

BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE

Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation: 2017-18

THIRD YEAR REPORT



Buffett
Early Childhood
Institute

at the University of Nebraska



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BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	10
Three Levels of Implementation.....	10
Evaluation of the Third Year Full Implementation of the School as Hub Birth – Grade 3 Approach	12
Evaluation Questions.....	14
Evaluation Design and Methodology.....	16
Program Quality: Home Visiting and Classroom Practices	20
Birth – Age 3: Home Visiting.....	20
PreK – Grade 3: Classroom Teaching Practices.....	22
Family Processes	26
Family Processes: Family Support.....	26
Family Processes: Caregiver-Child Relationships.....	28
Family Processes: Family-School Engagement.....	30
Child Development and Learning Outcomes	32
Language Development.....	32
Educational Achievement.....	39
Social-Emotional Development.....	44
Executive Functioning.....	46
Implementation Insights: Change Strategies at Work	50
What We Are Learning in the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 Approach Evaluation	54
Customized Assistance to Districts	57
Strengthening Classroom Practices and Environments: Gretna Public Schools.....	57
Supporting Language Development and Instructional Practices: Ralston Public Schools.....	61
Improving Professional Collaboration: Westside Community Schools.....	62
Professional Development for All	65
Concluding Thoughts	70
References	71

TABLES

TABLE 1	SCHOOL AND DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS: FULL IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOLS	15
TABLE 2	BIRTH – AGE 3 EVALUATION BASELINE AND FOLLOW-UP DATA	17
TABLE 3	PREK – GRADE 3 EVALUATION ENROLLMENT BY DISTRICT AND SCHOOL	19
TABLE 4	PD FOR ALL SURVEY RESULTS	66

FIGURES

FIGURE 1	SCHOOL AS HUB FOR BIRTH THROUGH GRADE 3: THEORY OF CHANGE	14
FIGURE 2	DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS OF THE CLASS RATING SCALE	22
FIGURE 3	PREK AND K – 3 CLASS DOMAIN AND DIMENSIONS SCORES IN 2018	23
FIGURE 4	PREK AND K – 3 CLASS DOMAIN SCORES, TIMES 1, 2, AND 3	24
FIGURE 5	CHANGE IN FAMILY SUPPORTS OVER TIME: BIRTH – AGE 3	27
FIGURE 6	CHANGE IN FAMILY SUPPORTS OVER TIME: PREK – GRADE 2 FAMILIES	27
FIGURE 7	CAREGIVER-CHILD INTERACTION: 0 – 3	29
FIGURE 8	RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR CHILDREN IN HOME VISITING	33
FIGURE 9	EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN IN HOME VISITING	33
FIGURE 10	TOTAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN IN HOME VISITING	34
FIGURE 11	CHANGE IN INFANT-TODDLERS’ LANGUAGE SKILLS BY HOME LANGUAGE	34
FIGURE 12	RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY PREK ENTRY GROUP	35
FIGURE 13	CHILDREN’S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PREK ENTRY GROUP BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS	36
FIGURE 14	RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP	37
FIGURE 15	RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS	38
FIGURE 16	LETTER/WORD ACHIEVEMENT PREK ENTRY GROUP	40
FIGURE 17	LETTER/WORD ACHIEVEMENT PREK ENTRY GROUP BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS	41
FIGURE 18	EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT-BA3 COMPOSITE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP	42
FIGURE 19	EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS	43
FIGURE 20	SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS PREK ENTRY GROUP	45
FIGURE 21	SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP	45
FIGURE 22	EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING PREK ENTRY GROUP	46
FIGURE 23	EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP	47
FIGURE 24	EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS	48
FIGURE 25	IMPLEMENTATION STAFF SUPERINTENDENTS’ PLAN	51
FIGURE 26	MODIFIED TPOT INDICATORS OF FIDELITY	58
FIGURE 27	SELF-CONCEPT	59
FIGURE 28	SELF-CONTROL	59
FIGURE 29	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	60
FIGURE 30	INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS	60
FIGURE 31	CLASS SCORES	61
FIGURE 32	ADMINISTRATORS’ RANKINGS OF MEETING TOPIC USEFULNESS	64
FIGURE 33	KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING SKILLS AND PRACTICES	68

Executive Summary

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is a collaboration among the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska, the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties, and the superintendents of the 11 school districts that make up the Learning Community. Now in its fourth year, the districts are engaged in an innovative, comprehensive approach designed to reduce income- and race-based opportunity and achievement gaps for children from birth through Grade 3. The plan was developed in response to legislation (LB 585) passed in 2013 that directed the Learning Community Coordinating Council to enact an early childhood program created by the metro Omaha superintendents for young children living in high concentrations of poverty. It is the largest birth – Grade 3 demonstration project in the nation.

Research on brain development in the first eight years of life confirms the importance of investing in early learning and development. Fifty years of research indicates that these investments in families and learning experiences can transform the life trajectories for young children whose families live in poverty and other children at greatest risk. The design and activities of the Superintendents' Plan are based on innovative applications of research on children's development and learning, family engagement, and school effectiveness. The work involves three interconnected levels of implementation through which school districts, elementary schools, and community-based professionals are strengthening their efforts at increasing access to opportunity and achievement in the years from birth through Grade 3.

This report presents evaluation findings from the third year of implementation. It focuses on the 2017-18 school year and provides data related to each of the three levels of implementation across multiple time points.

FULL IMPLEMENTATION: THE SCHOOL AS HUB FOR BIRTH – GRADE 3 APPROACH

The School as Hub approach is utilized by districts and schools engaged in full implementation. It helps schools, educators, and communities strengthen their roles in reducing educational disparities by enhancing children's opportunity and achievement. The aim of the approach is to build a continuum of supports for children's learning and family engagement, beginning at birth and extending through Grade 3 and beyond. The school serves as a center, or hub, for the continuum of engagement. The impact of School as Hub is realized through modifying how schools "do school." They start early by connecting with children and families prenatally or at birth and focus on strengthening continuity, quality, and equity across multiple levels of the educational systems over the next eight to nine years.

Principals, teachers, school staff, families, and children are participants in the program. In addition, a home visitor and a family facilitator employed by each district are included in this approach in order to provide early childhood parenting supports and promote family-school-community partnerships. In the 2017-18 year the following numbers constitute the schools, children, and families served:

- 12 schools continued their implementation of School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3.
- 127 families with 156 children received home visiting services from their school.
- 3,590 children were enrolled in 183 PreK through third grade classrooms at the 12 full implementation school sites. This included approximately 670 children enrolled in 29 PreK classrooms and 2,920 children in 154 Kindergarten through Grade 3 classrooms.

School as Hub Evaluation Approach and Measures

Evaluation of the full implementation addressed two general questions about processes, outcomes, and implementation.

1. *What has been learned about the specific processes and outcomes related to program implementation and quality, family processes, and child learning and development?*
2. *What are the essential features of the Superintendents' Plan as implemented by the Buffett Institute staff?*

The evaluation of full implementation of the Superintendents' Plan in years 2015-2018 used a multiple-cohort longitudinal design to understand how processes and outcomes changed over time. Two cohorts were constructed. The Birth – Age 3 Cohort consists of children birth – 3 years and the PreK – Grade 3 Cohort consists of children ages 3 – 8. This report presents baseline and follow-up data for the Birth – Age 3 Cohort (n = 56 families, 60 children); the PreK – Grade 3 Cohort (n = 185) is presented in terms of baseline and two follow-up rounds of data collection.

Various methods were used in the current evaluation approach, including observations in schools and family homes, direct child assessments, and family and teacher surveys. Implementation staff from the Buffett Institute were also interviewed about their coaching and facilitative roles with school staff. In all evaluation processes, efforts were made to understand how schools and families create contexts that support children's learning and development and how schools can be supported in leading that engagement. Key findings related to schools' engagement with families and promoting children's learning and development are outlined below.

Schools' Engagement With Families: Summary of Findings

Home visiting that supports families with children birth – 3 years is still a new and challenging programmatic addition to the work of schools. Implementation of a new evidence-informed home visiting curriculum was initiated during 2017-18 to help increase schools' capacity to engage in more in-depth work with families of children birth – 5 years.

Findings from the 2017-18 evaluation include the following:

- Engaging in Home Visiting in Schools Is Important, Complex Work
- Home Visiting Is Reaching Families With Greater Needs
- Families Are Increasing Their Access to Supports That Help Reduce Stress
- Higher Home Visiting Dosage Is Associated With Children's Language Development
- Schools Are Learning to Welcome and Engage Families in Meaningful and Inclusive Ways

Supporting Children's Learning and Development: Summary of Findings

The quality of classroom interactions and practices in full implementation schools improved from the first to the third years showing gains across all domains. Classroom teachers use quality practices to organize and support children's learning and social development. Children are demonstrating language and achievement gains relative to standardized expectations, with particular growth for children most affected by their initial achievement gap. Ongoing coaching and collaboration will focus on supporting teachers' efforts to enhance instructional practices.

Findings from the 2017-18 evaluation include the following:

- Classroom Interactions and Instruction Are Improving
- Children in Home Visiting Whose Home Language Is Spanish Show Increases in Language Development
- Language Development Improved for Children in PreK Through Grade 3, With Greater Gains for Low-Income and Hispanic Children
- Early Educational Achievement Increased Over Time, With Greater Gains for Children Who Are Black and Children Whose Home Language is Spanish
- Teachers' Ratings of Children's Executive Functioning Decreased in Higher Grades

Program Implementation Findings

Working with schools to change how school is done is complex work. The decision to enhance meaningful family engagement and partnership while supporting quality classroom practices holds promise for supporting children's learning and development.

Implementation staff with the Buffett Institute have worked to establish and leverage relationships with school staff in order to build capacity around the School as Hub approach, including home visiting, facilitating family engagement, and supporting quality classroom practices. Emerging work continues to build coaching for quality by using reflective practice, enhancing continuity for Birth to Grade 3 within schools and the community, and strengthening understanding of the equity lens that guides this work. The evaluation data related to quality practices, family processes, and child development and learning outcomes shed light on promising progress and opportunities for further refinement and growth. More information is needed to learn about how school leaders, home visitors, teachers, and other school staff are implementing School as Hub.

CUSTOMIZED ASSISTANCE

Customized Assistance provides Learning Community school districts with access to state and national consultation as they engage in strategic planning and improvement efforts. These efforts are intended to affect system-wide early childhood education and services. Working with local and state partners, Customized Assistance engages districts in designing and delivering sustained professional learning opportunities for staff by addressing key dimensions of early childhood programming, birth – Grade 3. The Buffett Institute assists with the design and evaluation of each plan. Measures are aligned with goals and expected outcomes for the specific plan and with the overall goals of the Superintendents' Plan. The customized assistance plans of three districts are highlighted below:

- *Gretna Public Schools* is engaged in work to strengthen social-emotional learning via classroom practices and environments. While all children are showing gains throughout the school year, those children identified as “at risk” are at a lower level of proficiency. In many cases, the increased percentage of children attaining proficiency scores from fall to spring is similar for both high- and low-risk groups, indicating that the groups of children are making differential gains in skills throughout the year. The district is also piloting evidence-based instructional resources to support implementation of new curriculum standards for social-emotional learning and development. Coaches will continue to facilitate professional development, grade-level collaboration, and implementation of the Pyramid model. Program evaluation data and teacher feedback were used to refine and target the 2018-19 professional development plans.
- *Ralston Public Schools* is prioritizing instructional practices that support preschool children’s language development. The overall trend for productivity scores is

strong and positive, indicating robust instructional practices. Quality of feedback and language modeling scores declined over the three-year period, although it is important to acknowledge that there are contextual factors that can affect these scores, such as individual child characteristics and the classroom environment. Program evaluation data will be used to further refine the focus for 2018-19 professional development and coaching.

- *Westside Community Schools* is focused on improving professional collaborations related to children's transitions to Kindergarten. During the 2017-18 school year, groups of educators and administrators met to work toward this common goal. Site directors and school principals collaborated around child assessments and the transition process. Preschool and Kindergarten teachers shared information about social-emotional supports, academic curricula and instruction, assessments, and student transitions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

The PD for All series is offered for all school leaders, community-based program administrators, teachers, early childhood educators, and family support professionals who work with young children and families in the Omaha metro area. The Buffett Institute plans and facilitates the PD for All series. The broad goal of PD for All is to provide ongoing opportunities for participants to increase their shared knowledge of research-based practices that increase quality, continuity, and equity in birth through Grade 3 education and family engagement.

Each year the PD for All series is organized around a central theme that introduces leading-edge research and innovative practices. The connecting theme for the four institutes of the 2017-18 PD for All series focused on practices to provide content-rich learning experiences for children, birth through Grade 3. A fifth Spanish-language institute for bilingual Spanish-speaking professionals was facilitated by the Buffett Institute in collaboration with the Learning Community Center of South Omaha.

Over 200 attendees participated in each of the first four institutes. These attendees included representatives from all school districts of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and over 80 community organizations, including early care and education programs. The Spanish-language institute in May had over 30 participants. Survey findings showed that 2017-18 participants made gains in their knowledge of high-quality instructional practices and reported that they applied the practices explored through PD for All in their ongoing work with children and families.

CONCLUSION

School districts composing the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties continue to focus intensive efforts on reducing income- and race-based disparities in educational achievement for young children, from birth through Grade 3. In the Full Implementation School as Hub Approach schools are engaging in new ways of partnering with families, and teachers are intensifying quality classroom practices. Programmatic efforts continue to be refined to improve the implementation of this systems-based approach at all levels. Ongoing evaluation efforts will focus more intensively on learning how schools engage in home visiting and establish deeper partnerships with families. In the coming year we will also use interviews, focus groups, and school-based data to expand our understanding of how the efforts of principals, teachers, and families are supporting children, especially those most at risk for school failure.

Customized Assistance continues to help districts with self-identified challenges and opportunities for learning to enhance quality, continuity, and equity across the Birth – Grade 3 continuum. Ongoing efforts will allow districts to refine their projects. PD for All will continue through the next year, enhancing learning offerings in response to evaluation feedback, and incorporating research on professional learning. The theme for 2018-19 is Harnessing the Power of Language and Communication to Build Children’s Literacy Success.

Changing how schools “do school” is no small undertaking. Yet this evaluation of the Superintendents’ Early Childhood Plan programs offers evidence that positive changes are occurring. In conjunction with our partners, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute continues to refine our programming and evaluation efforts to support the learning and development of children in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

Introduction

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

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

The goal of the Superintendents' Plan is to reduce or eliminate social, cognitive, and achievement gaps among young children living in high concentrations of poverty. Translating research into practice, the plan provides for a comprehensive systems approach that transforms learning opportunities for children at risk for school failure by the end of third grade. Because of its systemic perspective, the plan is intended to elevate the capacity of the Omaha metro school districts to serve all young children well, not just those living in high concentrations of poverty.

THREE LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

In this systems-level implementation, schools serve as hubs that connect young children and their families to a continuum of high-quality, comprehensive, and continuous early childhood education and community services from birth through Grade 3. This continuum includes home visiting for children birth to age 3, transitions to high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, and aligned Kindergarten through Grade 3 educational experiences. Strong family and community partnerships provide the foundation for services across all age levels, birth through Grade 3.

Customized Assistance to Districts

Customized Assistance offers school districts technical assistance and consultation tailored to specific needs in birth through Grade 3 policies and programming. Customized assistance provides districts with access to expert consultation in strategic planning and improvement efforts for system-wide early childhood education and related services and support in designing and delivering sustained professional learning opportunities to address early childhood programming, birth through Grade 3. In the past school year, Gretna, Ralston, and Westside school districts participated in customized assistance projects and related program evaluation.

Professional Development for All

Translation of research into high-quality early childhood practices is the core of the Superintendents' Plan implementation. PD for All provides a connected series of professional development institutes open to all school and community-based program leaders, teachers, early childhood professionals, and caregivers who work with young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. PD for All introduces leading-edge research and innovative practices to the community while promoting collaborative connections and shared commitments to strong early learning and family support systems, birth through Grade 3.

