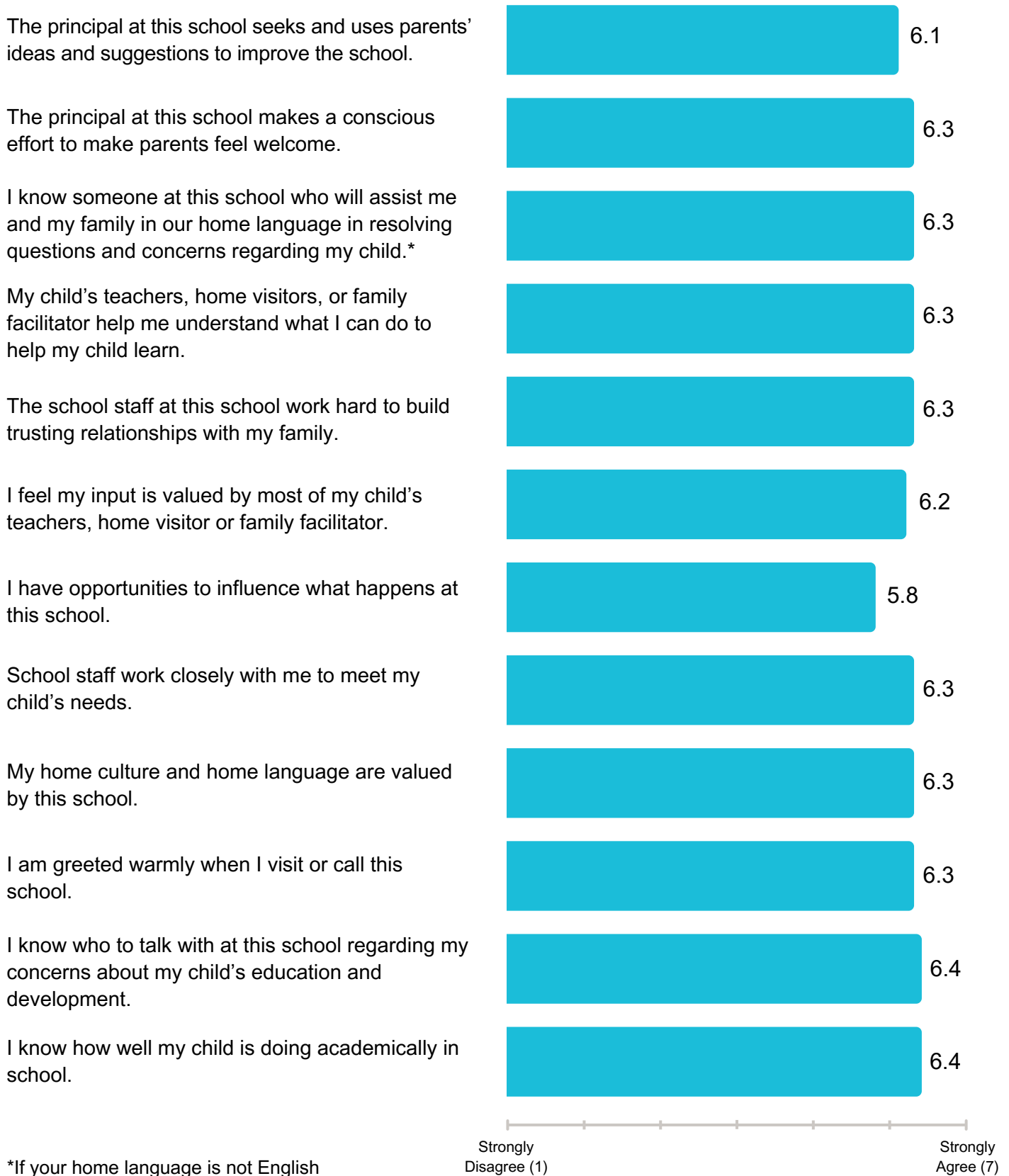
A total of 690 families with at least one child aged birth to grade 3 responded to the survey across 10 schools, with 155 (22.3%) of these families reporting that they speak a language other than English in the home. The majority of the families reported their race as White (n=481; 72.7%). The next largest 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

Statement	Rating
The principal at this school seeks and uses parents' ideas and suggestions to improve the school.	6.1
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.*	6.3
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.	6.3
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.	5.8
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.	6.3
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

Strongly Disagree (1) Strongly Agree (7)

*If your home language is not English

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Figure 2. Ratings Comparison Year to Year

Legend: 2022-2023 | 2023-2024

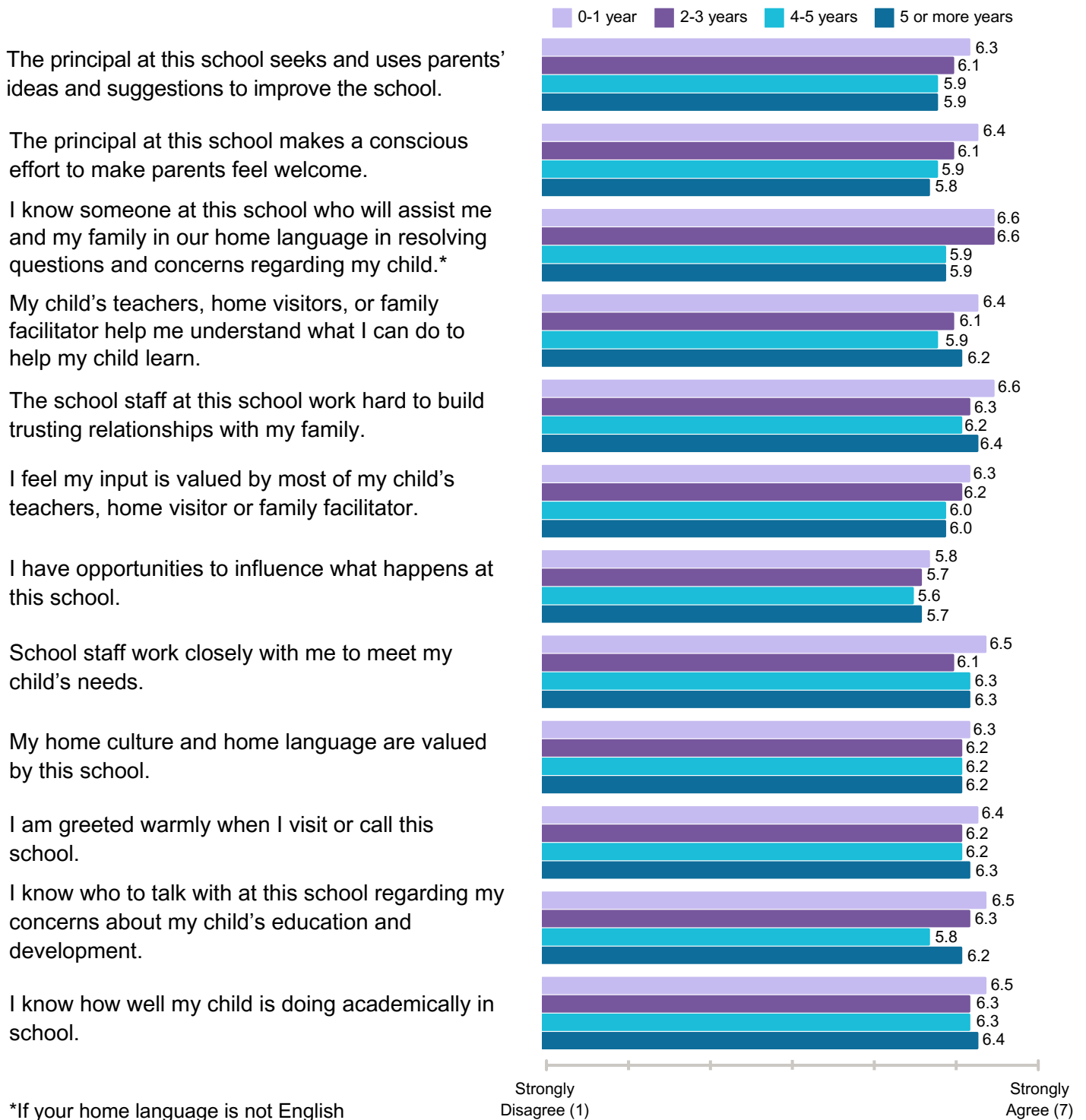| Statement	2022-2023	2023-2024
The principal at this school seeks and uses parents' ideas and suggestions to improve the school.	6.1	6.1
The principal at this school makes a conscious effort to make parents feel welcome.	6.2	6.3
I know someone at this school who will assist me and my family in our home language in resolving questions and concerns regarding my child.*	6.4	6.3
My child's teachers, home visitors, or family facilitator help me understand what I can do to help my child learn.	6.3	6.3
The school staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with my family.	6.2	6.3
I feel my input is valued by most of my child's teachers, home visitor or family facilitator.	6.2	6.2
I have opportunities to influence what happens at this school.	5.9	5.8
School staff work closely with me to meet my child's needs.	6.2	6.3
My home culture and home language are valued by this school.	6.3	6.3
I am greeted warmly when I visit or call this school.	6.3	6.3
I know who to talk with at this school regarding my concerns about my child's education and development.	6.3	6.4
I know how well my child is doing academically in school.	6.3	6.4

Strongly Disagree (1) — Strongly Agree (7)

*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%).

Legend: 0-1 year | 2-3 years | 4-5 years | 5 or more years

Statement	0-1 year	2-3 years	4-5 years	5 or more years
The principal at this school seeks and uses parents' ideas and suggestions to improve the school.	6.3	6.1	5.9	5.9
The principal at this school makes a conscious effort to make parents feel welcome.	6.4	6.1	5.9	5.8
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.*	6.6	6.6	5.9	5.9
My child's teachers, home visitors, or family facilitator help me understand what I can do to help my child learn.	6.4	6.1	5.9	6.2
The school staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with my family.	6.6	6.3	6.2	6.4
I feel my input is valued by most of my child's teachers, home visitor or family facilitator.	6.3	6.2	6.0	6.0
I have opportunities to influence what happens at this school.	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.7
School staff work closely with me to meet my child's needs.	6.5	6.1	6.3	6.3
My home culture and home language are valued by this school.	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.2
I am greeted warmly when I visit or call this school.	6.4	6.2	6.2	6.3
I know who to talk with at this school regarding my concerns about my child's education and development.	6.5	6.3	5.8	6.2
I know how well my child is doing academically in school.	6.5	6.3	6.3	6.4

Strongly Disagree (1) — Strongly Agree (7)

*If your home language is not English

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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."

"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."

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

"As a home visitor, I think the greatest accomplishment I feel is just having a great reciprocal relationship with the families."

"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?"