The integrative theme for the 2017-18 PD for All series focused on practices that provide content-rich learning experiences for children, birth through Grade 3. Five institutes provided professional learning related to specific topics within this theme, including an additional Spanish-language-only session of Children as Researchers:

- *Children as Scientists: Scientific Inquiry for Every Child*
- *Children as Authors: Guiding Children on Pathways Toward Strong Writing*
- *Children as Mathematicians: Early Math That Matters the Most*
- *Children as Researchers: Reading to Learn Can Start Early*

Evaluation activities specific to each of the three interconnected levels of implementation in the Superintendents' Plan are described in the sections that follow. The sections immediately following elaborate the School as Hub (full implementation) evaluation findings related to home visiting and classroom practices, family processes and perceptions, and child learning and development. A qualitative study outlines features of implementation, including coaching, that are designed to support partnership efforts with School as Hub schools. Subsequent sections describe evaluation results for two other Superintendents' Plan efforts: Customized Assistance to Districts and Professional Development for All.

Evaluation of the Third Year Full Implementation of the School as Hub Birth – Grade 3 Approach

SCHOOL AS HUB FOR BIRTH – GRADE 3 APPROACH (FULL IMPLEMENTATION)

School as Hub for Birth – Grade 3 is an approach that helps schools, educators, and communities strengthen their roles in reducing educational disparities by enhancing opportunity and achievement. The aim is to build a continuum of supports for children’s learning and family engagement beginning at birth and extending through Grade 3 and beyond. The school serves as a center, or hub, for the continuum of engagement. The impact of School as Hub is realized through modifying how schools “do school.” They start early by connecting with children and families prenatally or at birth and focus on advancing continuity, quality, and equity across multiple levels of the educational systems through the end of Grade 3.

The School as Hub Theory of Change (see Figure 1) illustrates the centrality of commitments to continuity, quality, and equity and the change strategies that increase access to opportunity and achievement.

- **Continuity** refers to the commitment to provide children with seamless learning and educational experiences from birth through Grade 3. What children learn at one age or grade level builds upon and elaborates the learning that came before. Continuity is grounded in shared understandings about children’s development. It is operationalized as aligned educational practices and content, engagement with families from children’s birth, and changes in systems designed to support children and families transitioning from one program to the next, such as from home visiting to preschool, from preschool to Kindergarten, and from grade to grade in the elementary years (Stipek et al., 2017; Takanishi, 2016).
- **Quality** refers to the commitment to implement practices with families, children, and educators that are evidence-based, produce developmentally and educationally important outcomes, and are informed by continuous improvement. High-quality classroom and family support practices share a number of characteristics in common: They are based on two-way relationships that enhance interactions between educators, children, and families; they promote social-emotional well-being and stimulate learning and thinking; they are tailored to individual needs;

and they are culturally and linguistically affirming (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; Pianta, Downer, & Hamre, 2016).

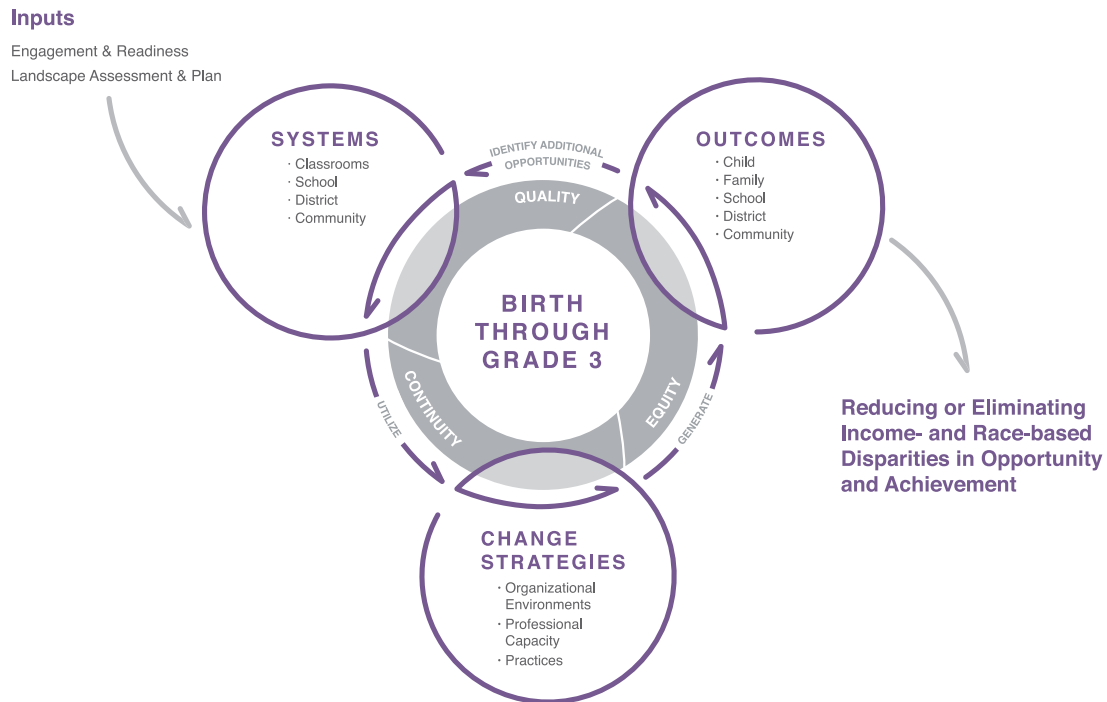
- **Equity** refers to the commitment that every child receives what he or she needs to succeed in school and life (Blankenstein & Noguera, 2016). A commitment to equity recognizes the responsibility to confront the underlying causes of disparities in opportunity and achievement and to create conditions whereby a child's developmental and educational well-being are not constrained by systemic inequities, socio-economic factors, and racial identity.

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

An essential feature of the School as Hub approach is the connected continuum of Change Strategies that combines educational experiences for children with opportunities for family engagement and parenting supports. The strategies emphasize change in Organizational Environments, Professional Capacity, and Practices. School change research demonstrates that complex practice changes must be embedded within the contexts that build professional capacity and organizational environments in order to support and sustain those practices (Fullan, 2010; Sebring et al., 2006). This complexity is captured in the Theory of Change described below. As the School as Hub approach is implemented, strategic and interdependent changes are promoted to build professional capacity through leadership and collaborative learning. Organizational environments, such as school culture and family-school partnerships, also are strengthened.

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation aims to capture the degree to which the change strategies of the School as Hub approach are being implemented and observed across a range of districts and schools. In the following sections, we describe what we are learning about efforts in the Full Implementation. Subsequent sections describe engagement in the Customized Assistance and Professional Development for All programs.

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



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation of the School as Hub Birth – Grade 3 approach (full implementation) includes findings from four levels of the system: quality practices in home visiting and classrooms, family processes, child development and learning outcomes, and program implementation supports. For the 2017-18 school year, evaluation activities were designed to address the following question about program implementation, quality practices, family processes, and child learning and development:

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

- *Are family supports and classroom practices (i.e., program quality) improving?*
- *Do family interaction processes reflect increased support and engagement?*
- *Is the learning and development of children improving?*

The full implementation approach is designed to bring about significant shifts in how “schools do school” over time. Teachers, principals, school staff, children, and families participate in the program. In addition to principals and teachers, school staff include a home visitor and a family facilitator employed by each school to provide early childhood

parenting supports and to promote family-school-community partnerships. In the 2017-18 year, approximately 3,590 children were enrolled in 183 PreK through third grade classrooms at the 12 full implementation school sites. This included approximately 670 children enrolled in 29 PreK classrooms and 2,920 children in 154 Kindergarten through third grade classrooms. Table 1 describes the characteristics of children enrolled in the full implementation districts and schools.

TABLE 1. | SCHOOL AND DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS: FULL IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOLS 2017-18

District and Schools	2017-18 Student Enrollment	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	% Minority Population	% At or Above Proficient 3rd Grade Language Arts*	% At or Above Proficient 3rd Grade Math*
Bellevue	10,028	35	30	46	68
Belleaire	320	66	38	48	73
DC West	918	33	11	55	89
DC West	401	38	10	55	89
Millard	23,980	21	21	67	85
Cody	319	54	44	68	88
Sandoz	391	53	50	44	56
Omaha	52,344	70	72	40	62
Gomez Heritage	849	82	92	38	67
Liberty	745	89	87	19	43
Mount View	374	81	92	20	46
Pinewood	222	62	70	39	70
Ralston	3,363	56	46	36	63
Karen Western	188	74	65	24	52
Meadows	310	49	45	35	63
Mockingbird	402	73	68	36	60
Westside	5,999	35	27	62	82
Westbrook	518	61	43	38	66

*Based on 2016-17 proficiencies

Systemic educational change, as reflected in the Superintendents’ Plan, requires continuous, intensive engagement over several years. The evaluation of the Superintendents’ Plan was designed to examine how components of the School as Hub for Birth – Grade 3 approach are changing over time, and how children’s development and learning are progressing over time in the full implementation schools.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Design

The full implementation of the Superintendents' Plan, years 2015-2018, used a multiple-cohort longitudinal design to learn how processes and outcomes changed over time. Two cohorts were constructed. The Birth – Age 3 Cohort consists of children birth – 3 years and the PreK – Grade 3 Cohort consists of children ages 3 – 8. This report presents baseline and follow-up data for the Birth – Age 3 Cohort; the PreK – Grade 3 Cohort includes baseline and two follow-up rounds of data collection.

Sample and Participant Characteristics

The cohort design required distinct processes of recruitment and sampling of children and families. These processes are reported by cohort, described below.

Birth – Age 3 Cohort

Leaders at each school identified criteria for recruiting families into the voluntary home visiting program, with an emphasis on including children and families with the highest needs. To encourage early and continuous engagement with families, schools were encouraged to prioritize recruitment of families with children under age 1 or those expecting a child. Other priorities for recruitment included low income, teen parent(s), low birth weight, low maternal education level, and home language other than English. When home visitors enrolled families in the program, they invited them to participate in the evaluation. Baseline data were collected in the first 60 days following family consent, and follow-up occurred approximately every eight months thereafter. Evaluation visits were scheduled during the families' home visits, lasted approximately one hour, and were conducted in English or Spanish, depending on the families' preference.

The number of families enrolled in the home visiting program and evaluation have increased steadily over time. In the 2017-18 year, 127 families received home visiting services from their school (156 children). To capture the ongoing, long-term nature of the School as Hub work, only children and families for whom we had baseline and follow-up data by May 31, 2018, were included in this report, for a total of 44% of the families who volunteered to participate in the evaluation (N = 56 families and 60 children). Table 2 provides a breakdown of evaluation enrollment by district and school. Children enrolled in the evaluation of the Birth – Age 3 Cohort had slightly more males (52%) than females, and ranged in age from prenatal to 24 months at baseline (M = 6.3 months) and 1 to 24 months at follow-up (M = 10.5 months).

As of May 31, 2018, 21 children had turned 3 years old and transitioned out of the home visiting program. Of this group, 12 children were accepted into school-based PreK/Head

Start classrooms, one child will be in an early childhood special education classroom, and the remaining children will stay home or attend community programs.

TABLE 2. | BIRTH – AGE 3 EVALUATION BASELINE AND FOLLOW-UP DATA BY DISTRICT AND SCHOOL

District	School	Children (Families) in Evaluation With Baseline and Follow-Up	Total Children (Families) Participating in Home Visiting
Bellevue	Belleaire	7 (6)	14 (10)
DC West	DC West	10 (9)	18 (15)
Millard	Cody	3 (3)	16 (12)
	Sandoz	5 (5)	18 (13)
Omaha	Gomez Heritage	10 (10)	13 (12)
	Liberty	9 (9)	22 (20)
	Mount View	1 (1)	15 (14)
	Pinewood	10 (9)	25 (20)
Ralston	Karen Western		
	Meadows	1 (1)	7 (6)
	Mockingbird		
Westside	Westbrook	4 (3)	8 (5)
Totals		60 (56)	156 (127)

We use the term “caregiver” in the report to refer to the family member (parent, grandparent, guardian) who served as the primary contact and participant in the evaluation. Caregivers provided demographic and other information about their family and children. Forty-two percent of family caregivers self-identified as Hispanic, 30% white, 18% black, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, with 2% of caregivers identifying their ethnicity as “other.” One-third of caregivers reported high school as their highest achieved education, and 64% live in coupled households. Approximately 29% of caregivers report an annual income less than \$17,000, 75% received public benefits, and over half of the sample indicated that they worried about a shortage of food for their family.

PreK – Grade 3 Cohort

Children were selected randomly from among those enrolled in the participating school PreK and Kindergarten classrooms during the 2015-16 school year. This sampling process resulted in 222 PreK through Kindergarten children participating in the evaluation study with parental consent. The retention rate of children in Year 1 was 95% (211 children) and in Year 2, 83% (185 children PreK – Grade 2). Table 3 provides a description of children participating in each school. To optimize the continuous and ongoing nature of this work, this report only includes children and classrooms for whom there were three data points by May 31, 2018.

The PreK – Grade 3 Cohort is 48% female and 68% receive Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL). The cohort is diverse, with 51% white, 20% black, 19% “other”, 8% “multiple” races, and 2% Asian. Of those, 42% describe themselves as Hispanic; 25% report Spanish as their home language, and another 10% are dual language (Spanish and English). Approximately 13% of children were eligible for special education services.

Evaluation Methods

The quality of home visiting and classroom practices was assessed using observational measures. Family process assessments included surveys that focused on understanding the family’s social support system and observations of caregiver-child interactions. Child development and learning outcomes were assessed with standardized measures and surveys in the areas of language development, educational achievement, social-emotional skills, and executive function. Brief descriptions of all measures used can be found in Appendices 1 (birth – age 3) and 2 (PreK – Grade 3).

Birth – Age 3

Evaluation staff used direct assessment, video observations, caregiver surveys, and other information gathered by home visitors. Fifty-six caregivers and 60 children participated in baseline and follow-up data collection, with an average interval between time points of 10 months (SD = 1.65).

PreK – Grade 3

Evaluation staff used direct assessment of children, video observation of classroom practices, and family and teacher surveys. Baseline data (Time 1) were collected in spring 2016 for all school districts except the Omaha Public Schools (OPS), whose baseline was gathered in fall 2016. Follow-up data were collected at all schools in spring 2017 and 2018. To remain consistent with the cohorts, results are reported for three distinct groups:

- 1. PreK Post-Home Visiting Group:** Children who continued in the evaluation study in fall 2017 after participating in home visiting services in the Birth – Age 3 Cohort.
- 2. PreK Entry Group:** Children who enrolled in the evaluation study in PreK in 2015.
- 3. Kindergarten Entry Group:** Children who enrolled in the evaluation study in Kindergarten in 2015.

TABLE 3. | PREK – GRADE 3 EVALUATION ENROLLMENT BY DISTRICT AND SCHOOL IN 2017-18

District	School	PreK Classrooms	K – 3 Classrooms	PreK Children Post Home Visiting*	PreK Children	K – 2 Children
Bellevue	Belleaire	1	8	1		8
DC West	DC West	2	14			23
Millard	Cody	4	8	1		14
	Sandoz	3	12	2		17
Omaha	Gomez Heritage	3	34		3	25
	Liberty	4	23	1	4	26
	Mount View	3	8	2	3	7
	Pinewood	2	7	4	3	12
Ralston	Karen Western	1	7			8
	Meadows	1	8			10
	Mockingbird	1	12			10
Westside	Westbrook	4	13			12
Totals		29	154	11	13	172

*Eleven 3-year-olds were added to the PreK evaluation study this year after transitioning from the home visiting program in the Birth – Age 3 Cohort.

In this report, findings are summarized descriptively. When possible, and for the PreK entry and Kindergarten groups only, findings are reported for groups based on income, home language status, and race and ethnicity. (The PreK Post-Home Visiting group was too small for a subgroup analysis.)

When possible and consistent with the assessment tool, findings are reported using a visual display across percentile ranks in five ranges: below average, low average, mid-average, high average and high.

For assessments that use a clinical “cut-off” score, results are reported as frequencies of typical and non-typical ranges, and are indicated by **. For assessments using standard scores, means are reported.

Program Quality: Home Visiting and Classroom Practices

BIRTH – AGE 3: HOME VISITING

Engaging in Home Visiting in Schools Is Important, Complex Work

School-based, voluntary home visiting is a key program component of the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 approach. Consistent, high-quality home visiting in the first three years has been shown to increase children's outcomes over time by: (1) increasing caregivers' capacity to support their child's learning and development (Caldera et al., 2007) and (2) enhancing families' relationships and engagement with their child's school (Wessels, 2013). The home visiting program includes three one-hour visits per month with each participating family, throughout the school year and summer months.

The quality of home visiting practices was assessed using the Home Visiting Rating Scales (HOVRS; Roggman et al., 2014). The HOVRS is a videotaped observation containing seven items and two subscales. Items are scored using anchors that indicate the quality of the interaction (1 = needs training, 3 = adequate, 5 = good, and 7 = excellent), and each scale is assigned an overall score (1 – 7). Process Quality refers to the home visitor's practices, including responsiveness; relationship-building; facilitating parent-child interactions; and non-intrusion. Effectiveness refers to how the home visitor's efforts are observed in the parent and child interaction.

Evaluation data collectors accompanied the home visitors on a typical home visit. For each home visitor, up to three randomly selected families consented and were observed in the first year, and up to four in the second year. Rigorous coding protocols were used. To examine program quality over time, this report includes observations for eight home visitors with HOVRS observations in both years 1 and 2. For year 1, observations from 18 home visits (1 – 3 families per home visitor), and for year 2, observations from 23 home visits (1 – 4 families per home visitor) were included.

Findings

From baseline to follow-up, home visit process quality and effectiveness were slightly above the mid-range. Mean process quality was 4.4 at baseline and 3.7 at follow-up. Mean home visiting effectiveness was 4.8 at baseline and 4.6 at follow-up.

What We Are Learning About Home Visiting

Home visiting that supports families in their capacity to promote children's learning and healthy development is still a new and challenging programmatic addition to the work of

schools in the Omaha metropolitan area. An extensive body of research describes how difficult home visiting is to do well, and yet how important it is for children's academic and social readiness for Kindergarten (Duffee et al., 2017). In spring 2018, the former home visiting curriculum was replaced with Growing Great Kids (Elliot et al., 2012) and was adopted in the Superintendents' Plan full implementation schools to support an intensive focus on practices and supports with families. This transition in curriculum involved intensive training and support, which may explain scores remaining in the mid-range during this year. However, gains in home visiting quality are expected as a result of the curriculum and increased focus on practices and family support.

Using Growing Great Kids, regular coaching and performance feedback provide support for home visitors' continuous improvement related to process quality and effectiveness. The HOVRS observation is one tool being used to provide helpful feedback for home visitors' ongoing learning. It will be employed more frequently and across all home visitors and families in the upcoming program and evaluation year. More frequent use of the HOVRS will provide the necessary ongoing feedback to support home visitors in their professional learning, in addition to reflecting progress in program quality.

In addition to observing home visiting quality, caregivers provided information at both baseline and follow-up that is helpful for learning about how home visitors provide ongoing support for families:

- Caregivers reported average levels of parenting stress, though families whose home language was Spanish reported slightly elevated levels of parenting stress in comparison to English-speaking families. This information can be helpful for home visitors who may want to explore effective strategies to support Spanish home-language families to identify and reduce their experiences of stress in the parenting role.
- Over time, more caregivers enrolled in home visiting reported accessing a regular pediatric health care provider for their child. Increases from 90% at baseline to 98% at follow-up reflect improvements in families' identification of medical and other community resources, which is an ongoing goal of home visiting.
- Caregivers reporting depressive symptoms over time decreased from 17.9% at baseline to 16.1% at follow-up. While an improvement, this level of depression is higher than the Nebraska average for depressive symptoms in the postpartum period at 12.8% (Centers for Disease Control, 2015). Connecting family caregivers with supports, including mental health services, is an ongoing purpose of home visiting.

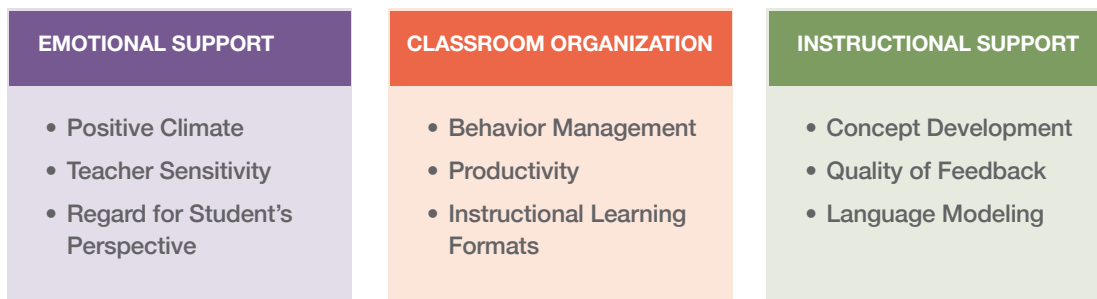
PREK – GRADE 3: CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICES

Classroom Interactions and Instruction Are Improving

Because the quality of teachers’ practices and interactions in the classroom is associated with higher academic and social interactions throughout the elementary school years (Hamre & Pianta, 2003), supporting teachers’ quality classroom practices is a key component for the Superintendents’ Plan. Educational facilitators provide coaching and professional learning opportunities for PreK – Grade 3 teachers on a regular basis and work with all school staff to promote school climates that support evidence-based strategies to support children’s optimal learning and development.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) was used to assess the quality of classrooms in full implementation schools. CLASS quality is defined in three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, with three dimensions for each domain (see Figure 2). Emotional Support refers to teachers’ practices that support positive relationships in the classroom, identify children’s needs for support, and recognize and respond to children’s emotions, ideas, and interests. Classroom Organization refers to teachers’ practices that support effective management of time and guidance of children’s behavior, setting expectations, routines, and guidelines for the class. Instructional Support (IS) refers to the practices teachers use to help children solve problems, deepen skills and knowledge, and develop more complex language skills. The CLASS tool uses a common metric that articulates features of classroom quality in the early childhood and elementary grades. It is an observational tool measuring classroom interactions which enhance student learning. Samples of classroom interactions were video-recorded and evaluators rated dimensions. Ratings are based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating highest quality.

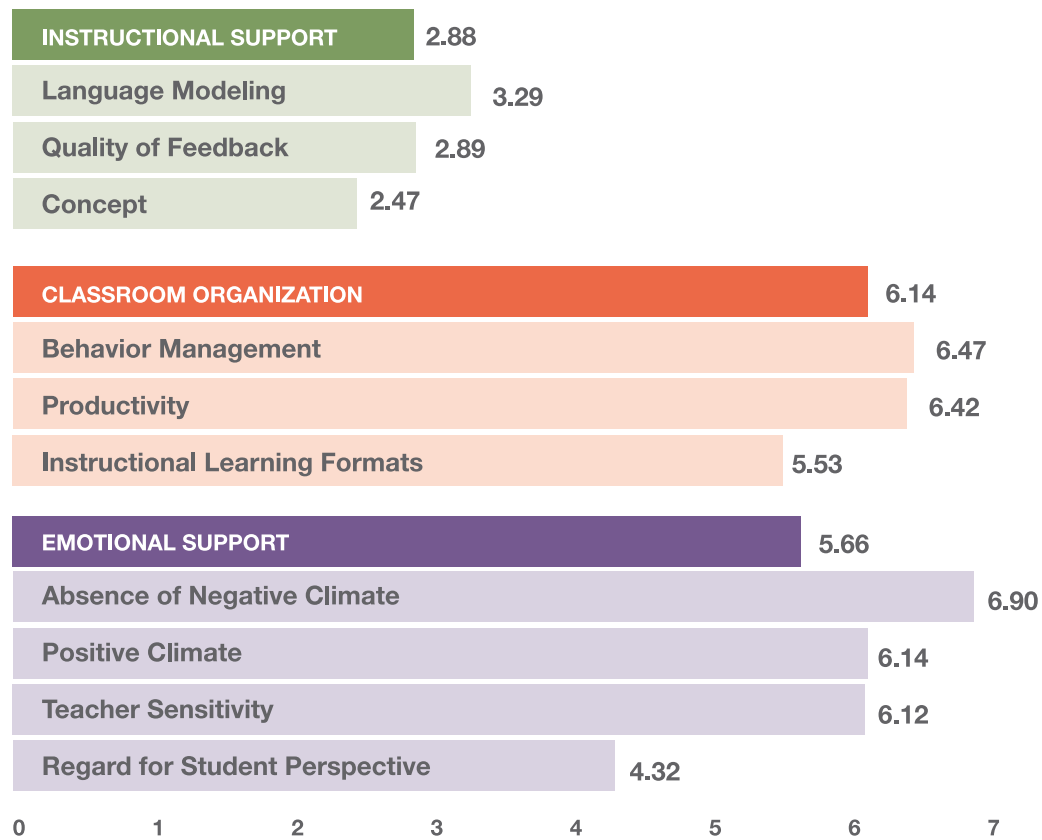
FIGURE 2. | DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS OF THE CLASS RATING SCALE



Findings

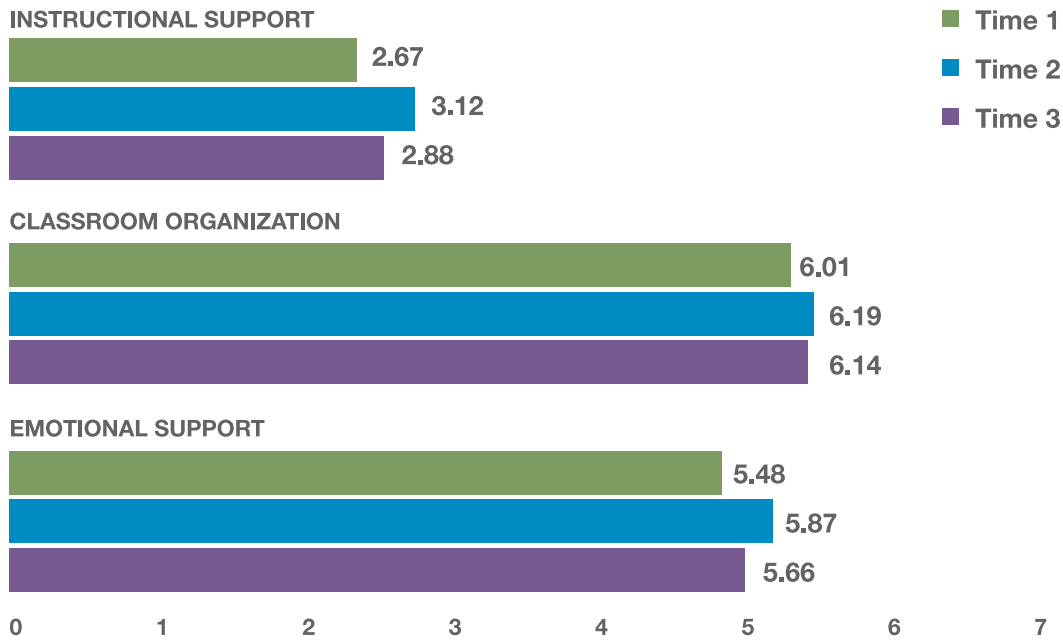
The quality of classroom interactions and practices in full implementation schools improved from the first to the third year and also improved across all domains. CLASS scores for 146 PreK and K – 3 classrooms across three time points are reported for three program years (2016, 2017, 2018) in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. | PREK AND K – 3 CLASS DOMAIN AND DIMENSIONS SCORES IN 2018, N = 146



To highlight areas of classroom quality, strengths, and challenges, a breakdown of the dimensions in each of the domains follows (Figure 4). Scores above six are considered in the “high” range. Emotional Support ratings approached the “high” range, reflecting a generally positive climate, and lower ratings for regarding students’ perspectives. Classroom Organization (CS) ratings were the highest, with lower ratings for practices related to instructional learning formats. Instructional support reflected the lowest scores of the three domains, with language modeling the highest and concept development the lowest of all the dimension ratings. Recommendations for each of the domains are below.

FIGURE 4. | PREK AND K – 3 CLASS DOMAIN SCORES, TIMES 1, 2, AND 3, N = 146



What We Are Learning About Classroom Practices

Teaching in PreK – Grade 3 classrooms is a complex challenge that requires meeting the learning needs of young children in the context of ongoing developmental needs. Children younger than age 8 are very active, have less self-regulation than their older elementary peers, and are still learning how to engage in social relationships—all while learning to read and write and gain general knowledge about the world (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). In sum, early childhood and elementary teachers spend much time teaching children to be competent learners. While classroom quality results shown here mirror national trends that suggest teachers demonstrate greater strengths in classroom organization and emotional support, efforts are underway to target strategies for supporting teachers’ growth in instructional practices. Educational facilitators have engaged in professional learning and reflective supervision to implement a more focused coaching approach, while integrating and aligning their work with school improvement plans. Specific areas for targeting coaching supports include:

- Although *Instructional Support* in classroom practice is improving over time, it remains the domain of greatest programmatic need in PreK – Grade 3 classrooms. In national studies, Instructional Support tends to reflect the lowest scores and presents the most opportunity for improvement as it challenges teachers to extend children’s language, model advanced language, and promote higher-order thinking skills (Pianta et al., 2008).

- Classroom *Organization* was in the high range, and a relative strength of the PreK – Grade 3 classrooms. Nonetheless, opportunities exist to support teachers in their use of Instructional Learning Formats, including effective questioning, creative opportunities for hands-on exploration, and providing clear learning objectives.
- To enhance *Emotional Support* in the classroom, coaching can support teachers in their Regard for Student Perspective. This means education facilitators can partner with teachers to enhance their flexibility with incorporating children’s individual differences and interests, developing relationships, connecting with home assets, building on child background and strengths, and ensuring that instructional materials are representative and positive.

Family Processes

The Superintendents' Plan works with schools to re-examine and address how to support families of young children, birth – Grade 3. Schools can support families by helping caregivers connect with other school families and identify helpful community resources (Min, Anderson, & Chen, 2017). Through home visiting and parent-child interaction groups, schools can provide information about child development and learning and promote healthy relationships. By learning from caregivers and identifying how families can be more meaningfully engaged, schools can shift their practices related to partnering with families, communication, school culture, and trust. To learn about family processes in the Superintendents' Plan, we examined families' perceptions related to supports, observed caregiver-child relationships, and surveyed PreK – Grade 3 families about school-family engagement.

FAMILY PROCESSES: FAMILY SUPPORT

Families Are Increasing Their Access to Supports That Help Reduce Stress; Home Visiting Is Reaching Families With Greater Needs

A key aim of School as Hub is to help families identify and obtain supports that enhance their children's development and learning. To consider how home visiting and family facilitation might be reflected in families' perceptions, caregivers of children in the Birth – Age 3 and PreK – Grade 3 cohorts completed the FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (PFS; FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, 2011). This survey tool is designed for use with caregivers receiving such services as home visiting, parent education, and family support. It provides information about strengths and opportunities that may serve as protective factors for families in the context of stress. Two subscales were used: (1) Social Support refers to caregivers' perceived informal support from family, friends, and neighbors that helps provide for emotional needs, and (2) Concrete Support refers to caregivers' perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.

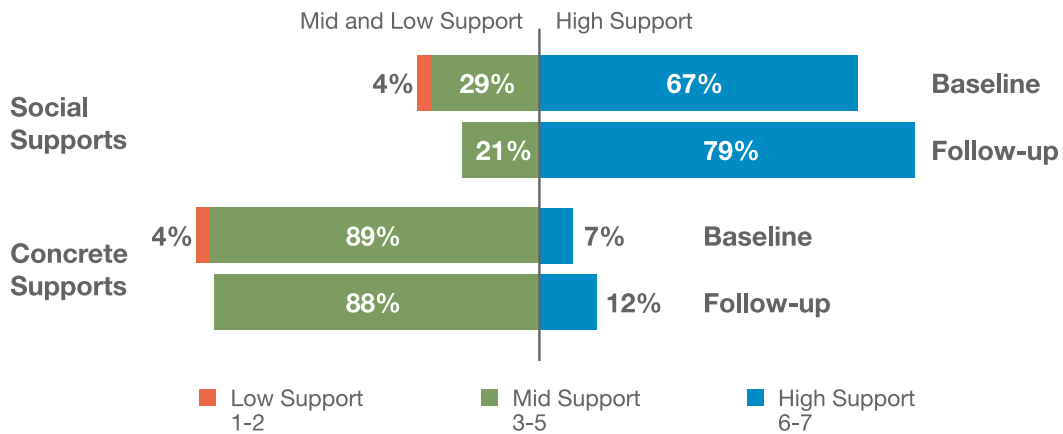
Birth – Age 3

Fifty-six caregivers in the home visiting program completed the survey at baseline and follow-up (see Figure 5).

Findings

Caregivers reported relatively high levels of social support but very low levels of perceived concrete supports. Both levels of support increased over time and at follow-up no caregivers report “low support.”