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."
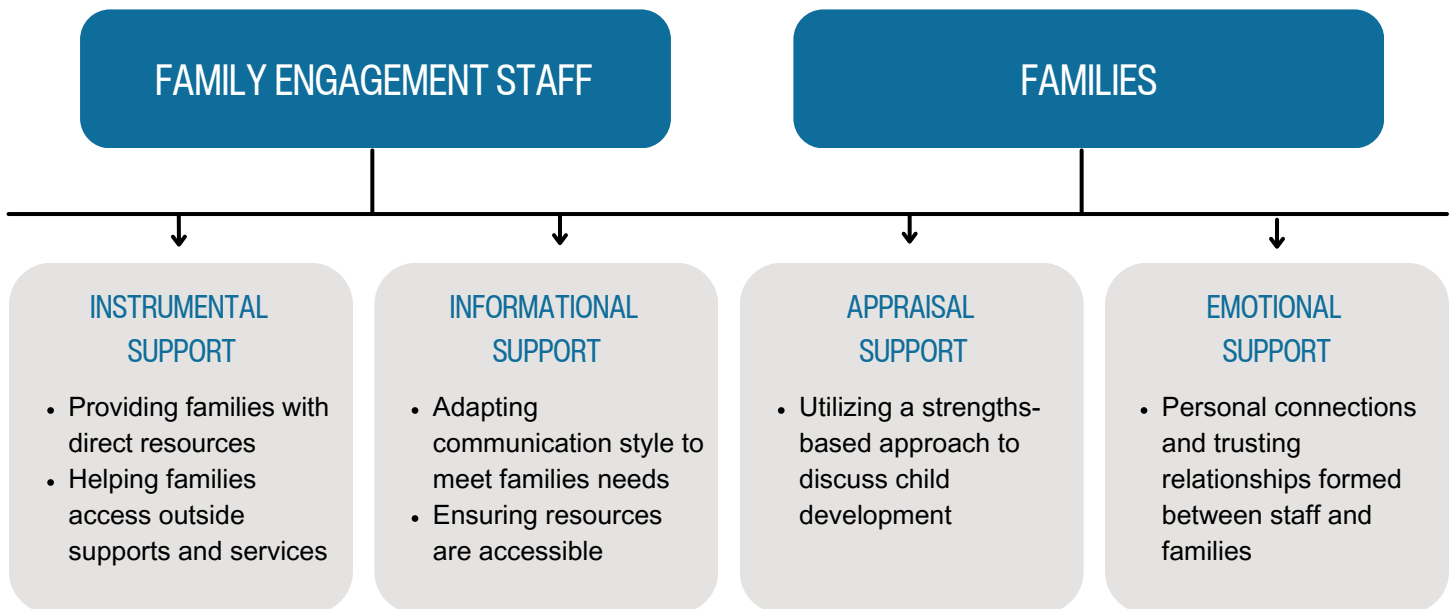
"And I think for us, it has been getting him to the point where he can verbally express himself. When he first started, he would get frustrated because he couldn't and a lot of, like, screaming would come out and he would just get frustrated. And we worked a lot on that with his vocabulary. And he has absolutely flourished, especially, I would say, in the last six months."

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.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STAFF		FAMILIES	
INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT	**INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT**	**APPRAISAL SUPPORT**	**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**
• Providing families with direct resources • Helping families access outside supports and services	• Adapting communication style to meet families needs • Ensuring resources are accessible	• Utilizing a strengths-based approach to discuss child development	• Personal connections and trusting relationships formed between staff and families

Areas for Improvement:

Families need greater access to mental health resources

Ensure availability of culturally relevant materials to share with families

Inclusion of frequent assessment tools to help families measure child development progress

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

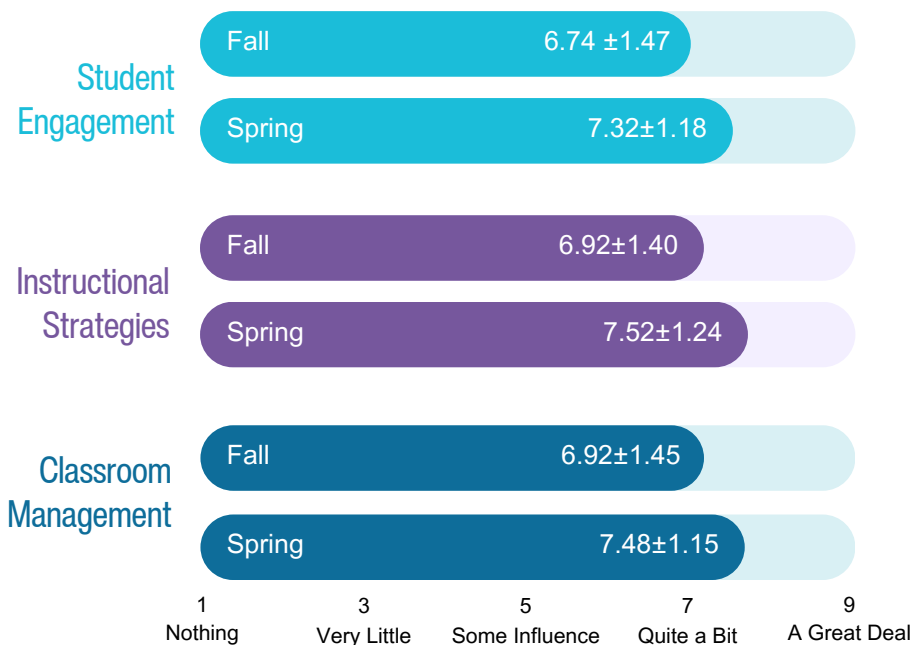| Mean	Left statement	Right statement
6.45	My views did not change	I saw things in new ways
6.35	It was pretty much as I expected	It was fresh and new
6.44	I didn't learn anything new	I learned something new
6.48	I was uninvolved	I was deeply involved
6.63	I was easily distracted	I was alert and aware
6.60	I did not participate	I actively participated
6.53	My senses were not engaged	My senses were engaged
6.57	I was somewhere else	I was fully present
6.55	I felt resistant	I was "in the flow"
6.54	I felt connected and whole	My attention was focused
6.38	I felt scattered	I felt connected and whole
6.44	I was in the there and then	I was in the here and now
6.58	I was on "automatic pilot"	I responded to what was happening
6.24	I was self-absorbed	I was not self-conscious
6.28	I was aware of time passing	I didn't notice the passage of time
6.15	I did not feel a connection with the natural world	I felt a sense of oneness with the natural world
6.21	I had no bodily sensation	I felt the experience in my body
6.18	I had no emotional reactions	The experience was emotional

26

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	3	5	7	9
Nothing	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite A Bit	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?**

Student Engagement
- Fall: 6.74 ±1.47
- Spring: 7.32±1.18

Instructional Strategies
- Fall: 6.92±1.40
- Spring: 7.52±1.24

Classroom Management
- Fall: 6.92±1.45
- Spring: 7.48±1.15

1	3	5	7	9
Nothing	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite a Bit	A Great Deal

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
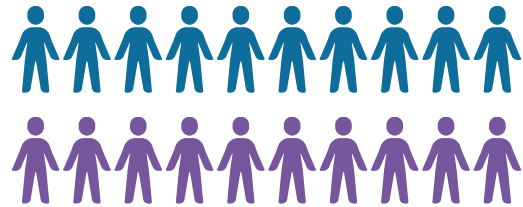
Omaha Public Schools
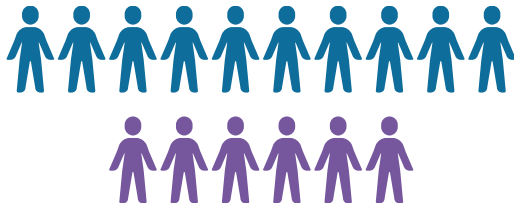
Ralston Public Schools

Grade Levels Supported

Multiple responses allowed

Preschool	Kindergarten	Grades 1-3	Other*
9	11	10	6

Years in Birth to Grade 3
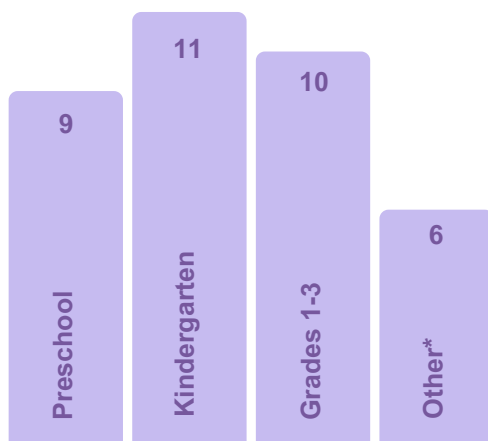
- 15 years or more: 10
- Less than 1 year: 3
- 1-2 years: 1
- 2-3 years: 2
- 3-5 years: 2
- 5-10 years: 5
- 10-15 years: 3
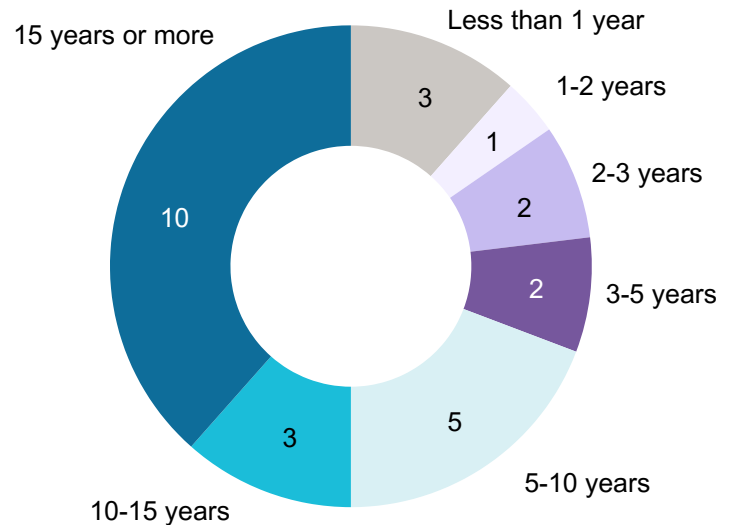
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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

2.1 → 2.9

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.

3.1 → 3.5

Our students are provided with opportunities to participate in a variety of enrichment learning activities outside of the school day and during the summer.
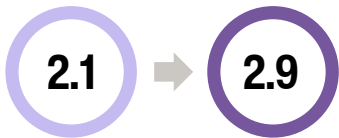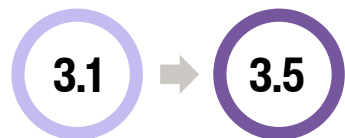
Least Growth
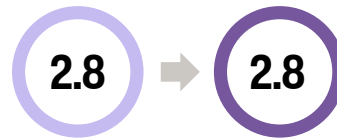
2.8 → 2.8

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.

2.6 → 2.7

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).
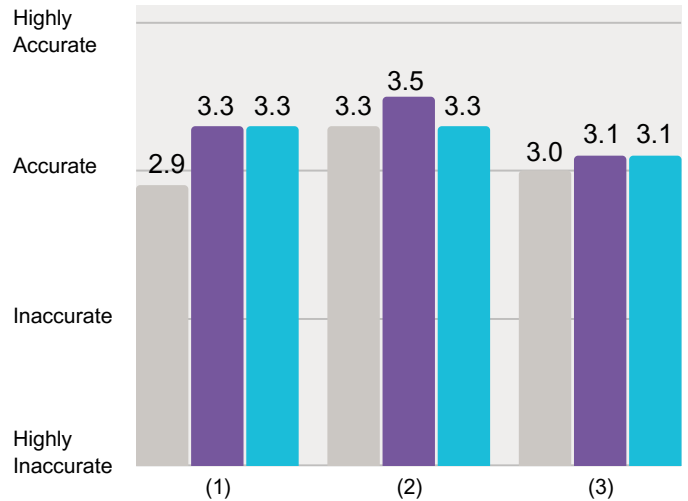
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Aggregated scores are reported below at each time point: (1) Winter 2023=Grey; (2) Spring 2023=Purple; (3) Spring 2024=Blue.

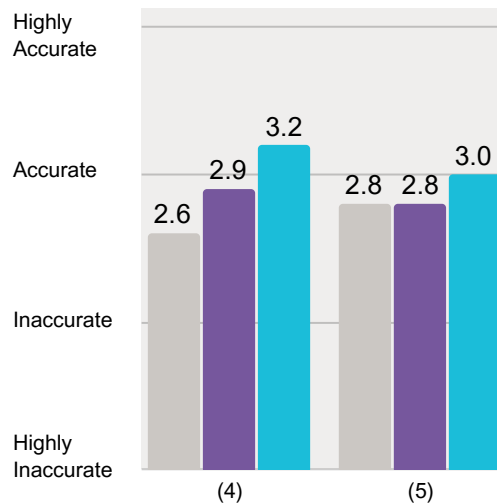## Competency 2: Develop and Foster Partnerships with Families and Communities

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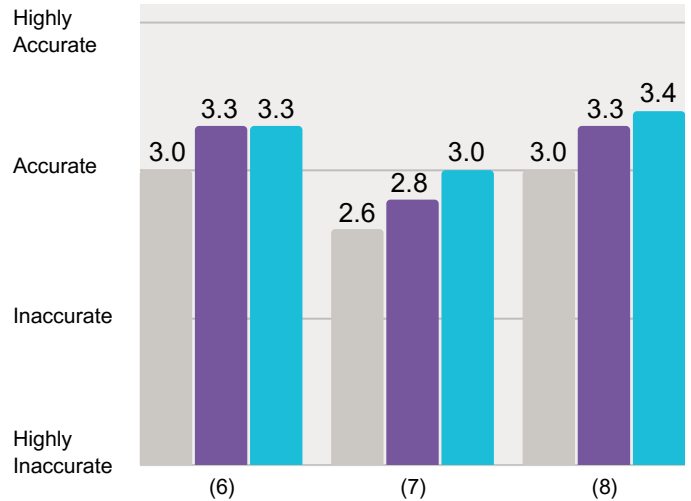
→ **Strategy 2.4:** Facilitate linkages with community supports and services to meet the needs of Birth-3rd grade students and families.