FIGURE 5. | CHANGE IN FAMILY SUPPORTS OVER TIME: BIRTH – AGE 3, N = 56



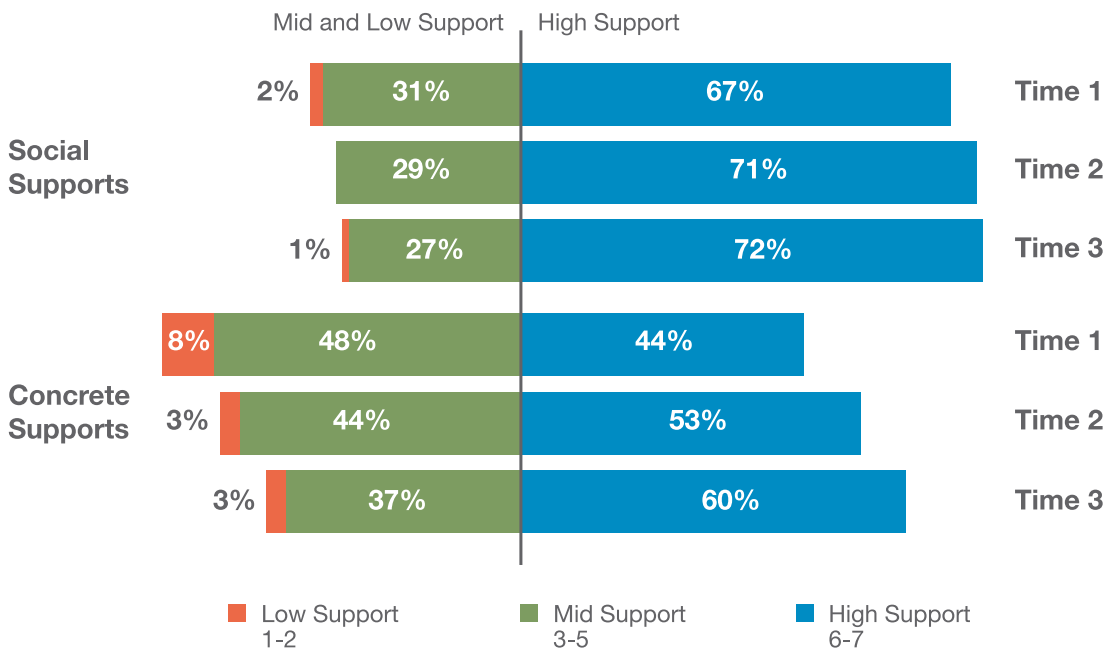
PreK – Grade 3

A total of 174 caregivers of children in PreK – Grade 3 classrooms completed the survey at three time points (see Figure 6). These results were aggregated for all children who entered at PreK or Kindergarten.

Findings

Caregivers reported relatively high access to social supports and mid-level, yet increasing access to concrete supports. Perceptions of access for both types of support increased over time.

FIGURE 6. | CHANGE IN FAMILY SUPPORTS OVER TIME: PREK – GRADE 2 FAMILIES, N = 174



What We Are Learning About Increasing Family Supports

Families are more effective and confident in their parenting when they perceive that they have access to social and concrete supports (Dunst & Dempsey, 2007). One purpose of home visiting is to help families identify and acquire supports, and over time families participating in home visiting and PreK – Grade 3 reported having increased access to both social and concrete supports. But there were some notable differences between types of support and between families in home visiting and those in school-based programs.

Home visiting in the School as Hub approach is reaching families with greater needs. Caregivers of children Birth – Grade 3 reported higher social supports than concrete ones. Caregivers in Birth – Age 3 home visiting reported fewer concrete supports than caregivers of PreK – Grade 3 families. Because families enrolled in the home visiting program have higher rates of poverty than the general school district population it is not surprising that they experienced greater needs related to concrete, tangible supports. Over time, families may become able to access supports in the early elementary years through school engagement, family and community networks, or some combination. Helping families access supports, especially tangible goods and services, should continue to be an area of focus for home visiting. Full implementation schools are engaging with families in parent-child interaction groups, which may support families' networking and identify ways families can access social and concrete supports.

FAMILY PROCESSES: CAREGIVER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

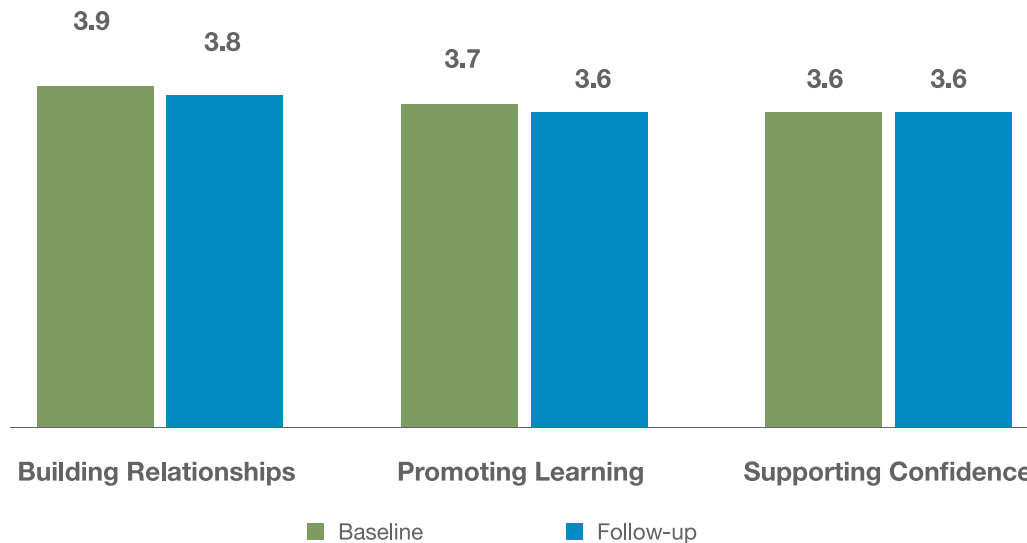
Strengthening Caregivers' Support for Development and Learning

Birth – Age 3

The caregiver-child relationship contributes in essential ways to young children's development and learning (Richter, Griesel, & Manegold, 2004). A primary goal of home visiting is to help the caregiver develop and maintain a positive relationship with their child (Sama-Miller et al., 2017). The Keys to Interactive Parenting (KIPS; Comfort & Gordon, 2006) was used to assess and support caregiver-child interaction. The KIPS includes 12 items nested in three scales. Items in the Building Relationships scale consider how caregivers react to the child in ways that promote trust and acceptance; the Promoting Learning scale considers caregivers' scaffolding of child learning; and Supporting Confidence considers how parents encourage the child's self-confidence. Each scale is assessed using a 5-point scale (1 = rarely, 3 = usually, and 5 = consistently). Figure 7 highlights the quality of caregiver-child interaction at baseline and follow-up.

Findings

Mean levels of caregiver-child interaction were in the mid-range and remained relatively stable over time.

FIGURE 7. | CAREGIVER-CHILD INTERACTION: 0 – 3, N = 46***PreK – Grade 3***

Caregivers completed surveys concerning their relationships with their child, indicating their perceptions about their relational closeness and conflict, using the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS; Pianta, 1992). The scales range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more closeness and more conflict in their relationship with their child.

Findings

Caregivers of participating children ($n = 171$) in PreK – Grade 3 reported high levels of closeness ($M = 4.79$; range 3.71 – 5) and low levels of conflict ($M = 1.99$, 1 – 4.38) that remained stable over time.

What We Are Learning About Supporting Caregiver-Child Relationships

The foundation for children’s relationships with their caregivers develops in the child’s first three years (Thompson, 2001). Home visitation can serve as a support for building caregivers’ relationships with their children. However, caregivers may experience varying challenges at different stages of child development. For example, parenting may become more challenging as children find opportunities to practice independence and autonomy (e.g., the “terrible twos”). Home visiting can provide caregivers with coaching around interacting with their child and match coaching to the child’s developmental level. Implementation of the Growing Great Kids curriculum provides extensive information for home visitors and parents at each stage of child development. As many

families benefit from ongoing support with parenting, schools can leverage home visiting, personal visits with families, and parent-child interaction groups to continue to support close caregiver-child relationships.

FAMILY PROCESSES: FAMILY-SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Schools Are Learning More Ways to Welcome and Engage Families Meaningfully

When schools engage meaningfully with families, children demonstrate better educational achievement and social outcomes (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). The Road Map Family Engagement Survey (Ishimaru & Lott, 2015) helped us learn about families' perceptions about collaboration among families, communities, and schools. There are six primary domain areas in this scale: 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. Caregivers rank items on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

PreK – Grade 3

Caregivers of children in PreK – Grade 3 (n = 174) completed the survey in the spring of each school year.

Findings

In general, caregivers rated their engagement with their school positively: domain means ranged from 5.19 to 6.68 and there was little change across the three years. Caregivers identified school strengths as creating a welcoming environment and building a culture of trust. Principals contributed to this in their efforts to make parents feel welcome in the school and seek their ideas and suggestions to improve the school. At the item level, a few important family perceptions did change over time. Over time, caregivers' perceptions increased related to how they felt their home culture and language being valued by the school (.33 change). They also reported increasing their knowledge of community resources to help their child (.11 change). Families perceived small decreases over time in how often the child's teacher or staff had positive communication with families about their child's behavior (.15 change) or academic progress (.14 change).

What We Are Learning About Family Engagement

Families' perceptions were largely positive concerning their child's school, which reflects the research nationally (Perkins, 2008). To tease apart some issues related to family engagement, evaluators examined how parents' perceptions of school engagement were related to different groups of children's academic and vocabulary skills. They found that the caregivers of children in PreK to Grade 3 who were Hispanic and/or

whose home language was Spanish, and whose children demonstrated positive gains in vocabulary and academic skills, acknowledged improvements in the school environment related to positive cultural climate. Full implementation schools are increasing their engagement with Hispanic and/or Spanish home-language families and support of families' access to cultural resources. Family-based processes will continue to be supported and strengthened in the Superintendents' Plan.

Child Development and Learning Outcomes

Over time we expect a focus on continuity, quality, and equity to be manifested in improved development and learning for all children and reduced disparities based on race and income. Children's development (language and social-emotional) and educational achievement were assessed annually to investigate changes in learning and in disparities over time.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Children Whose Home Language Is Spanish Show Increases in Language Development; Higher Home Visiting Dosage Is Associated With Higher Language Development

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

Birth – Age 3

Children's language development was assessed in the home using the Preschool Language Scale-5 (PLS-5; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2011). The assessor interacts with the child using standardized materials, examining receptive (comprehension) and expressive (spoken) language skills. A combined score yields a Total Score. The assessment was completed in Spanish for children whose families reported it as their home language. For the children with baseline and follow-up data (n = 51), their average age at baseline was 14.12 months (4 – 33 months) and average age at follow-up was 22.8 months (11 – 40 months).

Findings

Scores for this measure are norm-referenced and usually reported as below average (< 85), average (85-115), and above average (> 115). Figures 8 – 10 display the distribution of children's language development across quintile percentage rankings at baseline and follow-up. Children experienced a slight decline in receptive and expressive language skills between baseline and follow-up, with fewer children in the high range and more in the low range. However, a greater percentage of children scored in the average ranges.

FIGURE 8. | RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR CHILDREN IN HOME VISITING, N = 51

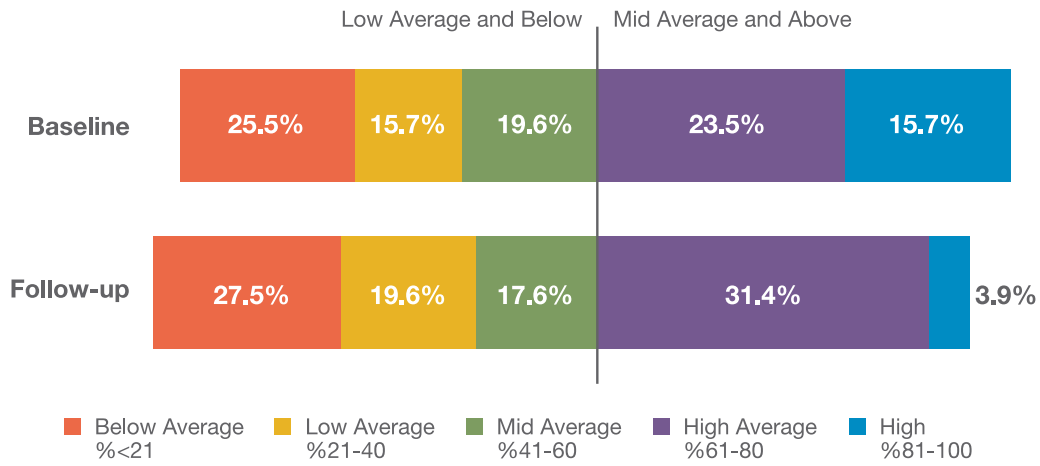


FIGURE 9. | EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN IN HOME VISITING, N = 51

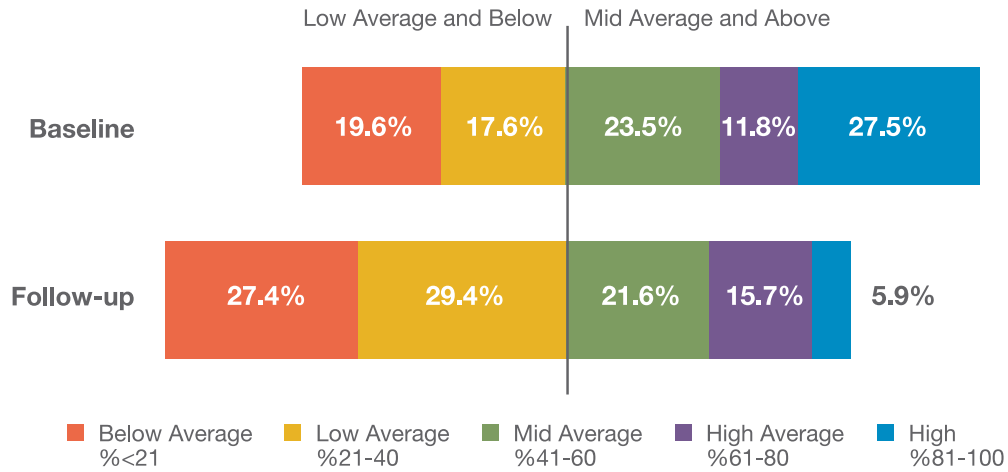
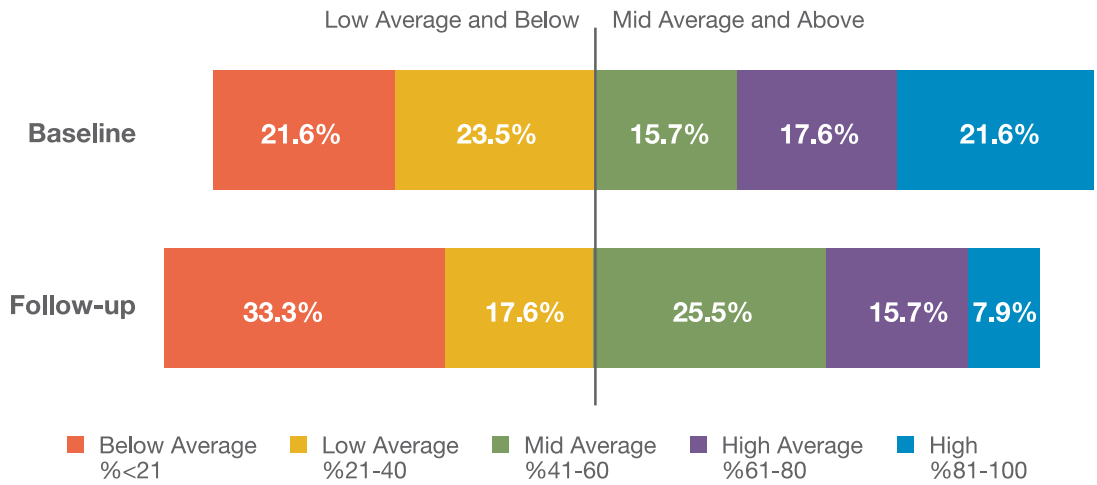
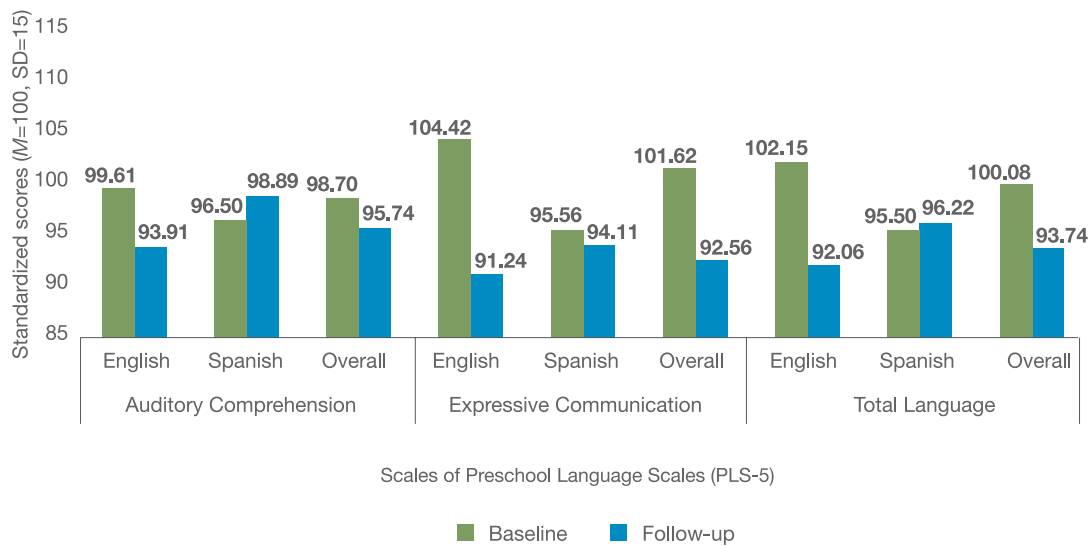


FIGURE 10. | TOTAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN IN HOME VISITING, N=51



We wanted to investigate how language development might vary by home language. Children whose home language was Spanish experienced gains in receptive and total language skills from baseline to follow-up, compared to English-only children who did not show these gains (see Figure 11). Because we anticipate that home visiting will support children’s language development over time, we examined associations of children’s developing language and home visiting. Children whose families received more home visits over time demonstrated higher levels of expressive ($r = .22$) and total language scores ($r = .22$) at follow-up.