- (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.
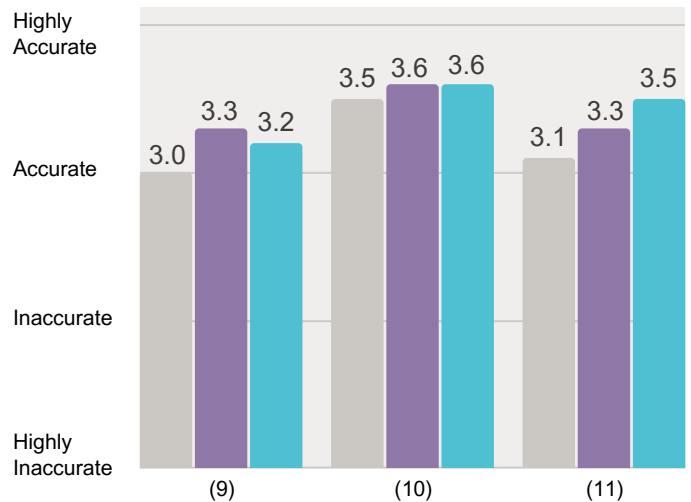
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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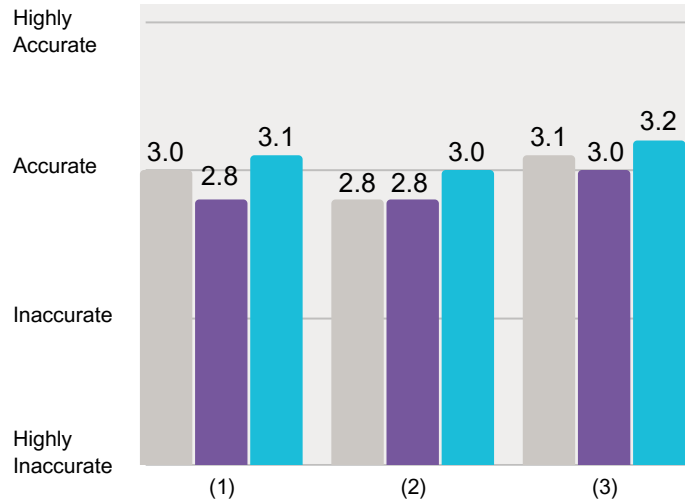
→ **Strategy 4.2:** Establish a school climate that is open, inclusive, and affirming of differences (for staff, students, and their families).

- (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.
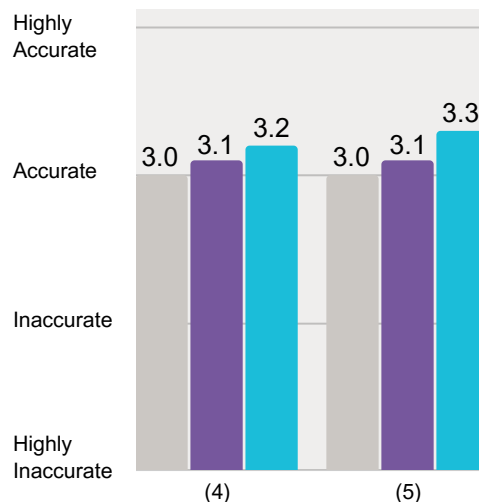
Competency 4: Ensure Equitable Opportunities

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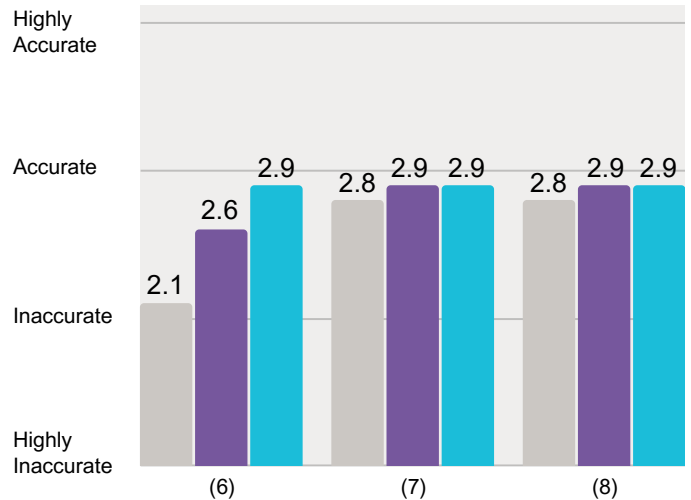
→ **Strategy 4.4:** Differentiate resources and strategies to ensure students, teachers, staff, and families have equitable opportunity to succeed.

- (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.
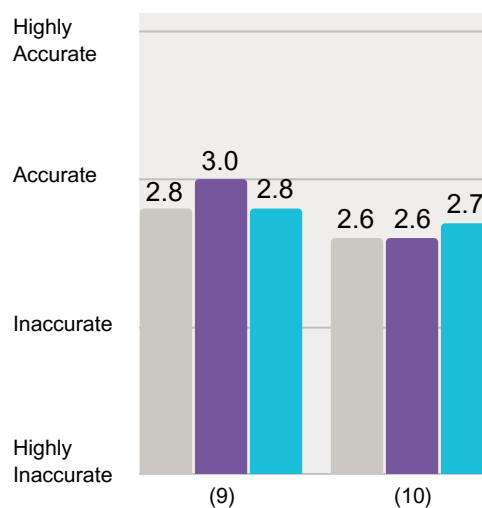
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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.

Domain	Fall	Spring
Develop Goals (Fall ±0.76; Spring ±1.19)	5.20	5.40
Guide Teachers (Fall ±1.18; Spring ±1.19)	4.67	4.97
Create a Positive and Safe Learning Environment (Fall ±1.25; Spring ±1.35)	5.23	5.67
Motivate Teachers (Fall ±1.15; Spring ±1.43)	4.67	5.25
Develop a Collective Culture (Fall ±0.97; Spring ±1.33)	4.77	5.50

Scale: 1 Not Certain at All — 3 Quite Uncertain — 5 Quite Certain — 7 Absolutely Certain

Fall / Spring

n=10*

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

Fall: 4.91
Spring: 5.48
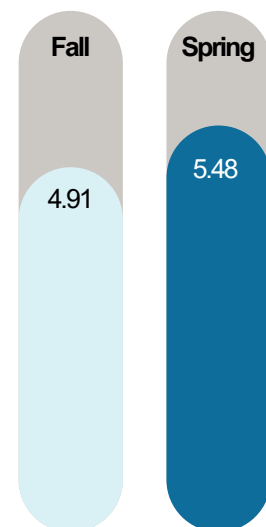
*Some respondants chose not to answer all of the questions

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.

81	87	70
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
• 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

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.

Level of Collaboration

Level		
Collaboration	5	
Coalition	4	
Coordination	3	
Cooperation	2	
Networking	1	
No interaction at all	0	

Category	2023	2024
District Organization and Capacity	2.0	3.0
School Leadership	2.1	3.0
Foundations for Early Learning	2.4	3.1
Essential Child Experiences	2.3	2.1
Family Focus	2.6	4.3
Community-School Connections	2.2	3.8
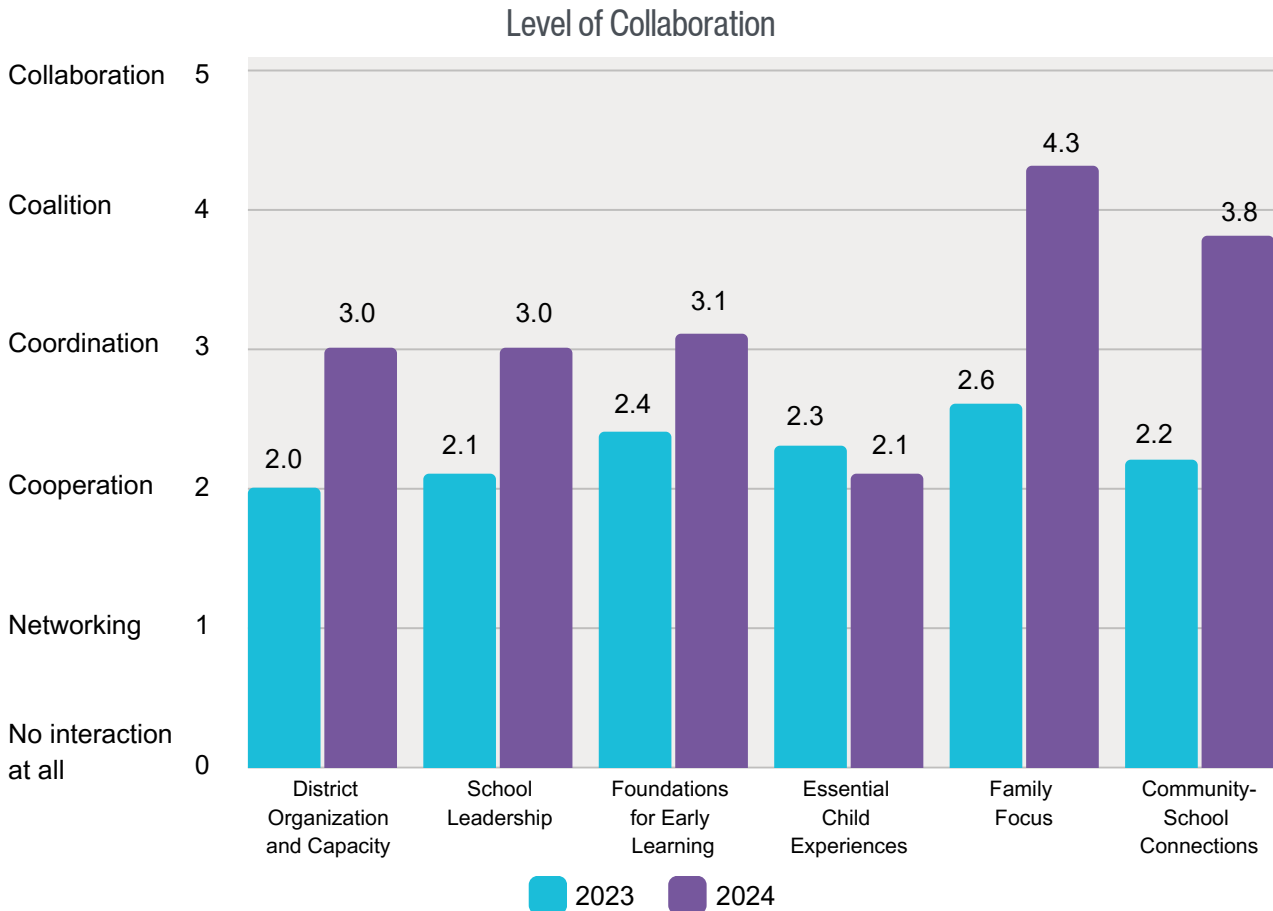
Institute staff (n=8) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

School and district staff are able to speak openly and freely as members of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (4.9±0.4)	School and district staff ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration (4.6±0.5)	Power is shared between the Buffett Institute and school and district staff (4.8±0.5)
4.9	4.6	4.8
Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree
2023: 4.17±1.1	2023: 4.17±1.1	2023: 3.75±1.1
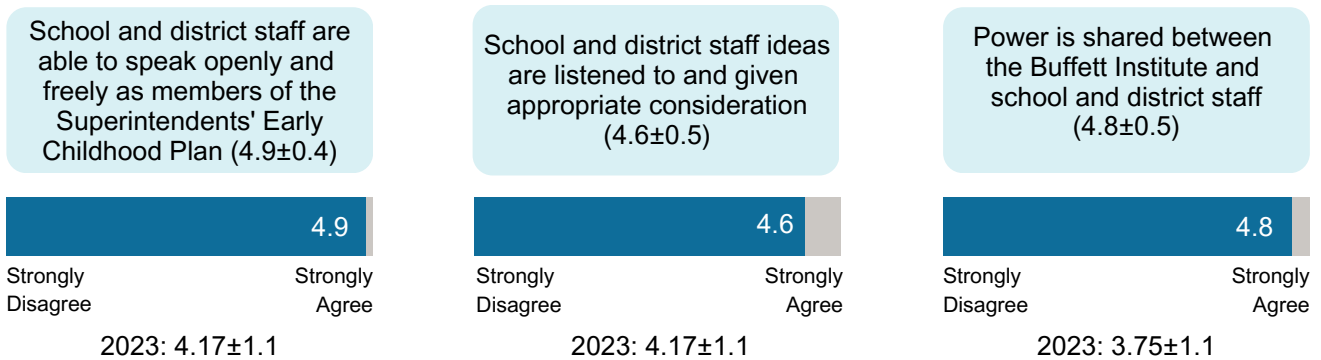
DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

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).

Level of Collaboration

Construct	2023	2024
District Organization and Capacity	2.9	3.6
School Leadership	3.3	3.5
Foundations for Early Learning	3.4	3.7
Essential Child Experiences	3.3	3.8
Family Focus	3.4	3.6
Community-School Connections	3.7	3.6

Scale: 5 = Collaboration; 4 = Coalition; 3 = Coordination; 2 = Cooperation; 1 = Networking; 0 = No interaction at all

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.

Level of Collaboration

Category	2023	2024
District Organization and Capacity	1.7	2.9
School Leadership	1.4	2.9
Foundations for Early Learning	1.8	3.3
Essential Child Experiences	1.9	3.3
Family Focus	1.7	3.5
Community-School Connections	1.9	3.3

Scale: 5 = Collaboration, 4 = Coalition, 3 = Coordination, 2 = Cooperation, 1 = Networking, 0 = No interaction at all
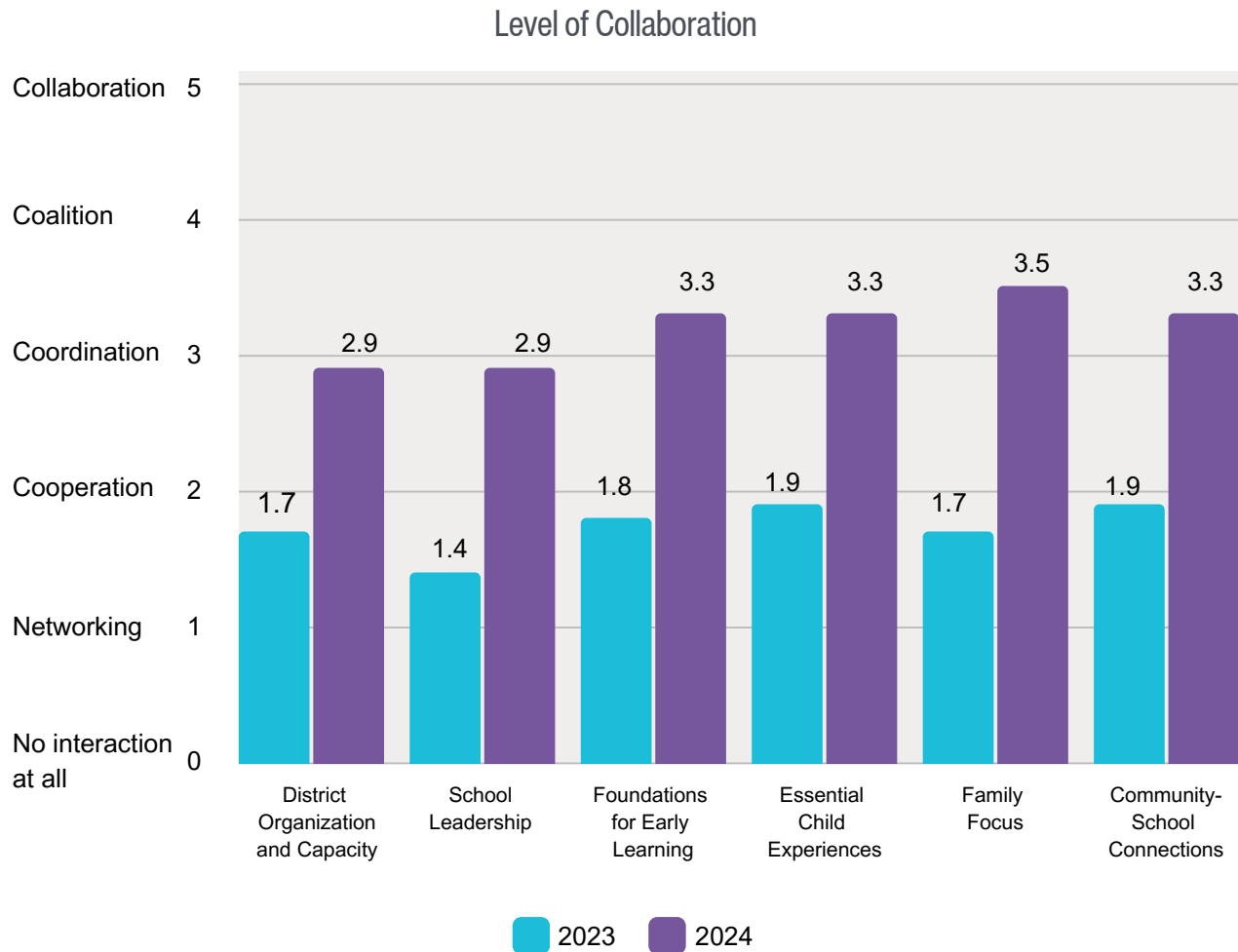
* 2024 Respondents only completed these survey items if they self-identified as a workgroup member or a participant in an Institute led Community of Practice (COP)

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Full Implementation Districts Survey Findings

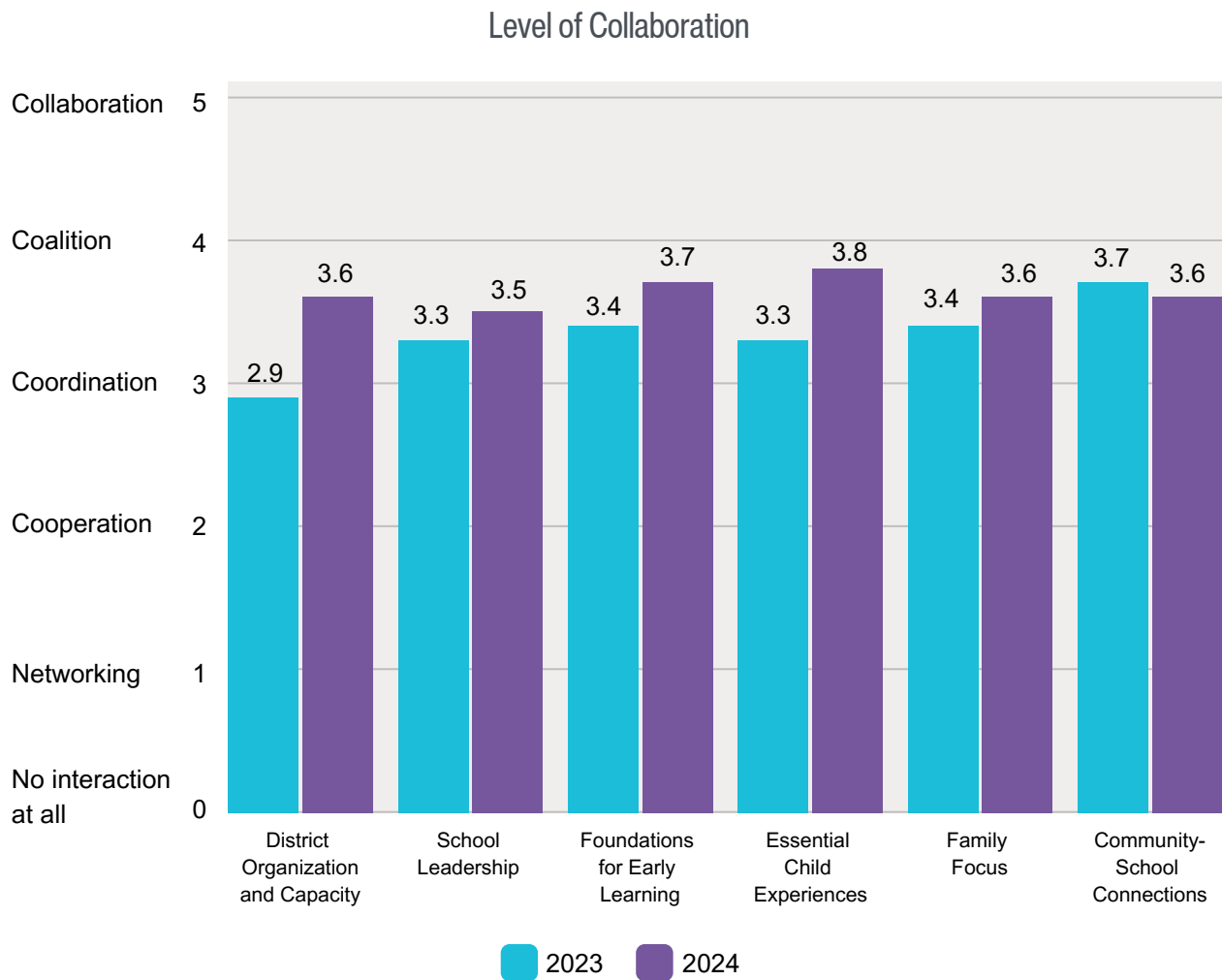Plan stakeholders from full implementation districts (n=57) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest level of agreement was related to shared power between school teams and the Buffett Institute (m=4.4±.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±.98), and colleagues are a key support for achieving action plan goals (4.2±.97), 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 (4.2±.99)	My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan are a key support for achieving my action plan goals (4.2±.97)
1 ——————————— 5	1 ——————————— 5

The Buffett Institute helps me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals (4.4±.85)	My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals (4.3±.93)
1 ——————————— 5	1 ——————————— 5

The Buffett Institute helps me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals (4.2±.87)	My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals (4.2±.98)
1 ——————————— 5	1 ——————————— 5

The Buffett Institute is responsive to my questions and helps me to obtain answers as needed (4.4±.89)	Power is shared between my team and the Buffett Institute (4.4±.88)
1 ——————————— 5	1 ——————————— 5

I am able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (4.4±.96)	My ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration (4.4±.89)
1 ——————————— 5	1 ——————————— 5

DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Customized Assistance District Survey Findings
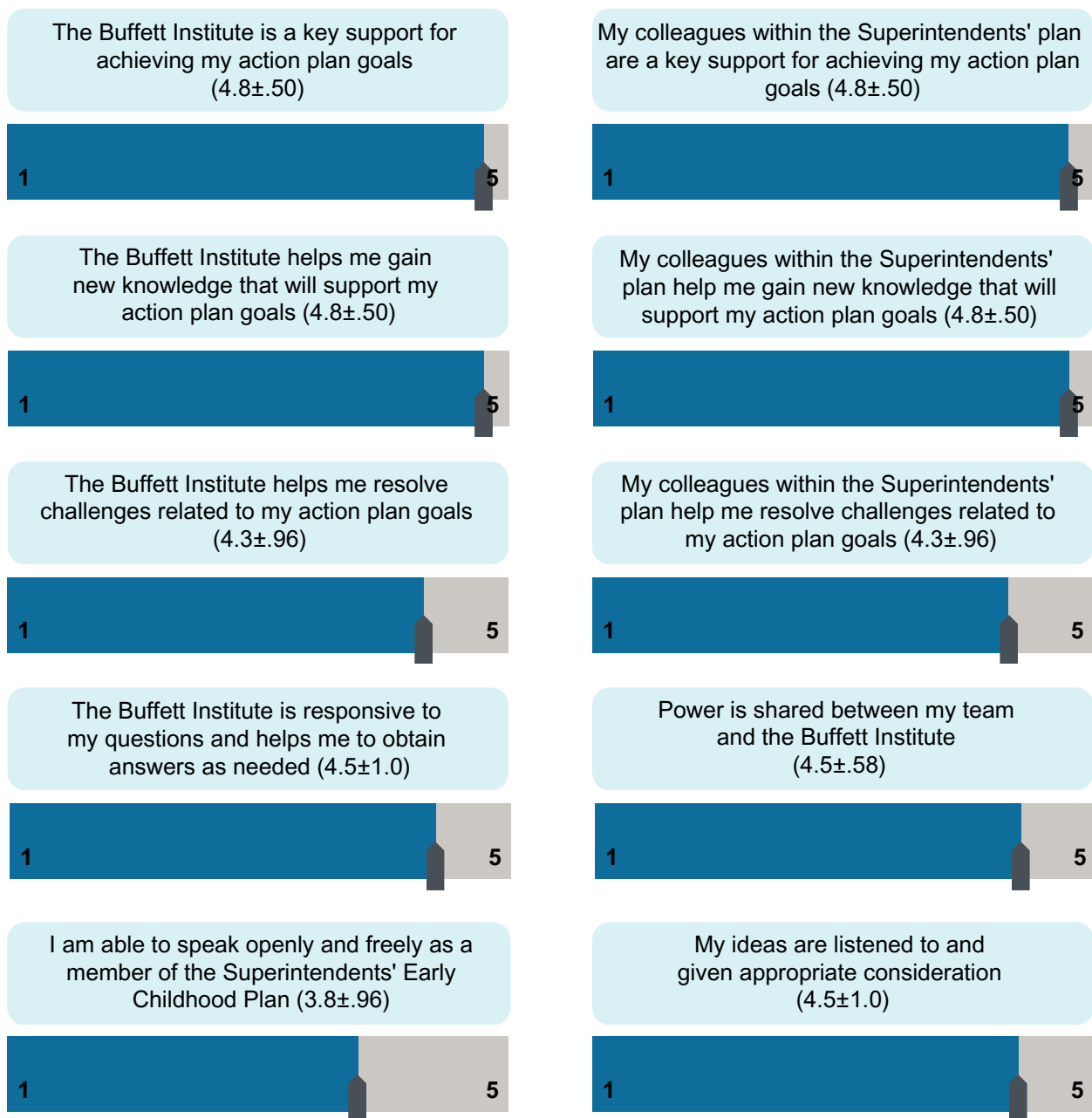
Plan stakeholders from customized assistance districts (n=4) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the Institute (4.8±.50) and colleagues (4.8±.50) being key supports for achieving action plan goals, and the Institute (4.8±.50) and colleagues (4.8±.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±.96). Additional mean and standard deviation findings are reported below.

The Buffett Institute is a key support for achieving my action plan goals (4.8±.50)	My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan are a key support for achieving my action plan goals (4.8±.50)
1 _____ 5	1 _____ 5

The Buffett Institute helps me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals (4.8±.50)	My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals (4.8±.50)
1 _____ 5	1 _____ 5

The Buffett Institute helps me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals (4.3±.96)	My colleagues within the Superintendents' plan help me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals (4.3±.96)
1 _____ 5	1 _____ 5

The Buffett Institute is responsive to my questions and helps me to obtain answers as needed (4.5±1.0)	Power is shared between my team and the Buffett Institute (4.5±.58)
1 _____ 5	1 _____ 5

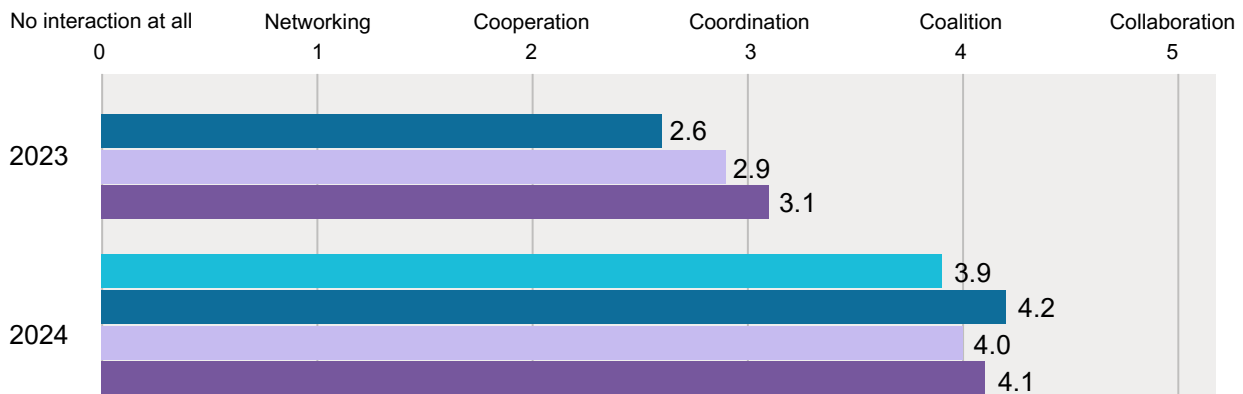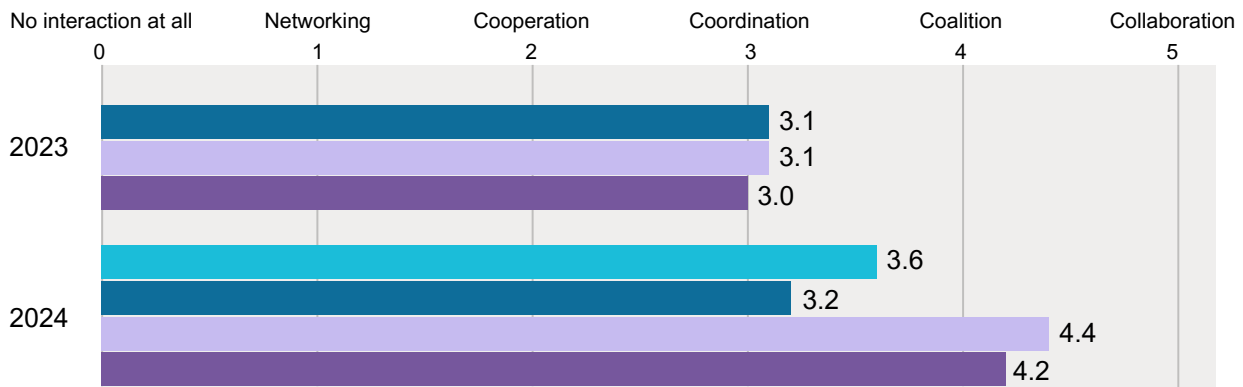| I am able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan (3.8±.96)	My ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration (4.5±1.0)
1 _____ 5	1 _____ 5

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

No interaction at all 0	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5

2023
- 2.6
- 2.9
- 3.1

2024
- 3.9
- 4.2
- 4.0
- 4.1

School Leadership

No interaction at all 0	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5

2023
- 3.1
- 3.1
- 3.0

2024
- 3.6
- 3.2
- 4.4
- 4.2

Foundations for Early Learning

No interaction at all 0	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5

2023
- 3.4
- 3.1
- 3.2

2024
- 4.1
- 3.6
- 3.8
- 4.3

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DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Comparison of Findings by Stakeholder Type

Essential Child Experiences

	No interaction at all	Networking	Cooperation	Coordination	Coalition	Collaboration
	0	1	2	3	4	5

2023
- 3.3
- 3.0
- 3.1

2024
- 4.1
- 4.2
- 4.0
- 4.2

Family Focus

	No interaction at all	Networking	Cooperation	Coordination	Coalition	Collaboration
	0	1	2	3	4	5

2023
- 3.8
- 3.4
- 3.0

2024
- 3.9
- 3.8
- 4.0
- 4.2

Community-School Connections

	No interaction at all	Networking	Cooperation	Coordination	Coalition	Collaboration
	0	1	2	3	4	5

2023
- 3.6
- 3.3
- 3.1

2024
- 3.9
- 3.2
- 4.2
- 4.3

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
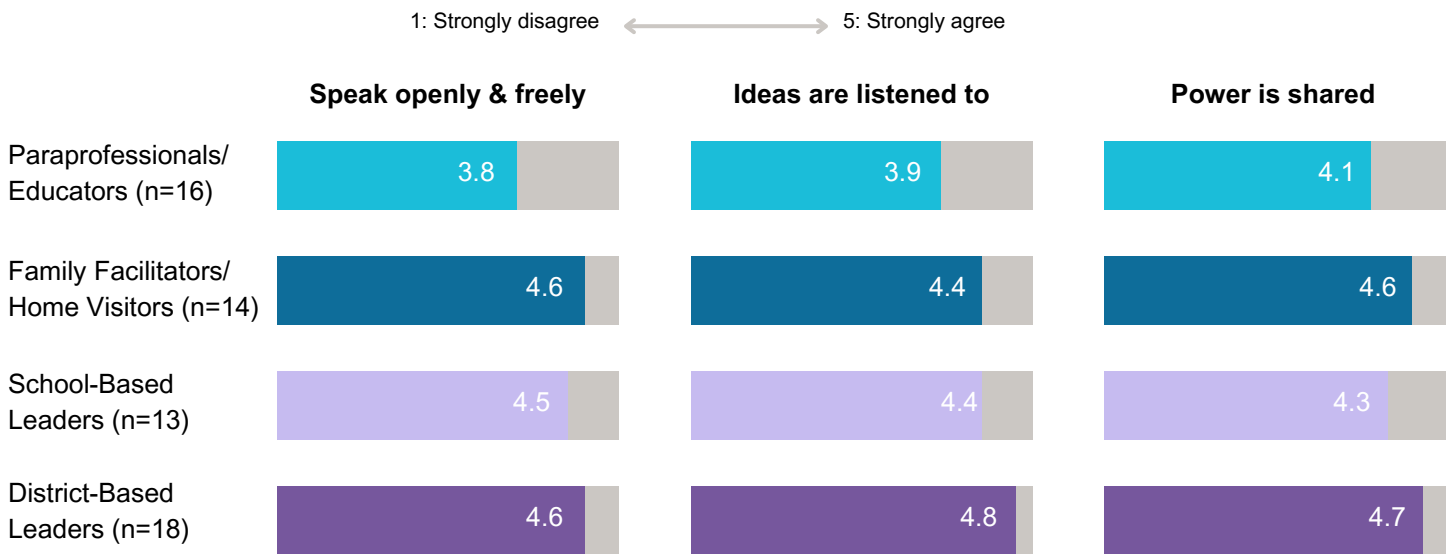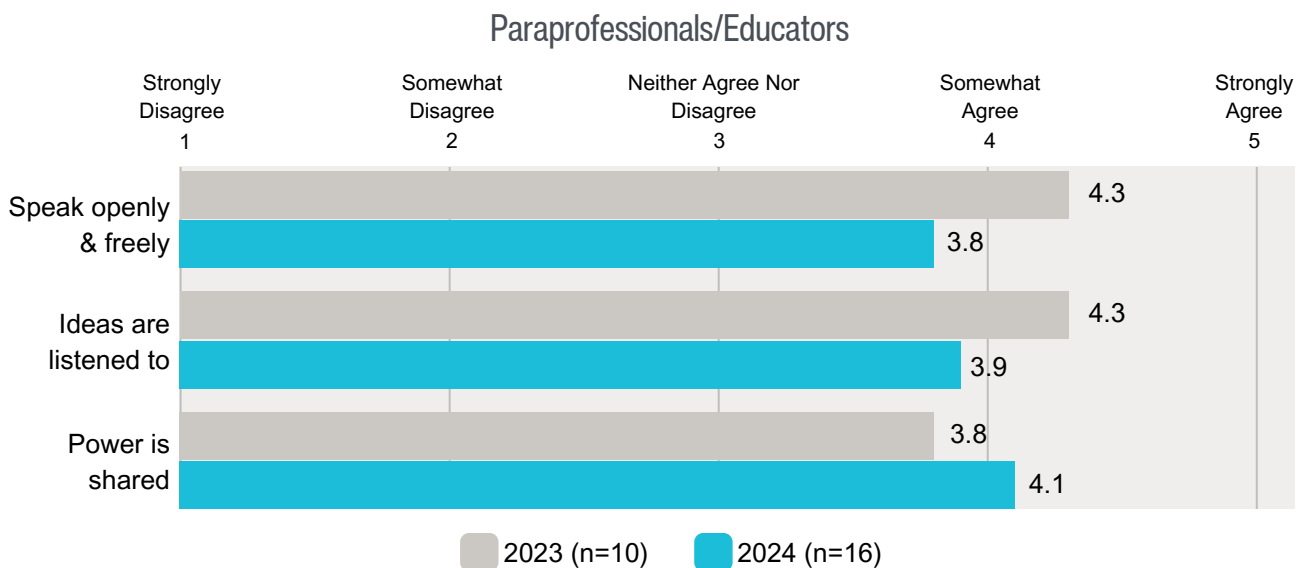
DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