FIGURE 11. | CHANGE IN INFANT-TODDLERS’ LANGUAGE SKILLS BY HOME LANGUAGE, N = 51



LANGUAGE: PREK – GRADE 3

Language Development Improved for All, With Greater Gains for Low-Income and Hispanic Children

Children’s receptive vocabulary (comprehension) was assessed using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition (PPVT-4; Dunn & Dunn, 2007) and was administered in school to 192 children. A standardized assessment, the PPVT-4 has been validated with a national sample of children 2.5 – 6 years, and yields a standard score with an average of 100 (range 85 – 115). The assessment was administered in English.

Findings

Scores for this measure are norm-referenced and usually reported as below average (< 85) , average (85-115), and above average (> 115). Figure 12 displays the distribution of children’s language development across quintile percentage rankings at baseline and follow-up, for the PreK – Grade 3 cohort.

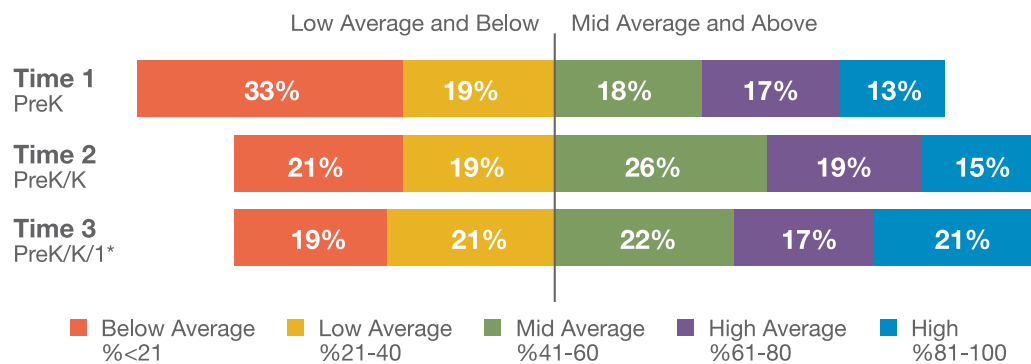
PreK Post-Home Visiting Group

The children who transitioned from the Birth – Age 3 home visiting (n = 11) scored within the average range (M = 94.5) in the spring of their first year of PreK in the area of receptive vocabulary skills.

PreK Entry Group

Time 1 consists of children who entered PreK at 3 or 4 years old; Time 2 reflects the same children one year later (PreK or K); and Time 3 reflects the child two years after the Time 1 baseline (in either PreK/K or first grade). Children’s receptive vocabulary skills in the PreK entry group increased over time, with more children scoring in the above and high average ranges, and fewer in the below average range.

FIGURE 12. | PERCENTILE RANKS OVER TIME: RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY FOR CHILDREN IN THE PREK ENTRY GROUP, N = 67



*Some OPS PreK children entered the study at age 3 in fall 2017 and had data collected at the baseline and in the spring of their first and second year of PreK.

Because we are interested in learning how disparities among groups are changing, we analyzed children’s language development by groups. All groups of children who entered the evaluation at PreK demonstrated improvement in language development (Figure 13). While children with paid lunch, had English as their home language, and/or white had the highest standard scores overall, Hispanic and/or Spanish home-language children showed the greatest language gains over time.

FIGURE 13. | CHILDREN’S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT BY GROUP FOR CHILDREN IN THE PREK ENTRY GROUP, BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS, OVERALL N = 67



Kindergarten Entry Group

Children’s receptive vocabulary skills in the Kindergarten entry group improved with time, with more children scoring in the high-average ranges, and fewer in the below-average range (Figure 14). We again analyzed children’s language development by demographic groups. All groups of children who entered the study at Kindergarten demonstrated improvement in language development relative to the standardized norms (Figure 15). Black children showed small declines over time. Hispanic children and/or those whose home language was Spanish showed the greatest receptive language gains over time.

FIGURE 14. | CHANGE IN PERCENTILE RANKS OVER TIME: RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY FOR CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP, N = 114

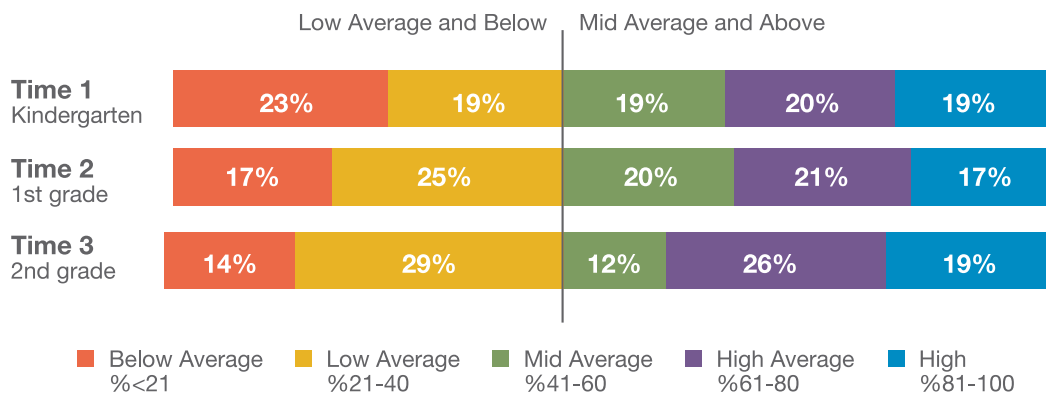
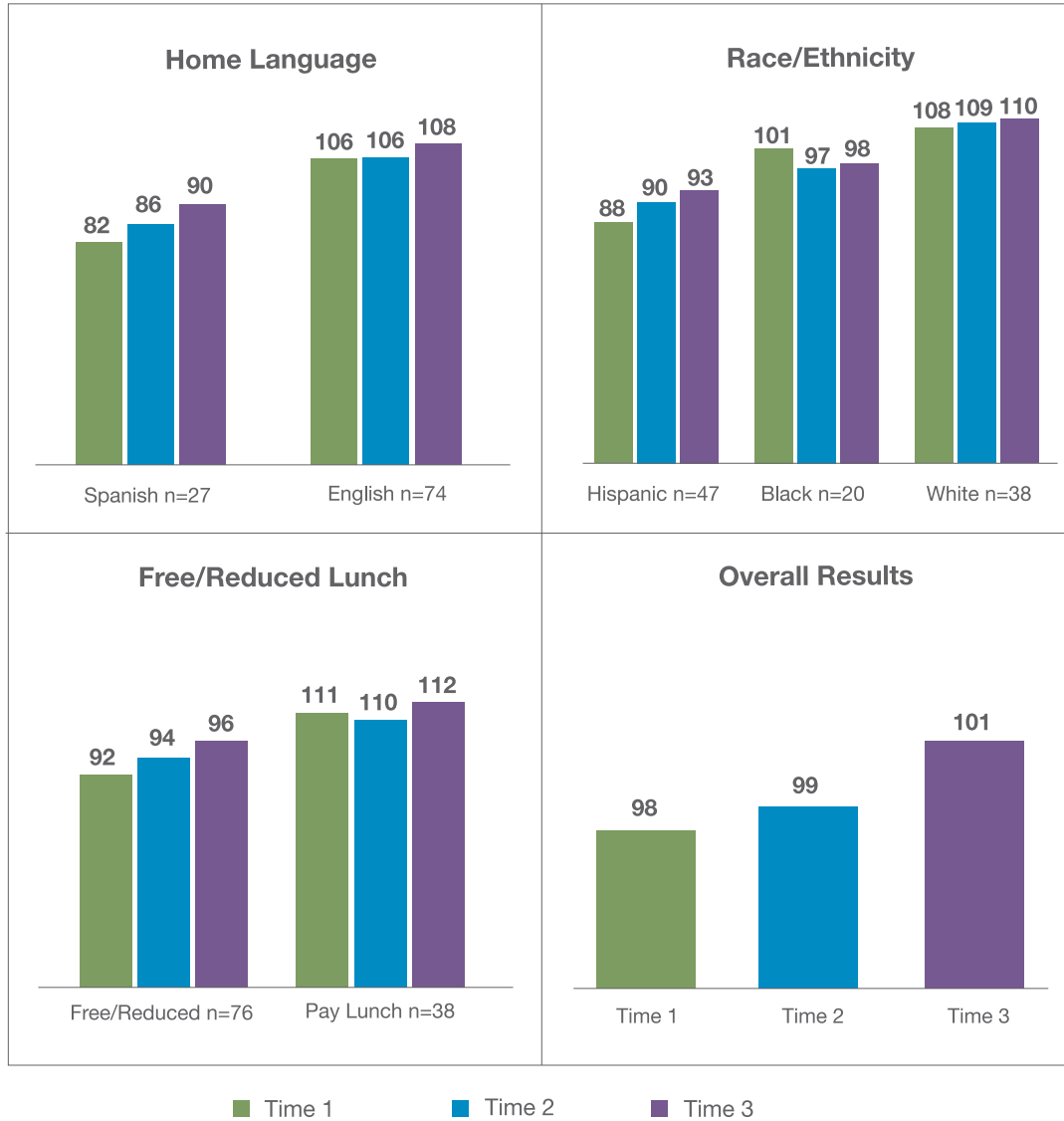


FIGURE 15. | CHILDREN’S RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY BY GROUP CHARACTERISTICS FOR CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP, BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS, OVERALL N = 114



What We Are Learning About Children’s Language Development

Individual differences in language exposure and early signs of developmental delay often emerge in the third year of life (Roberts & Kaiser, 2015). It is common to identify previously undetected language delays when children are between 2 and 3 years old. Furthermore, the performance of infants and toddlers on formal assessment is subject to cultural and environmental variation (Meisels, Wen, & Beachy-Quick, 2010). The decrease observed in children’s language skills in the toddler years may reflect emerging language delays and/or environmental differences in children’s language exposure.

Therefore, it is important to screen for language development regularly to identify children who may benefit from additional supports. The Superintendents' Plan has used the ASQ screening tool to support program planning and referrals; it may be valuable to use it in the future for tracking children's progress over time as well. Furthermore, it will continue to be important for home visiting to emphasize supporting caregivers' practices to increase language learning in the birth – age 3 period.

It is promising that Hispanic and/or Spanish home-language children in home visiting realized greater language development gains and that home visiting dosage was positively associated with children's language development. These findings emphasize that ongoing work with families in home visiting, family facilitation, and parent-child interaction groups has potential to positively influence children's language development.

That children in the PreK – Grade 3 cohort experienced relative gains in receptive language is also promising. Language development remains an area of focus, as children begin to use more complex sentences, tell stories, and understand more complex ideas. While learning two languages simultaneously is considered a benefit for cognitive development (Barac & Bialystok, 2012), it is also difficult. Targeted efforts in home visiting and classroom practices may especially benefit children whose home language is Spanish. We should also consider that the decreases in language skills among black children during Kindergarten may signal a necessity to focus on representative instructional materials, responsive instructional methods, and building positive relationships to support vocabulary and language development among black children, and at younger ages.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Early Educational Achievement Risk Decreased Over Time – Spanish Home-Language Children and Black Children Realized Greater Gains

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

PreK – Grade 3 Cohort

Children's academic achievement was assessed using the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, 3rd Edition Brief Form (KTEA-3 Brief; Kaufman & Kaufman, 2015), and was administered to 172 children in PreK – Grade 3. The KTEA-3 Brief is a norm-referenced screening tool for students older than age 4 and provides a general estimate of academic achievement. The KTEA-3 Brief yields a composite (total) score and three

subscale scores in the areas of reading, math, and spelling. It was administered in English in schools. The KTEA has been validated with a national sample and yields a standard score with an average range of 100 (range 85 – 115). Assessment results are provided by group.

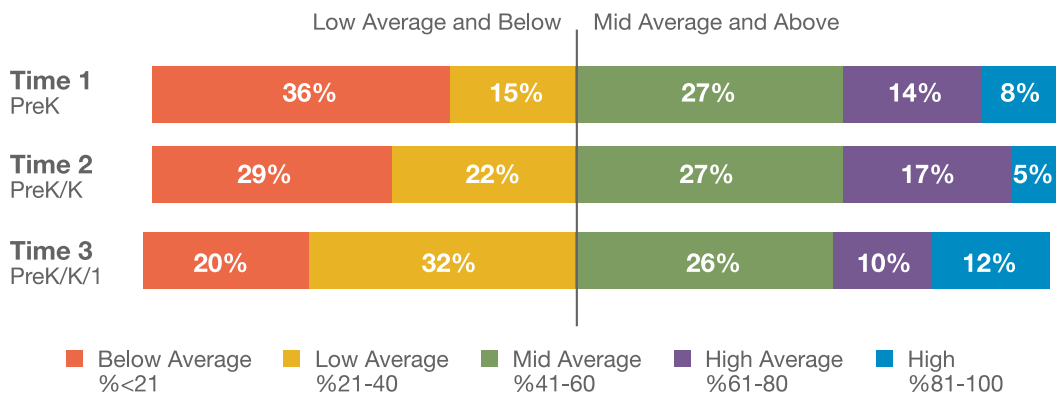
Findings – PreK Post-Home Visiting Group

The children in this group were 3 years old and were too young for this assessment.

Findings – PreK Entry Group

The number of children demonstrating below average skills (word/letter identification) decreased over time, and the percentage of children in the above average range increased.

FIGURE 16. | CHANGE IN PERCENTILE RANK OVER TIME: LETTER/WORD ACHIEVEMENT FOR CHILDREN IN THE PREK ENTRY GROUP, N = 59



We analyzed children’s achievement by demographic groups. Children in the PreK entry group who were Hispanic, Black, eligible for free/reduced lunch, and/or whose home language was Spanish had an average gain of 5.5, higher than the average gain for children with paid lunch, English-speaking home language and/or white (2.0).