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).
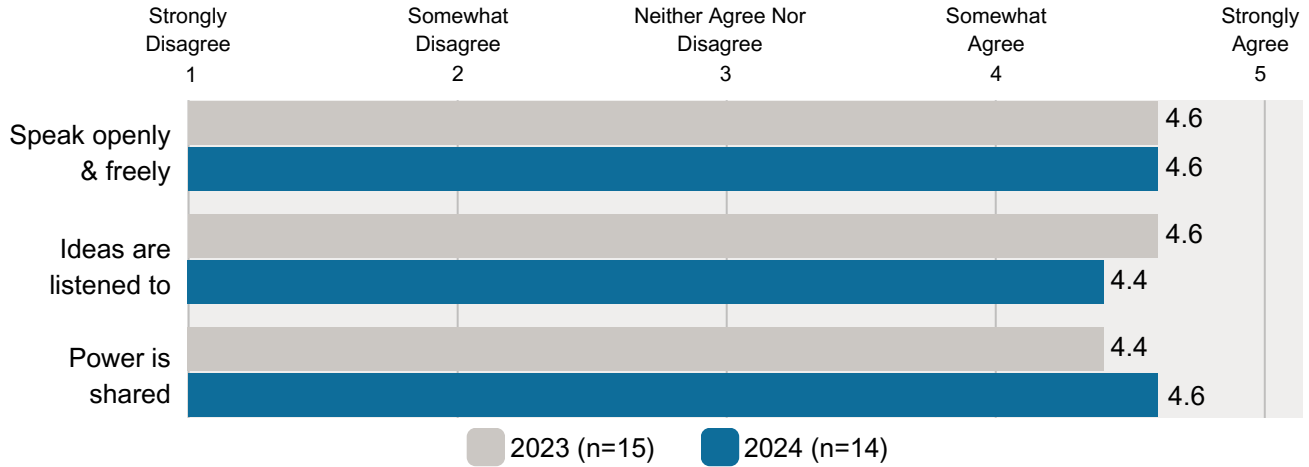
1: Strongly disagree ⟷ 5: Strongly agree

	Speak openly & freely	Ideas are listened to	Power is shared
Paraprofessionals/ Educators (n=16)	3.8	3.9	4.1
Family Facilitators/ Home Visitors (n=14)	4.6	4.4	4.6
School-Based Leaders (n=13)	4.5	4.4	4.3
District-Based Leaders (n=18)	4.6	4.8	4.7

Level of Collaboration Findings by Stakeholder Type: 2023 & 2024

Paraprofessionals/Educators

	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Speak openly & freely — 2023: 4.3, 2024: 3.8

Ideas are listened to — 2023: 4.3, 2024: 3.9

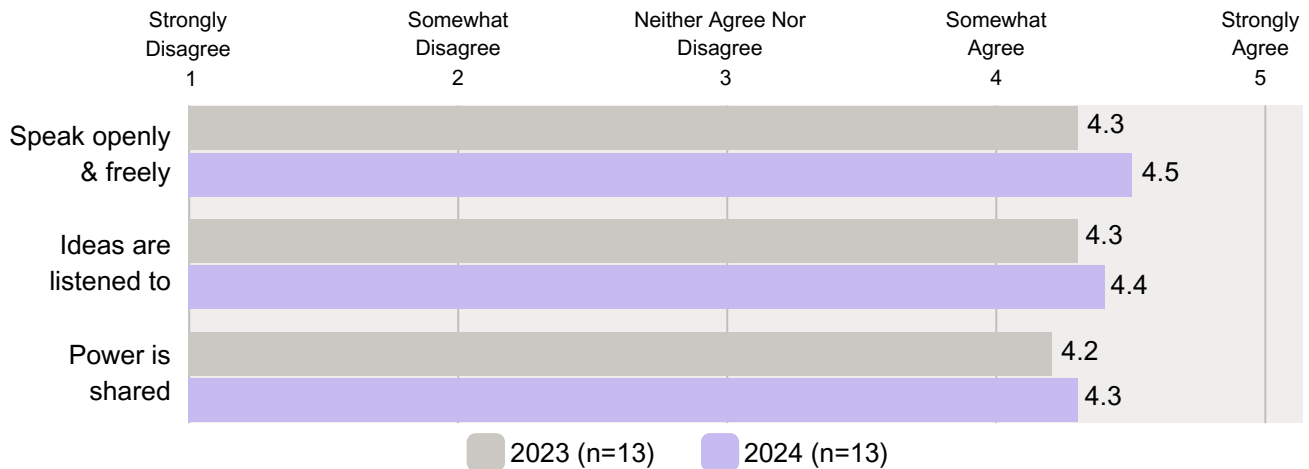Power is shared — 2023: 3.8, 2024: 4.1

2023 (n=10)   2024 (n=16)

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DISTRICTS & INSTITUTE COLLABORATION

Level of Collaboration Findings by Stakeholder Type: 2023 & 2024

Family Facilitators/Home Visitors

	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Speak openly & freely — 2023: 4.6, 2024: 4.6

Ideas are listened to — 2023: 4.6, 2024: 4.4

Power is shared — 2023: 4.4, 2024: 4.6

2023 (n=15)   2024 (n=14)

School-Based Leaders

	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Speak openly & freely — 2023: 4.3, 2024: 4.5

Ideas are listened to — 2023: 4.3, 2024: 4.4

Power is shared — 2023: 4.2, 2024: 4.3

2023 (n=13)   2024 (n=13)

District-Based Leaders

	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5

Speak openly & freely — 2023: 4.7, 2024: 4.6

Ideas are listened to — 2023: 4.5, 2024: 4.8

Power is shared — 2023: 4.1, 2024: 4.7

2023 (n=21)   2024 (n=18)

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

"Our renewed and continued focus on parent and family engagement."
-School-Based Leader

"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

ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

"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

"The focus is on the students!"
-Principal

"Responsive schools training and implementation to support social emotional learning."
-K-3 Educator

"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

VALUE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

"Being able to see the child grow at school and continue the relationships that was started prior to even starting school."
-Family Facilitator

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

INSTITUTE PERSPECTIVE

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

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.

DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

Collaboration and Partnerships
"Our Buffett partners collaborate alongside us and really listen to the unique challenges this district has. They celebrate success and help us refocus challenges."
-Family Facilitator

Professional Development and Expertise
"Professional support provided by the BECI staff at all levels. Responsiveness to our communities' needs."
-School-Based Leader

Shared Vision and Goals
"The true partnership. We see Buffett as an extension of our building!!!"
-Educator

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."
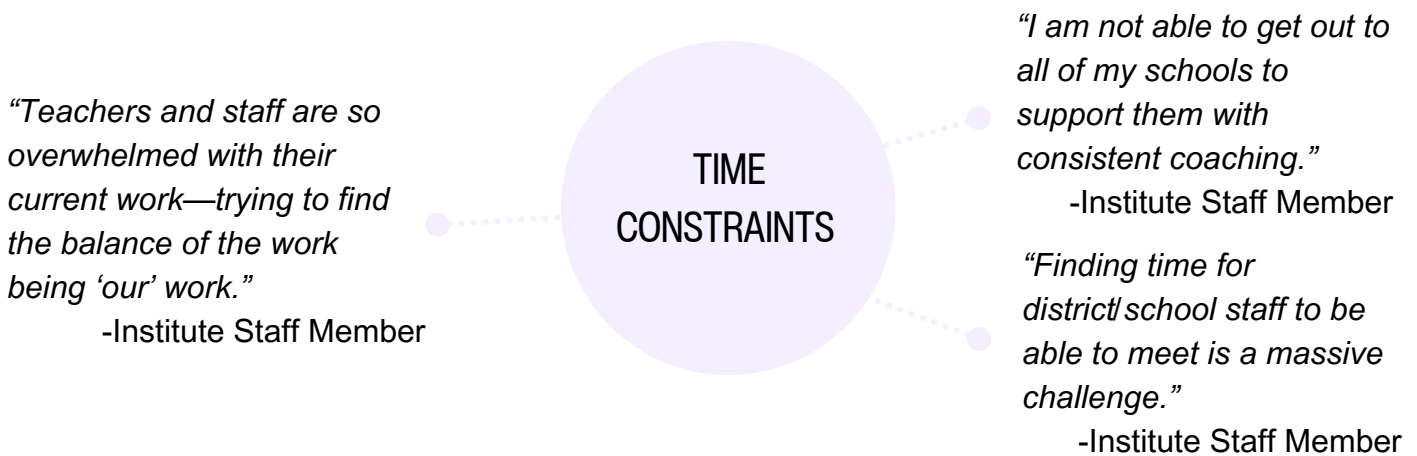   -Home Visitor

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.
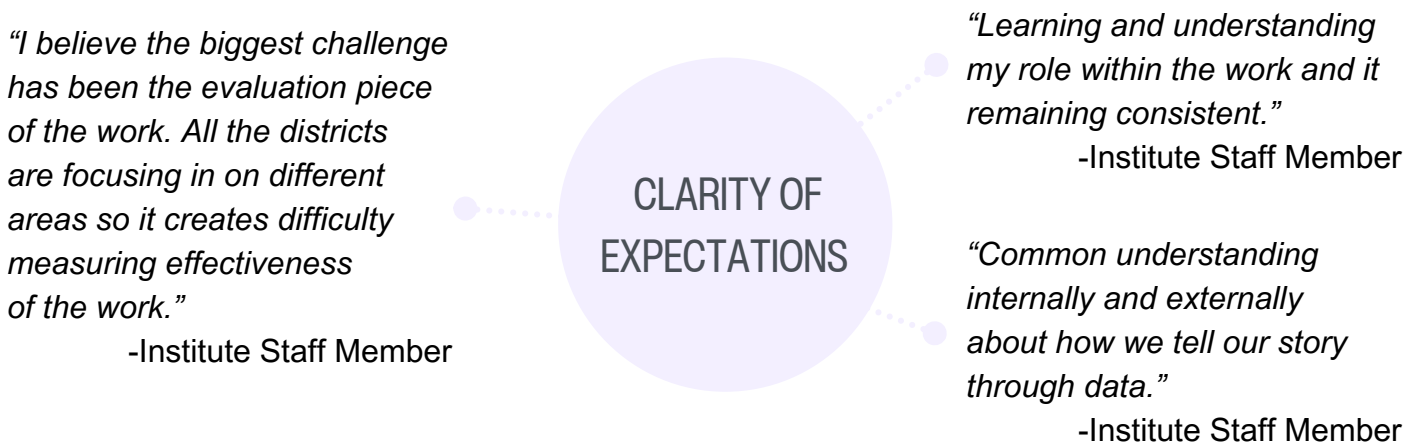
(1) Time Constraints
Like district stakeholders, Institute team members identified that a lack of time hinders their ability to support schools and districts to the degree they would like.

"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.
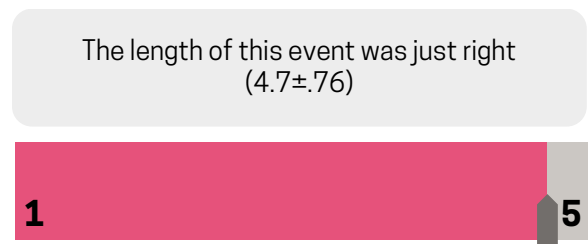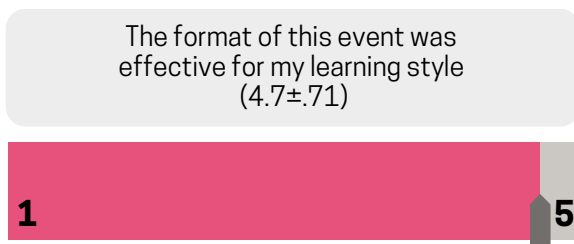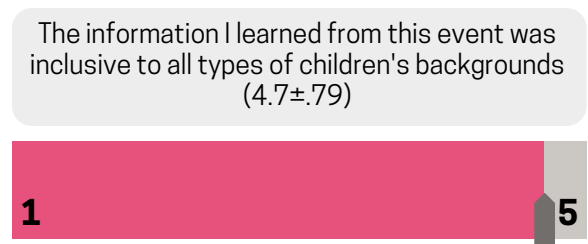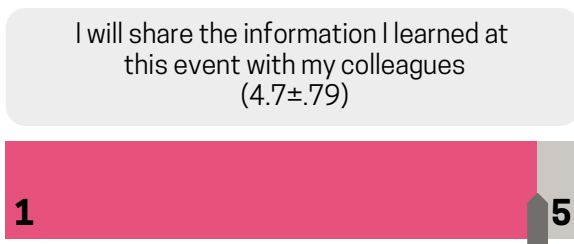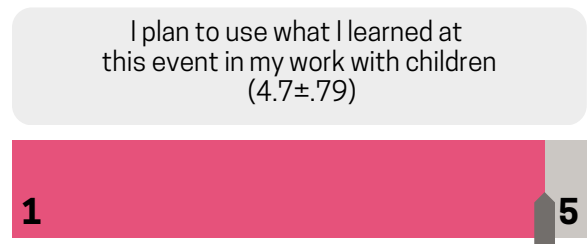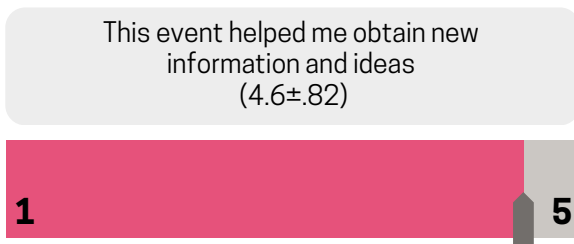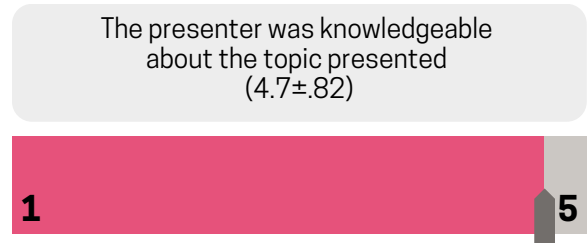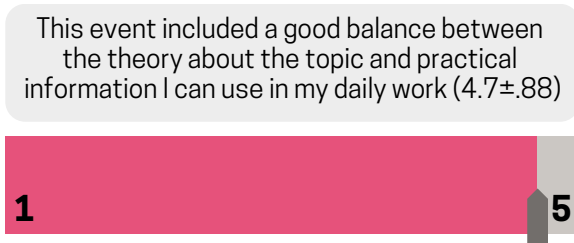
Session 1 February 29, 2024	Session 2 April 2, 2024	Session 3 May 7, 2024
An Evening with Tabatha Rosproy: Nurturing Positive Adult-Child Interactions when Behaviors Challenge Us	Working Together to Support Young Children: An Evening With Community Members	One night with Carolina Cajica: Encouraging 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.

This event included a good balance between the theory about the topic and practical information I can use in my daily work (4.7±.88)

1   5

The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.7±.82)

1   5

This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.6±.82)

1   5

I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.7±.79)

1   5

I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.7±.79)

1   5

The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.7±.79)

1   5

The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.7±.71)

1   5

The length of this event was just right (4.7±.76)

1   5

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%).
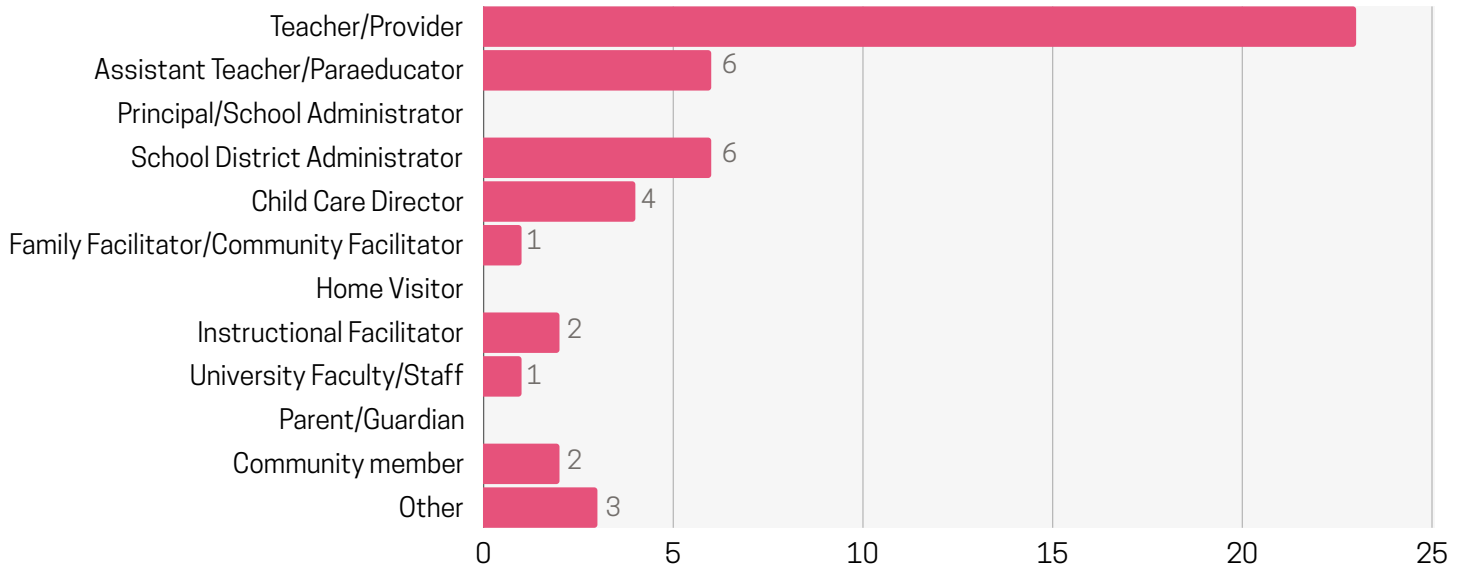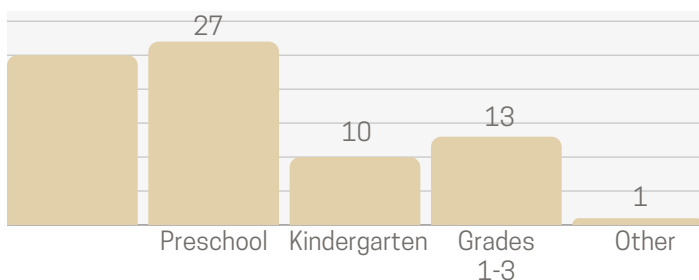

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

More than half of respondents reported more than 15 years of experience working with early childhood education (57.1%).
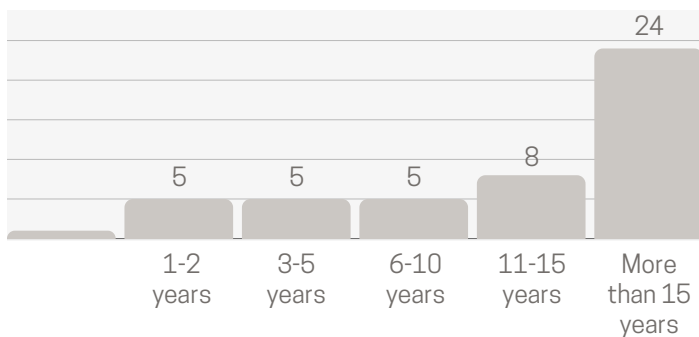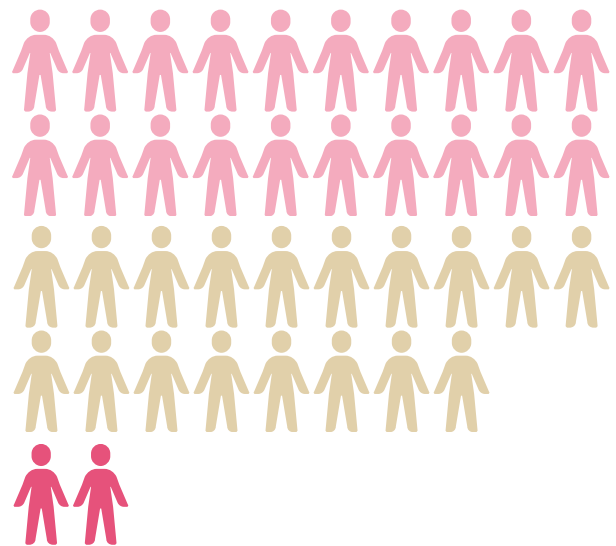

CHILD AGES SUPPORTED*

*Survey participants could select multiple answers.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

Participants (n=42) who worked with young children mostly identified as 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±.73) and participants' plans to share what they learned with colleagues (m=4.8±.67).The lowest levels of agreement were noted in the statements regarding the provision of new information and ideas (4.6±.71), and inclusivity of information for all types of children's backgrounds (4.6±.84) 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±.85)	The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.8±.73)
5	1 ... 5

This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.6±.71)	I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.7±.67)
5	1 ... 5

I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.8±.67)	The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.6±.84)
5	1 ... 5

The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.7±.69)	The length of this event was just right (4.7±.68)
5	1 ... 5

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)
1 — 5	1 — 5

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)
1 — 5	1 — 5

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)
1 — 5	1 — 5

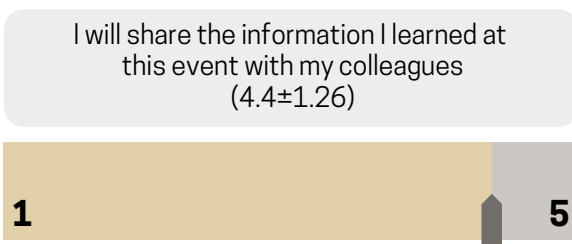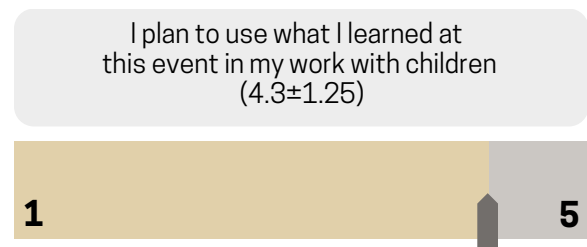| The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.7±.46)	The length of this event was just right (4.8±.44)
1 — 5	1 — 5

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.