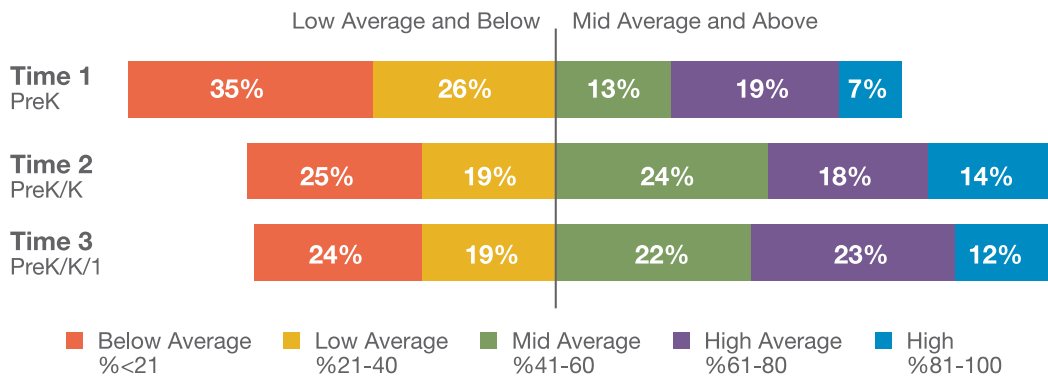
FIGURE 17. | CHANGE IN PERCENTILE RANKS OVER TIME: LETTER/WORD ACHIEVEMENT FOR CHILDREN IN THE PREK ENTRY GROUP, BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS, N = 59



Kindergarten Entry Group

Children’s educational achievement improved over time. The number of children scoring in the below average range decreased, while the number of children scoring in the high average and above ranges increased.

FIGURE 18. | CHANGE IN PERCENTILE RANKS OVER TIME: EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT-BA3 COMPOSITE FOR CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP, N = 113



Although all groups increased their scores in educational achievement over time, black children showed the greatest gains. Children who were Hispanic, black, eligible for free/reduced lunch, and/or had Spanish as their home language had an average gain of 7.8, compared with paid lunch, white and English home-language children (average gain of 5.7). Children whose home language was Spanish and/or were Hispanic had the lowest scores across all time points, yet demonstrated improvement over time.

FIGURE 19. | CHANGE IN PERCENTILE RANKS OVER TIME: EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP, BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS, N = 113



What We Are Learning About Early Educational Achievement

Disparities in educational achievement are manifest in the early school years, and magnify over the course of schooling (Halle et al., 2009). Children sampled in full implementation schools realized gains in educational achievement, with greater growth realized for children who were low-income, black, and Hispanic and/or whose home language is Spanish. However, children who qualify for free/reduced lunch, are non-white, and whose home language was Spanish scored lower across all time points. Ongoing efforts in the Superintendents’ Plan will target efforts to enhance instructional methodology, curricular materials, and data-informed interventions with students to address gaps in academic achievement.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Social-emotional development in early childhood is strongly associated with children's academic progress through the school years. Learning to express and regulate emotions in order to effectively engage in warm, productive social relationships is a key achievement during early childhood (Durlak et al., 2011). In the Superintendents' Plan, caregiver and teacher reports were used to assess children's developing social and emotional skills.

Birth to Age 3

To assess the social and emotional skills of children who were at least 12 months old in the home visiting program, caregivers completed the Infant-Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment (ITSEA; Briggs-Gowan & Carter, 2006) (n = 29). The ITSEA identifies potential social-emotional competencies and problems and has two domains with subscales: (1) Competence, composed of Attention, Mastery, Motivation, Imitation/Play, Empathy, and Prosocial Peer Relations; and (2) Dysregulation, composed of Negative Emotionality, Sleep Problems, Eating Problems, and Sensory Sensitivity. Caregivers rate each behavior item (0 = not true/rarely, 1 = somewhat true/sometimes, 2 = very true/always). Scores are assigned a clinical rating, based on the deviation from the mean T score (M = 50). For the Competence domain, a score below 35 is considered of concern and a score higher than 65 considered above normal. For Dysregulation, a score of 65 and higher is considered of concern. Of concern scores reflect children being at risk of a deficit or delay relative to their peers in their development of social-emotional competencies and their development of behavioral and emotional regulation.

Findings

Most children in the home visiting evaluation were in the normal and above ranges at baseline (89%) and follow-up (90%). The percentage of children scoring in the concern range for dysregulation decreased from baseline (14%) to follow-up (10%).

PreK – Grade 3

Teachers completed the Behavioral and Emotional Screening System, Third Edition (BASC-3 BESS; Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015) for 194 children. The BASC-3 BESS is a screening tool assessing behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses, and consists of 20 items. Scores are reported in the typical, elevated or extremely elevated ranges of adaptive skills.

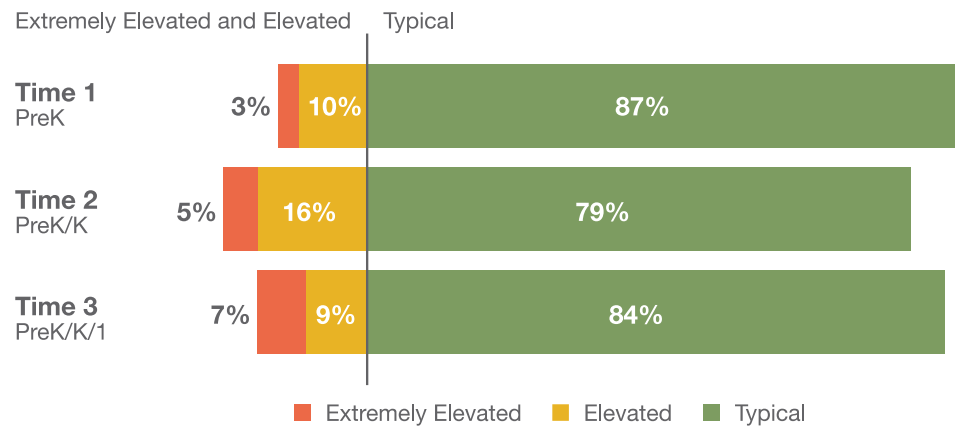
Findings – PreK Post-Home Visiting Group

Teachers rated all of the children who transitioned from the Birth – Age 3 Cohort (n = 11) in the typical range.

Findings — PreK Entry Group

The percentage of children who teachers rated as demonstrating elevated risk in their adaptive and social-emotional risk fluctuated over time (Figure 20). As the PreK entry group aged, teachers rated more children in the high elevated range, though fewer in the elevated risk range.

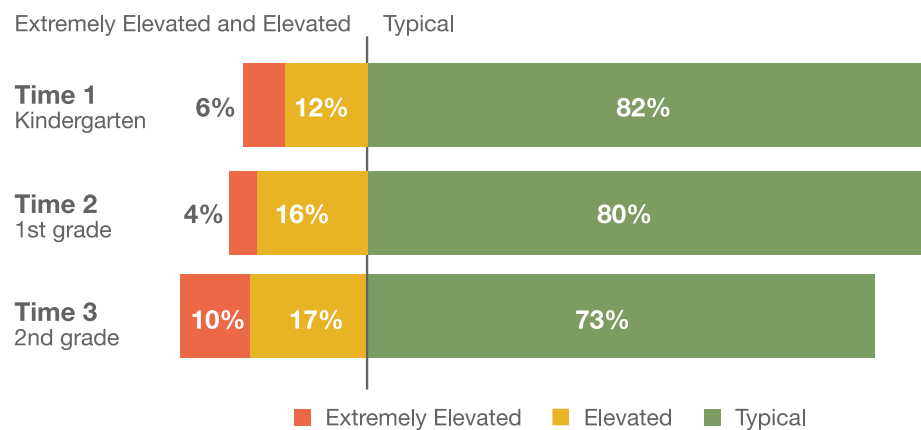
FIGURE 20. | SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS FOR CHILDREN IN THE PREK ENTRY GROUP, N = 67



Findings — Kindergarten Entry Group

Teachers’ ratings of children’s social-emotional skills in the Kindergarten entry group declined over time, such that second grade teachers rated more children in the elevated or extremely elevated risk categories than Kindergarten and first grade teachers (Figure 21). More children in second grade were rated within the elevated or extremely elevated range than they were in Kindergarten.

FIGURE 21. | SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS FOR CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP, N = 116



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive functioning refers to the ability to manage one’s emotions and behaviors in order to achieve a goal. These skills develop rapidly in early childhood and are seen in young children’s ability to control inappropriate behaviors or responses, to move easily from one task or activity to another, and to make use of short-term memory. Children’s executive functioning has been found to be related to social-emotional and academic functioning and learning (Obradović, Potilla & Boyce, 2012).

Findings

Birth – Age 3

Executive functioning was not assessed in the home visiting Birth – Age 3 children.

PreK – Grade 3

For children in the PreK and entry groups (n = 38), teachers completed the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function-Preschool Version (BRIEF-P; Gioia, Espy, & Isquith, 2003). The BRIEF-P is a standardized rating scale to assess executive function behaviors in students age 2 to 5 years. The BRIEF-P consists of a single rating form that contains 63 items in five non-overlapping scales: Inhibit, Shift, Emotional Control, Working Memory, and Plan/Organize. These scales yield an overall composite score, the Global Executive Composite. Scores are reported in two categories: Typical and At-Risk (see Figure 22).

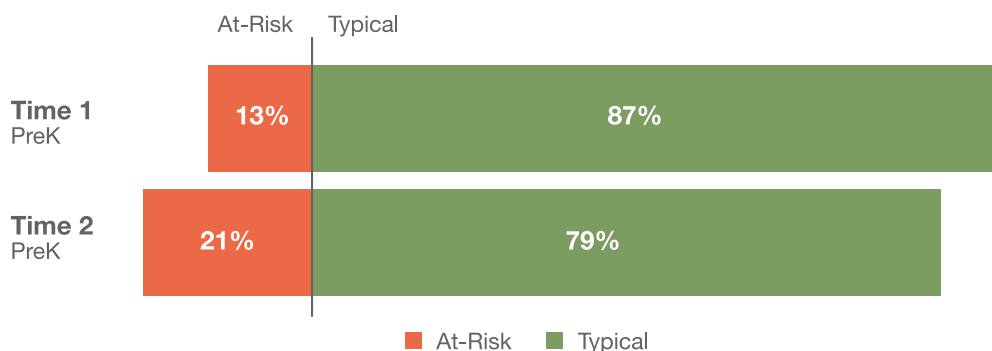
PreK Post-Home Visiting Group (N = 11)

Most (64%) children who transitioned from the home visit Birth – Age 3 group were rated in the typical range at Time 1, and ratings increased markedly over time (82% at Time 2).

PreK Entry Group (N = 38)

Although the majority of PreK children were within the typical range for executive function skills, the children rated by their teacher as at risk increased from Time 1 to Time 2.

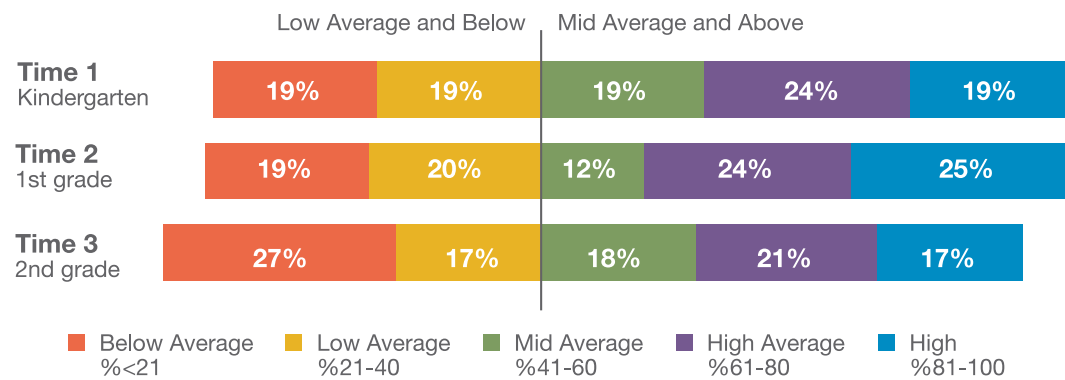
FIGURE 22. | EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING FOR CHILDREN IN THE PREK ENTRY GROUP, N = 38



Kindergarten Entry Group

For children in the Kindergarten entry group, teachers completed the Comprehensive Executive Function Inventory (CEFI; Naglieri & Goldstein, 2012) for 114 children in Kindergarten through second grade (Figure 23). The CEFI is a behavior rating scale that evaluates executive function skills in the areas of attention, emotion regulation, flexibility, inhibitory control, initiation, organization, planning, self-monitoring, and working memory for youths ages 5 to 18. The CEFI is a standardized assessment that has been validated with a national sample of children. The average score range is from 85 – 115, with a national average of 100. Teachers’ ratings of executive function skills declined slightly over time. By Time 3, 6% more children were rated within the low average and below range and 5% fewer children were rated in the mid average or above range.

FIGURE 23. | EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING FOR CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP, N = 114



Executive function scores for children in the Kindergarten entry group were analyzed by demographic subgroup (Figure 24). Black children received the lowest ratings from teachers at every time point.

FIGURE 24. | EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING FOR CHILDREN IN THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRY GROUP, BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS, N = 114



WHAT WE ARE LEARNING ABOUT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Teachers Rate Greater Percentages of Children at Risk in Higher Grades

Caregivers reported few behavioral concerns for their children birth – 3 years old, and their concerns regarding their children’s dysregulation decreased over time.

Teachers’ perceptions of children’s social-emotional development and executive functioning were high for children who started in PreK and decreased over early primary grades. For the Kindergarten Entry group, teachers rated the executive functioning of black children lowest among the subgroups at all time points. Children’s family income is also associated with teachers’ ratings of executive functioning, such that teachers rated children with free/reduced lunch lower in their skills.

Children often need environmental supports for developing executive functioning in early elementary classrooms. Therefore, teachers may benefit from supports related to their expectations for children’s behavior and how to create learning environments to benefit all children. Teachers’ perceptions of children’s capacities are important and are associated with children’s academic and social success in the classroom (Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006). However, it is possible that teachers bring unintentional bias to their assessments of children’s capacities matched with the classroom needs. Alternatively, classroom expectations for behavior may be mismatched with children’s capacity to regulate. At the minimum, it appears as though PreK and early elementary teachers may vary in their perceptions of social-emotional and executive functioning that are necessary for school success. In all likelihood, these ratings reflect a combination of unintended bias and changing expectations. Targeted coaching and professional learning opportunities in the Superintendents’ Plan are designed to provide such supports for teachers.

Overall, we are observing growth in children, family caregivers and teachers participating in Superintendents’ Plan School as Hub. We are also witnessing learning, as schools take on the challenge of building capacities to partner with and engage families, and address children’s instructional needs, with a focus on increasing access and opportunity for families with the least access. Partnering in the work with schools is a team of implementation specialists at the Buffett Institute who collaborate with and coach school staff. Understanding the processes of partnering, and how it works, is essential to continuing to support schools in their innovative efforts. In the next section, we describe what we are learning about the processes of coaching and facilitation with the Buffett Institute implementation staff.

Implementation Insights: Change Strategies at Work

In the spring of 2018, Buffett Institute research staff conducted an implementation study to examine the processes involved in partnering with schools in the Superintendents' Plan (School as Hub). The following questions were the focus of the study:

How is the Superintendents' Plan being implemented by the Buffett Institute?

- 1. How do implementation staff perceive their work with schools?*
- 2. How are the School as Hub Commitments (quality, continuity, and equity) and Change Strategies manifest in the implementation work with schools?*
- 3. What areas for growth and improvement can be identified?*

METHODS

Interviews were conducted with Buffett Institute implementation staff: educational facilitators (n = 5), program specialists (n = 2), and the program administrator (n = 1). Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded, using a case study design (Stake, 1995). Implementation staff described their activities, perceptions, and learning associated with their roles in the Superintendents' Plan. Findings, represented in aggregate, are presented below.

HOW DO IMPLEMENTATION STAFF PERCEIVE THEIR WORK WITH SCHOOLS?

Superintendents' Plan implementation staff shared their activities and perspectives related to their work with the School as Hub Birth – Grade 3 approach. They described their roles, how they developed relationships across their varied settings and partners, the interactive and shared practices such as in their coaching functions, and professional development employed with their school-based staff.