This event included a good balance between the theory about the topic and practical information I can use in my daily work (4.4±1.26)

1   5

The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.3±1.49)

1   5

This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.3±1.25)

1   5

I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.3±1.25)

1   5

I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.4±1.26)

1   5

The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.3±1.34)

1   5

The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.4±1.26)

1   5

The length of this event was just right (4.4±1.26)

1   5

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%).
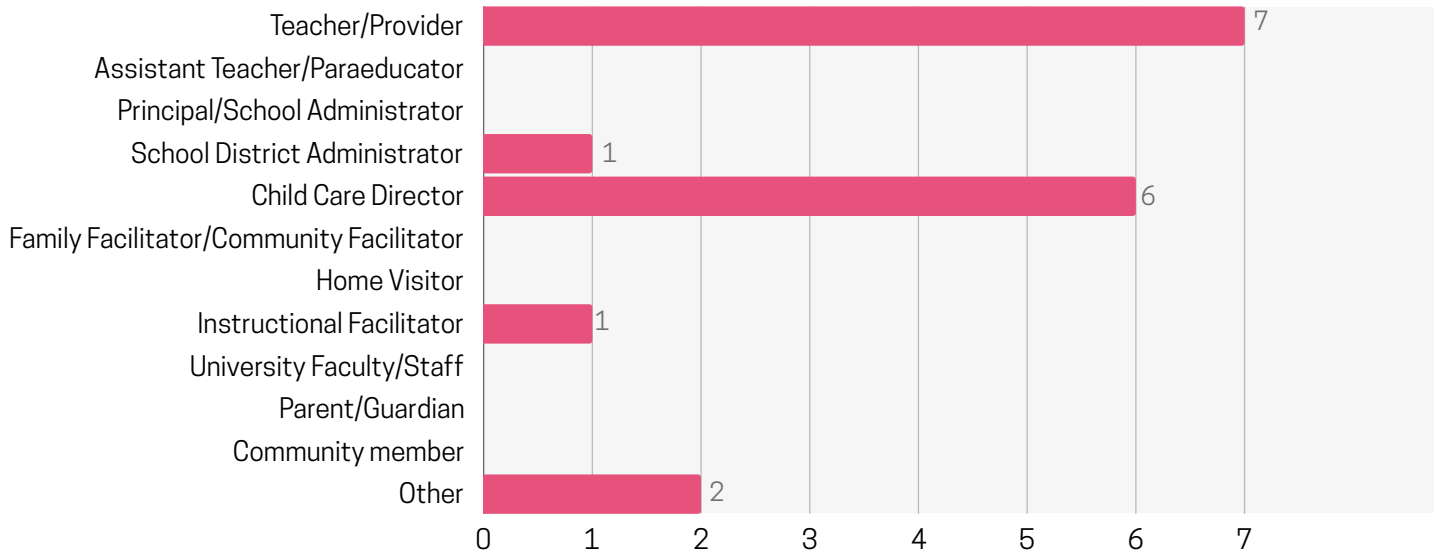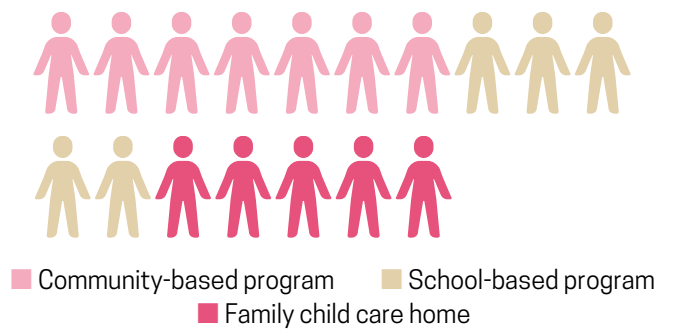

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Most respondents reported 6 or more years of experience working with early childhood education (88.2%).
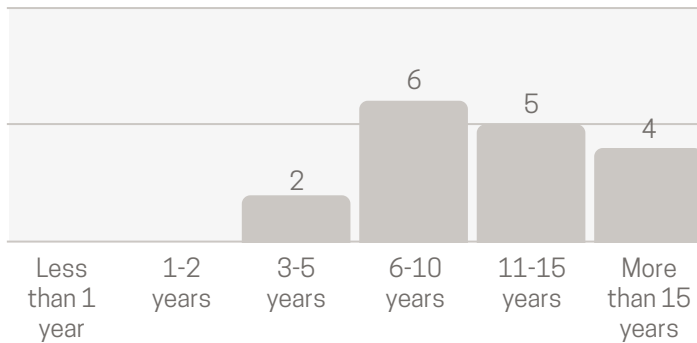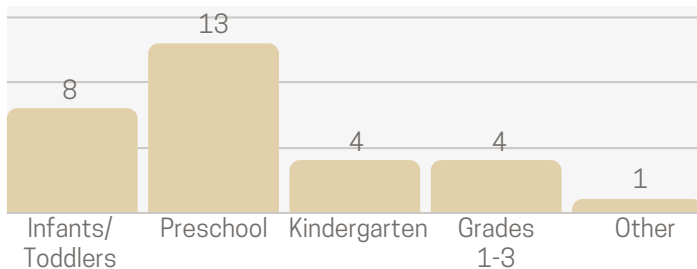

EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

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%)

- Community-based program
- School-based program
- Family child care home

CHILD AGES SUPPORTED*

*Survey participants could select multiple answers.

65

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±.46) and the panel's knowledge about the topic (m=4.7±.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±.98), and "I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children" (4.5±.98). 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±.46)	The panel was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.7±.97)
1 5	1 5

This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.5±.98)	I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.5±.98)
1 5	1 5

I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.5±.98)	The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.5±1.00)
1 5	1 5

The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.5±.98)	The length of this event was just right (4.5±.98)
1 5	1 5

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)
1 ————————————— 5	1 ————————————— 5

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)
1 ————————————— 5	1 ————————————— 5

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)
1 ————————————— 5	1 ————————————— 5

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)
1 ————————————— 5	1 ————————————— 5

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.

This event included a good balance between the theory about the topic and practical information I can use in my daily work (4.8±.37)

1   5

The panel was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.3±1.39)

1   5

This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.3±1.39)

1   5

I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.3±1.39)

1   5

I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.3±1.39)

1   5

The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.2±1.46)

1   5

The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.1±1.36)

1   5

The length of this event was just right (4.1±1.36)

1   5

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%).
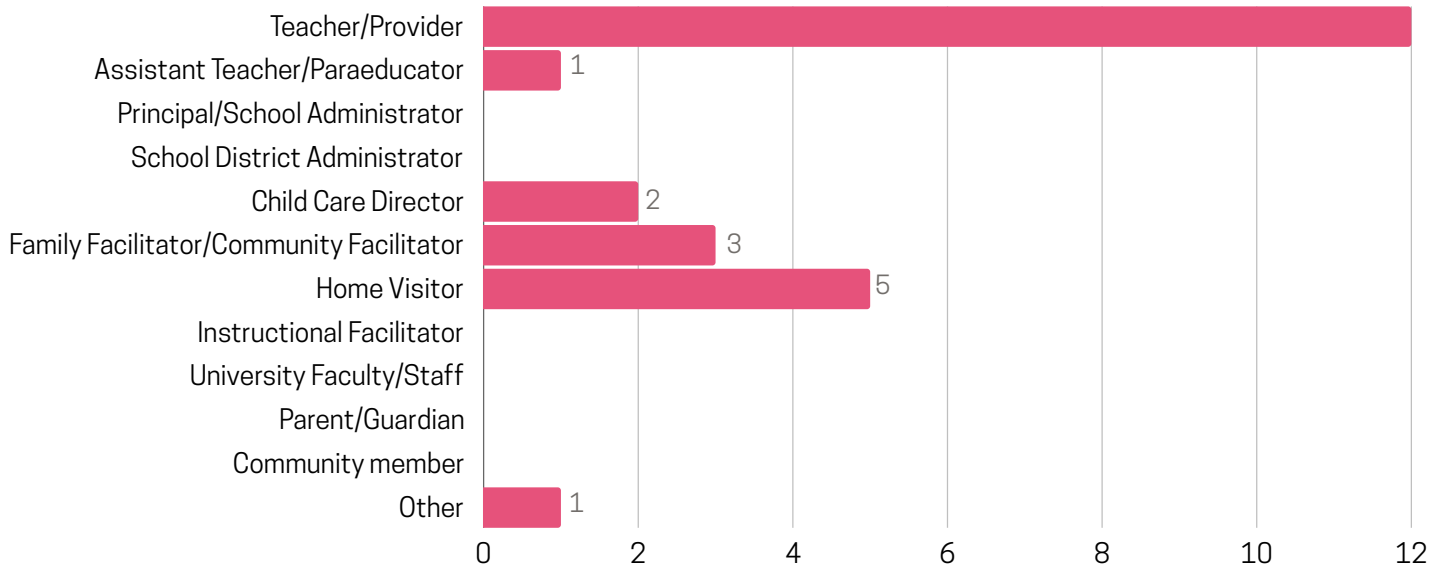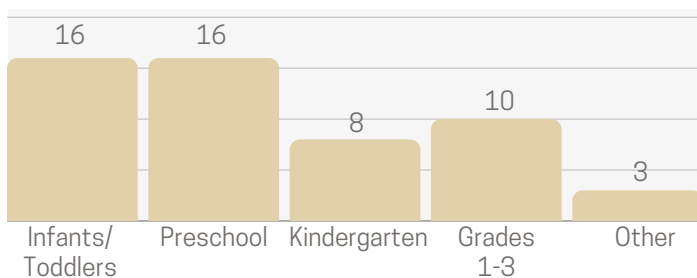

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Participants represented a range of experience, with 33.3% reporting they were in their first five years of early childhood education.
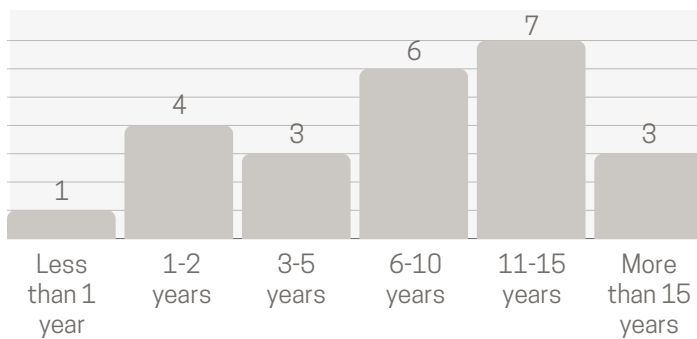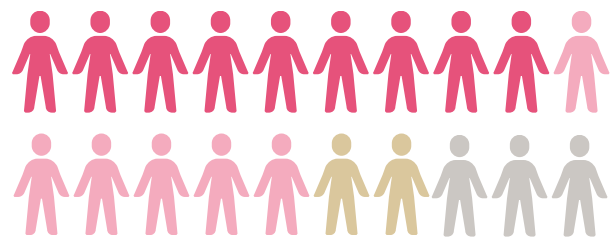

CHILD AGES SUPPORTED*

*Survey participants could select multiple answers.

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%).

- Family child care home
- Community-based program
- School-based program
- Other

69

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)

1   5

The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic presented (4.6±.88)

1   5

This event helped me obtain new information and ideas (4.7±.92)

1   5

I plan to use what I learned at this event in my work with children (4.7±.86)

1   5

I will share the information I learned at this event with my colleagues (4.7±.86)

1   5

The information I learned from this event was inclusive to all types of children's backgrounds (4.9±.34)

1   5

The format of this event was effective for my learning style (4.8±.37)

1   5

The length of this event was just right (4.7±.70)

1   5

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 intervetnion 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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