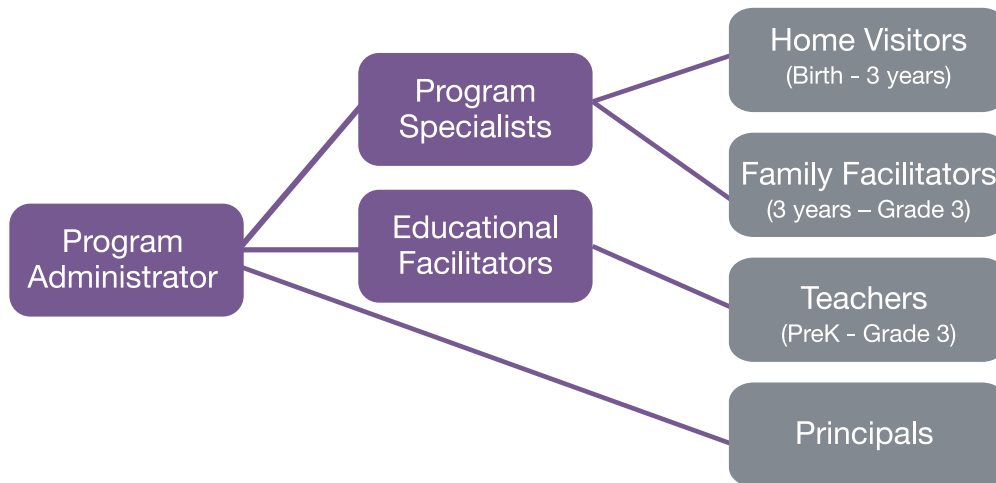
In the Superintendents' Plan, implementation staff work with schools to implement the School as Hub approach. Educational facilitators coach and support PreK – Grade 3 teachers. Program specialists coach and support school-based home visitors and family facilitators. The program administrator provides coaching and supervision to the educational facilitators and program specialists, and works with each of the school principals. Implementation staff work in a variety of school-related settings, including school staff meetings, professional learning communities, parent-child groups, home visits, and one-on-one conferences. They collaborate with principals and teachers, home visitors, and family facilitators (see Figure 25), described in this report as “school staff.” Implementation staff also engage with a variety of stakeholders, including community members, district staff, families, instructional coaches, literacy/reading

coordinators, math coaches, paraprofessionals, counselors, school psychologists, and school support liaisons. In this report, we summarize some ways in which the implementation staff observe their partnership work with schools, and how it is aligned with the School as Hub Change Strategies.

Relationship Building: Overarching Core of the Implementation Work

All Superintendents’ Plan work is accomplished through a network of relationships. Implementation staff reported relationship building as a central and primary aim in their work with schools. Through informal conversations and resource sharing, implementation staff initiated their partnerships by learning and listening to school staff. They offered constructive recommendations to enhance instructional practices and educational spaces. They experienced some struggles in establishing partnerships with some school staff and had the most meaningful successes when trust was established and school staff shared their deepest practice-related questions and struggles. In the context of trusting relationships, implementation staff reported that they could do effective work, such as using reflective feedback while coaching. Implementation staff reported that their partnerships with school staff enabled them to gradually see shifts in thinking and practice.

FIGURE 25. | BUFFETT INSTITUTE IMPLEMENTATION STAFF (PURPLE) AND THE PRIMARY SUPERINTENDENTS’ PLAN STAKEHOLDERS WITH WHOM THEY ENGAGE (GREY)



HOW ARE THE SCHOOL AS HUB COMMITMENTS AND CHANGE STRATEGIES MANIFEST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION WORK WITH SCHOOLS?

Working toward a School as Hub approach necessitates partnering with schools in the commitment to continuity, quality, and equity. Realizing these commitments requires intentional implementation of specific change strategies. These strategies, designed to decrease disparities in educational opportunities and achievement, center on organizational environments, supporting high-quality practices, and building professional capacity.

Organizational Environments

Implementation staff described how professional learning engagements and collaboration have supported some changes in how schools engage and partner with families. In one school, a morning coffee cart welcomes parents into the school; while in other schools, entire classrooms are dedicated to welcoming and engaging families. In the words of one implementation staff member, “There’s a climate of, ‘We all make each other better.’”

Practices

Implementation staff described the many ways they coached and partnered with school staff to support practice. They partnered with classroom teachers and paraprofessionals to think about supporting children’s social-emotional development and engaged in challenging conversations around the intersection of race and the achievement gap. Implementation staff planned professional development with their schools and brought current research to thinking about curriculum, instruction, and assessment. For home and personal visits with families, implementation staff worked with school staff to implement a new curriculum with families. Growing Great Kids supports interactions and partnering with families to build caregivers’ capacity to support their child’s development.

Professional Capacity

To realize the commitments of quality, continuity, and equity in the School as Hub, implementation staff partner with schools to build capacity in such areas as leadership, professional learning, and collaboration. Building relationships with and supporting school leadership is a priority of their work, and implementation staff partner with school teams to explore how School as Hub commitments can be reflected in school site plans. Collaborative reflection, in the context of intense professional learning and day-to-day interactions is ongoing and central to supporting change for how schools “do school.”

WHAT ARE SOME PERCEIVED AREAS FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVEMENT?

Implementation staff described several areas of progress with schools, recognizing that there is much work to be done in their own learning to further their work with schools. They note the following opportunities for growth: engaging school staff in reflection and

conversation about decreasing income- and race-based disparities; consistency and stability in the overarching school change framework message; and strengthening support of school capacity to implement the School as Hub approach.

Acknowledging and Addressing Disparities

Implicit biases exist in nearly all educational environments, as they do in every large social system. Implementation staff engage with school staff in reflective discussions related to diversity and systemic bias. These dialogues emerged in book clubs, staff meetings, and communities of practice. School staff have reflected and examined their practices and beliefs with implementation staff and begun to work toward reducing bias while increasing expectations and support within their instructional practice. Implementation staff are aware that challenging and thought-provoking conversations must be continued and refined to reduce and prevent further disparities. Implementation and school staff are increasing their use of an asset-based perspective, acknowledging strengths and understanding differences, and continuing to learn how to confront gaps and disparities in quality, continuity, and equity.

Message Clarity

Implementation staff expressed growing and evolving understanding of the School as Hub approach and a strong desire for greater clarity and focus related to aims and strategies. Refining and clarifying the approach, staff roles, and implementation focus are areas for continued work and development. They noted that schools and families can also benefit from greater clarity to allow a robust message to be shared across stakeholders. With this large and complex educational initiative, consistent communication across stakeholders in all settings is critical. A programmatic school reform message tying the overarching theoretical framework to the concrete, specific ways individual districts and schools approach this plan is essential. This work holds the potential to continue disseminating the message of school change and equalize knowledge among school staff members, extending the program efforts into the community in order to expand the opportunity for greater leadership and cross-collaborative partnerships.

Capacity Building

Capacity building refers to a school's ability to implement an approach with its own leadership and resources rather than consultants or external staff. Implementation staff partner with school staff and systems to cultivate a shared awareness and readiness about reflective practice and leadership among all school staff. Implementation staff continue to build coaching and collaboration skills, recognizing that job-embedded coaching and collaboration with principals, teacher leaders, and school staff are keys to building capacity and sustainability. It is clear that relationship building is at the core and creates the foundation for school improvement.

What We Are Learning in the School as Hub Birth to Grade 3 Approach Evaluation

DOING THE WORK: IMPLEMENTING THE SCHOOL AS HUB APPROACH

Implementation staff have worked to establish and leverage relationships with school staff to build capacity around the School as Hub approach. Specifically, implementation staff shared how they have been building coaching relationships with school staff and reflectively using data and collaboration to share what all children need to be successful in the Birth to Grade 3 continuum. Emerging work is focusing on building coaching for quality by using reflective practice, enhancing continuity within schools and with the community, and strengthening understandings of an equity lens that guides this work. The evaluation data related to quality practices, family processes, and child development and learning outcomes shed light on promising progress and opportunities for further refinement and growth. Greater inquiry is needed to learn more about how school leaders, home visitors, teachers, and other school staff are implementing School as Hub.

QUALITY PRACTICES

Home Visiting

Installing a home visiting program in the context of a public school is one of the innovations in the School as Hub approach, and one that challenges the typical way of work in an elementary school. While facilitation of quality home visit processes remains an area for growth among the home visitors and their coach, some notable progress has taken place. Families in home visiting reported increasing social and concrete support over time. Furthermore, we are learning that dosage matters. When Hispanic families received more frequent home visits, their children exhibited higher levels of language development. Years of research document that home visiting works to support families and their educational efforts with children. By making home visiting part of the school culture, families and school staff have opportunities to build their relationships and influence earlier. In the spring of 2018, program specialists, implementation staff, home visitors, and family facilitators were trained in and piloted Growing Great Kids, an evidence-informed and well-developed home visiting curriculum, and increased monitoring and coaching are underway.

Classroom Practices

Classroom practices related to organization and emotional support are strong and improving over time. Teachers are interacting with children warmly and are sensitive to their individual needs. Classroom routines and strategies for guiding children's positive

behavior are strong. However, processes related to enhancing quality instructional practices, including providing quality feedback and supporting concept development, remain an opportunity for growth. In the coming year, educational facilitators will increase their use of targeted coaching, focused on reflective practice, and will devote themselves to supporting all school staff in their ongoing efforts to enhance instructional quality for children most impacted by the achievement gap. Increasing instructional quality over time is expected to continue to enhance children's language skills and academic achievement over time. It is important to note that children's language development improved in PreK. Greatest gains were observed for children who received free/reduced lunch, were Hispanic, and/or whose home language was Spanish.

Family Processes

In School as Hub, schools offer targeted supports for families of the youngest children, including identifying concrete resources, enhancing social connections, and supporting caregivers' interactions and relationships with their children. Home visiting is a key investment for supporting ongoing learning and development. While families in the home visiting program have increased their perceptions of support over time, families with children under age 3 still struggle to provide their families with daily concrete needs. School-based home visitors can help families to identify their needs and local resources to provide those needs and help families feel confident in their ability to care for their children. Caregivers will benefit from the relatively newly implemented curriculum, Growing Great Kids, with home visiting focused on supporting their children in each developmental stage.

For children enrolled in PreK through Grade 3, families rated their engagement with schools positively, perceiving a welcoming environment and growing support of family culture and background. Opportunities for enhancing families' experiences may be found in school-initiated communication related to children's social and learning progress. School as Hub supports will continue to focus on supporting, connecting, and engaging families in meaningful ways.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Language and Literacy Achievement

Children's measured language development declined in the first three years of life. This decline in the second and third year is not uncommon, as the expectations for children's language use increase dramatically and slight delays in language are identified at this time. However, language development increased consistently in the PreK – Grade 3 children, with the greatest gains shown during PreK. PreK is a period of rapid language growth, and children benefit most from a language-rich environment in the preschool years (ages 3 – 5). Early literacy achievement reflected gains as well. Notably, infants

and toddlers who experienced higher numbers of home visits exhibited the highest language gains. Full implementation schools have an excellent opportunity to enhance children's early language and literacy by supporting consistent participation in quality home visitation and high-quality PreK.

Social-Emotional Development

Few children from 12 months through Grade 3 showed elevated risk in their social-emotional development, and executive functioning (as reported by teachers) was in the average range for children PreK to Grade 3. However, primary grade teachers reported higher percentages of "elevated risk" for children. It is possible that challenging behavior becomes more prevalent in the years beyond PreK; alternatively, teachers may have higher expectations for regulated behavior. It may be helpful to consider how teachers' expectations and learning environments are matched to the social-emotional developmental needs of young primary students, and how teachers can be supported in this regard.

Customized Assistance to Districts

Customized assistance provides Learning Community school districts with access to state and national consultation as they engage in strategic planning and improvement efforts intended to affect system-wide early childhood education and services. Customized professional development engages districts in designing and delivering sustained professional learning opportunities for staff by addressing key dimensions of early childhood programming, birth – Grade 3. Distinct evaluation plans are necessary for each customized assistance plan. Measures are aligned with goals and expected outcomes for the specific plan and with the overall goals of the Superintendents' Plan. The customized assistance plans of three districts will be highlighted: Gretna Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools.

STRENGTHENING CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENTS: GREтна PUBLIC SCHOOLS

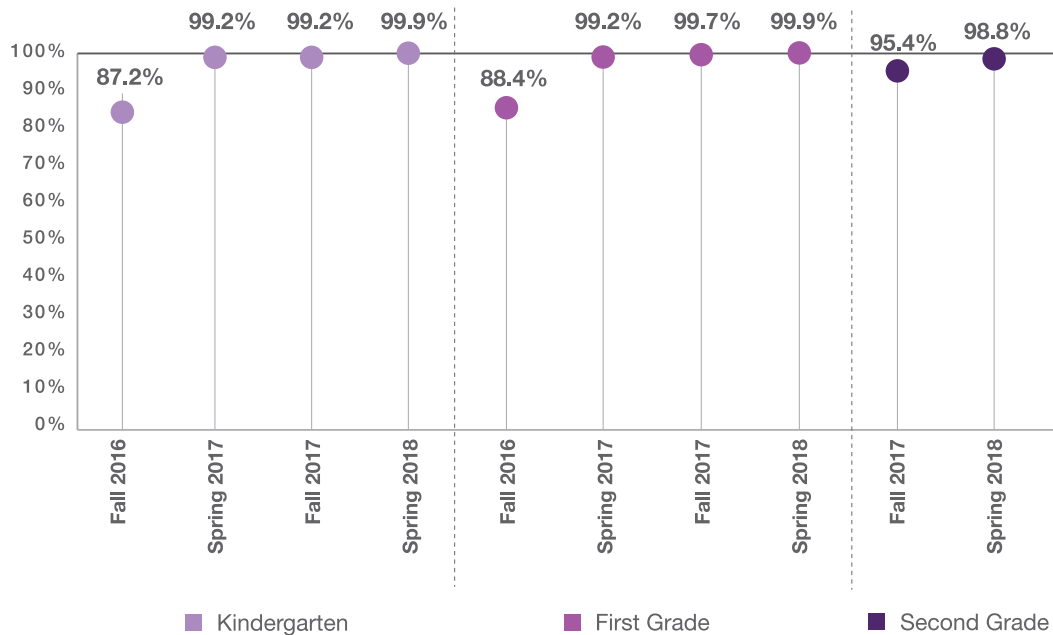
The Gretna Public Schools' plan emphasizes strengthening teacher practices and classroom environments through customized professional development to better support students' social and emotional development. The district uses the Pyramid Model to help teachers increase their support of social competence in students, while also preventing challenging behaviors. The plan extends into all of the elementary buildings and includes counselors, resource specialists, and Kindergarten through Grade 3 students. Implementation began in Kindergarten classrooms in the 2015-16 school year; first grade followed in 2016-17 and second grade in 2017-18, with third grade to follow in 2018-19. In addition, new teachers in PreK through the grade level added each year are included in the professional development activities.

In 2017-18, a total of 362 students were assessed in grades Kindergarten through Grade 2 as part of this evaluation. At least two students in each classroom were selected by teachers as having particular social and emotional risks. Additional children were chosen at random from each classroom to bring the total number of children selected from each classroom to six. Educational Service Unit 3 used a stratified random selection process to select these additional students. In the 2017-18 school year, 80 students were identified as having social and emotional risks and 282 students were randomly selected. A total of 120 Kindergartners (identified = 19, random = 101), 121 first graders (identified = 17, random = 104), and 121 second graders (identified = 44, random = 77) were assessed. The focus of the current evaluation was on teachers' fidelity to the Pyramid Model and differences in social development between the identified and randomly selected groups of students.

What was the fidelity to the Pyramid Model for program-wide implementation?

For the purposes of this evaluation, a modified version of the TPOT (see Appendix 3 for description) was administered in fall and spring by trained, objective professionals in Kindergarten and first grade in both the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, and in second grade in the 2017-18 school year. Educators have reached and maintained fidelity on the TPOT measure.

FIGURE 26. | MODIFIED TPOT INDICATORS OF FIDELITY



Are those students identified as at risk doing better, the same, or worse than a randomly selected sample of students from the same classrooms?

The Work Sampling System (see Appendix 3 for description) results for Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade students assessed in the 2017-18 school year are displayed in the graphs below. Overall, there are lower percentages of children reaching proficiency among those children identified as at risk. However, all of the children are showing gains throughout the school year. In many cases, the increased percentage of children attaining proficiency scores from fall to spring is similar for both groups, indicating that both groups of children are making similar gains in skills throughout the year.

FIGURE 27. | SELF-CONCEPT: PERCENT PROFICIENT FOR IDENTIFIED AND RANDOMLY SELECTED STUDENTS IN 2017-18

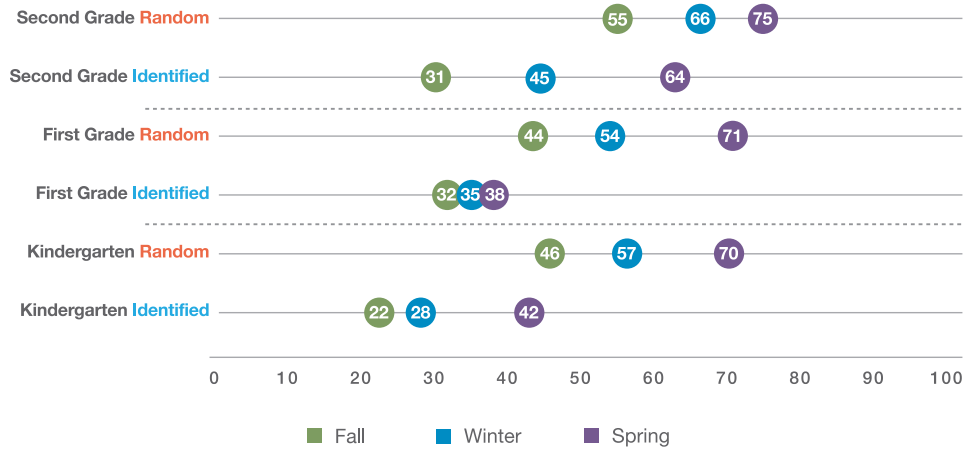


FIGURE 28. | SELF-CONTROL: PERCENT PROFICIENT FOR IDENTIFIED AND RANDOMLY SELECTED STUDENTS IN 2017-18

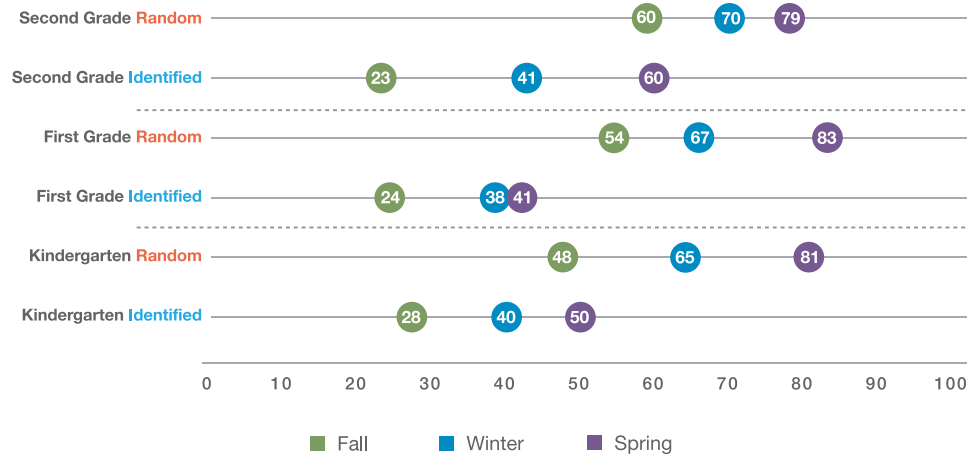


FIGURE 29. | APPROACHES TO LEARNING: PERCENT PROFICIENT FOR IDENTIFIED AND RANDOMLY SELECTED STUDENTS IN 2017-18

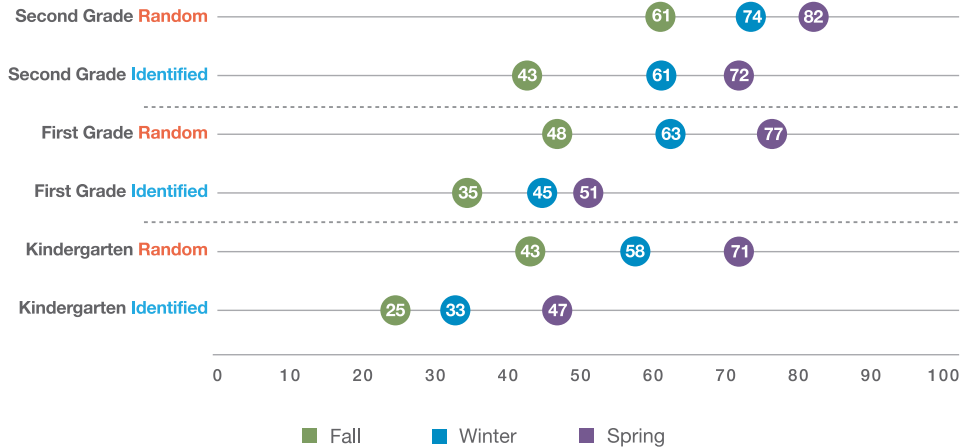
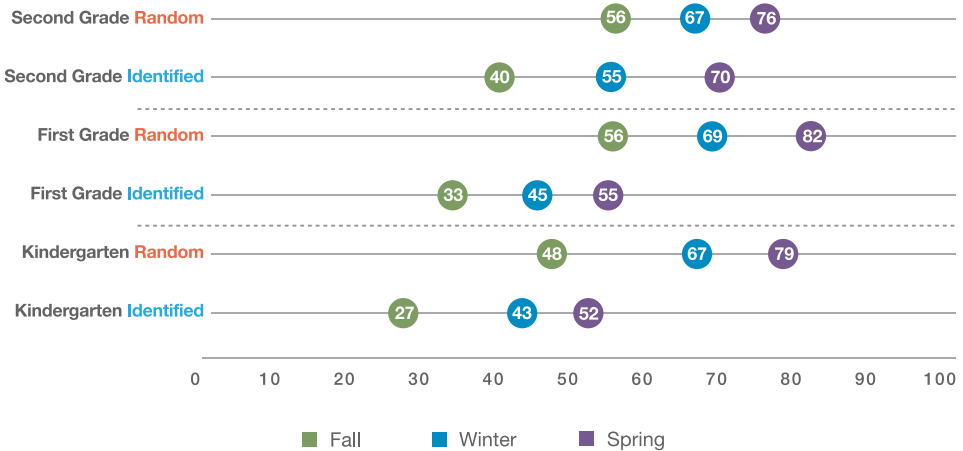


FIGURE 30. | INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS: PERCENT PROFICIENT FOR IDENTIFIED AND RANDOMLY SELECTED STUDENTS IN 2017-18



During summer 2018, a Gretna Public Schools curriculum committee developed social-emotional learning curriculum standards aligned with CASEL and CSEFEL national standards. The district is also piloting evidence-based instructional resources to support implementation of the new curriculum standards for social-emotional learning and development. Pyramid coaches will continue to facilitate professional development, grade-level collaboration and coaching. Program evaluation data and teacher feedback have been used to refine and target the 2018-19 professional development plans. Third grade classrooms will be added to the professional development and program evaluation plan. Additional modifications of the TPOT for third grade have been completed by representatives of second and third grade teachers, Pyramid coaches, Buffett Institute staff, and district administrators.

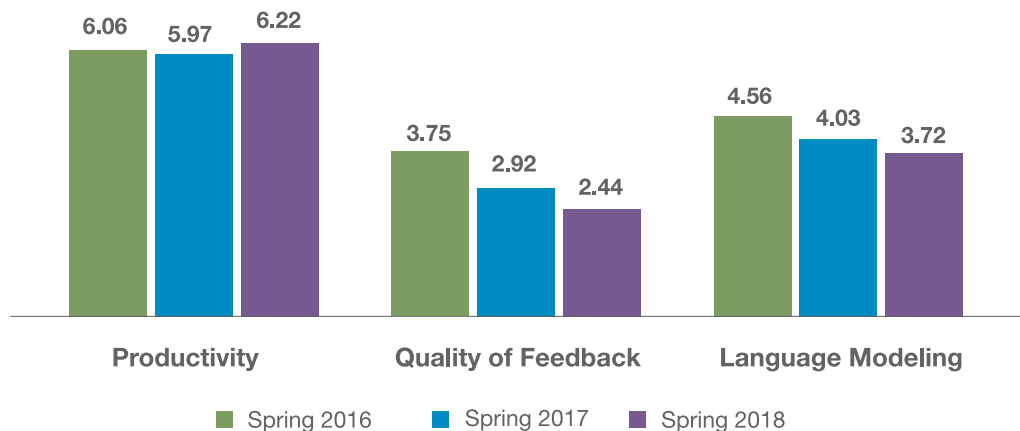
**SUPPORTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES:
RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

During the 2015-16 school year, the Ralston Public Schools’ district leadership team prioritized quality language development practices for customized professional development. In the 2016-17 school year, a leadership team composed of Ralston Public Schools personnel and Buffett Institute staff compiled the research on effective preschool practices and synthesized them into the Ralston Indicators of Preschool Quality. These indicators were used to assess educators in order to improve language interactions and promote child development. During the 2017-18 school year, teachers were provided with cycles of classroom observations, coaching, and feedback that were combined with ongoing customized professional development. The purpose of the current evaluation was to assess the impact of the professional development and coaching on teachers (using the CLASS assessment) and students (using Teaching Strategies GOLD).

What were the outcomes for teachers, as indicated by the results of the CLASS assessments for the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 school years?

The figure below shows the results of the CLASS assessments (see Appendix 3 for description) for 2016, 2017, and 2018. The overall trend for productivity scores is strong and positive, indicating robust productivity practices. Quality of feedback and language modeling scores declined over the three-year period. It is important to acknowledge that while this trend is moving downward, there are contextual factors that can impact CLASS scores, such as individual child characteristics, the classroom environment, and seasonal effects (Buell, Han, & Vukelich, 2017). Ralston Public Schools administrators and teachers are extending beyond comfortable spaces to implement new practices suggested by professional development and coaching interactions. Declines in scores may reflect the destabilization associated with these systems change efforts.

FIGURE 31. | CLASS SCORES



What were the outcomes for students, as indicated by the results of the GOLD assessments for the 2017-18 school year?

- Child learning outcomes were measured using a subset of objectives selected from Teaching Strategies GOLD, Birth through K “Objectives for Development and Learning” (Burts et al., 2016). Outcomes selected for the evaluation were Objective 8 (language: listens to and understands increasingly complex language) and Objective 12 (cognitive: remembers and connects experiences).
- Objective 8 Language: listens to and understands increasingly complex language
 - For item 8a (comprehends language), 69.3 percent of students met (n = 112) or exceeded (n = 3) state standards in fall 2017. By spring 2018, that number increased to 89.3 percent meeting (n = 111) or exceeding (n = 31) standards.
 - For item 8b (follows directions), 65.1 percent of students (n = 108) met state standards in fall 2017. By spring 2018, 95 percent of students (n = 151) met the standards, demonstrating a dramatic increase during the same academic year.
- Objective 12 Cognitive: remembers and connects experiences
 - On item 12a (recognizes and recalls), 43.4 percent of children met (n = 71) or exceeded (n = 1) state standards in fall 2017. By spring 2018, that number increased to 95.6 percent meeting (n = 150) or exceeding (n = 2) standards. The movement of students meeting proficiency from fall to spring was remarkable.
 - On item 12b (makes connections), 60.8 percent of children met (n = 100) or exceeded (n = 1) state standards in fall 2017. By spring 2018, this figure had risen to 94.3 percent of students meeting (n = 137) or exceeding (n = 13) standards. Once again, sizable gains were found among those students moving from below standards and into proficiency, indicating progress.

Program evaluation data will be used to further refine the focus for 2018-19 professional development and coaching. Increased participation by principals and paraprofessionals, who are key members of the classroom instructional team, should also strengthen professional development, classroom practices and support of the targeted child outcomes in language and cognitive development.

IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION: WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

With the aim of improving professional collaboration, aligning programming and enhancing the transition process for young children, the Westside Community Schools plan brought preschool and Kindergarten teachers, early childhood site directors, and elementary school principals into dialogue with one another. During the 2017-18 school year, feeder

program groups of educators and administrators met to work toward this common goal. Site directors and school principals collaborated around child assessments and the transition process. Preschool and Kindergarten educators discussed various topics regarding the preschool to Kindergarten transition activities, logistics, a crosswalk of the Pyramid Model and PBIS, social-emotional, literacy and math teaching strategies, assessments, and planning for student transitions.

To evaluate the impact of the collaboration meetings and to plan for future collaborations, the educators and administrators who participated in the meetings were asked to answer survey questions regarding their experiences and offer ideas for further discussion. See Appendix 3 for a detailed description of the survey process.

What portion of participants worked in preschool settings, and what portion worked in elementary settings?

Twelve educators (38.7%) and seven administrators (63.6%) indicated they worked in a preschool or early childhood setting. Nineteen educators (61.3%) and four administrators (36.4%) indicated they worked in an elementary setting.

What were the barriers to attending the collaborative meetings?

Fifteen educators and two administrators responded to the survey question concerning barriers to attendance. The number of meetings, travel time to and/or from the meetings, and time of the meeting were the most frequently cited barriers.

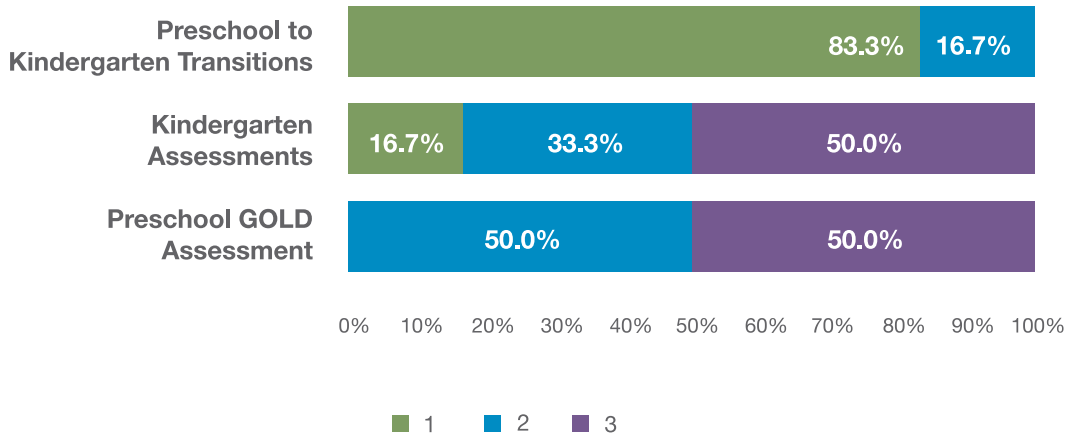
How did educators rank the meeting topics based on the usefulness to their particular school or site?

Thirty educators ranked the meeting topics according to their usefulness for school site. Over 60 percent of the respondents (n = 19) ranked the grouping of topics including getting to know one another, learning environments, logistics, and classroom visits as the most important. Social-emotional learning strategies and student transition received the next most votes, with a third of the participants selecting this choice.

How did administrators rank the meeting topics based on the usefulness to their particular school or site?

Twelve administrators responded to the survey question asking them to rank the meeting topics according to their usefulness to the administrators' particular school site. Over 80 percent (n = 10) of respondents ranked the preschool to Kindergarten transitions topic as the most important, while 50 percent (n = 6) ranked the preschool and Kindergarten assessment topics as least important.

FIGURE 32. | ADMINISTRATORS' RANKINGS OF MEETING TOPIC USEFULNESS



How satisfied were educators and administrators with the collaboration and alignment meeting process?

Thirty-two educators responded to this survey question. Over 60 percent (n = 20) were extremely or moderately satisfied with the meeting process. Twelve administrators responded. Over 80 percent (n = 10) were extremely or moderately satisfied with the process, and none were dissatisfied.

How effective did administrators find the collaboration and alignment meeting process in helping them to lead their staff to consider transitions between preschool and Kindergarten?

Twelve administrators responded. Just over 58 percent (n = 7) indicated that the meetings were extremely or very effective in helping them, with all participants agreeing that meetings were at least moderately effective.

The planning committee of principals, early childhood site directors, and teachers used the survey results and the survey respondents' suggestions for future topics to plan for 2018-19 collaboration meetings. These plans are being finalized with district administration. Topic suggestions included sharing content area instructional practices, classroom management strategies, and further development of materials and activities to support families and children in the transition from preschool to Kindergarten. Suggestions for changes in the collaboration meeting format included holding some meetings via video conferencing, opportunities for classroom observations, and sharing student work samples.

Professional Development for All

The Superintendents' Plan offers a Professional Development for All (PD for All) series for school leaders, community-based program administrators, teachers, early childhood educators and family support professionals who work with children from birth through Grade 3 and families in the Omaha metro area. The Buffett Institute facilitates the PD for All series, drawing upon the expertise of nationally recognized and local leaders in birth through Grade 3. The broad goal of PD for All is to provide ongoing opportunities for participants to increase their shared knowledge of research-based practices that increase quality, continuity, and equity in birth through Grade 3 education and family engagement. As part of this goal, a central intent is to support ongoing opportunities for PD for All participants who work in different settings and with children of different ages to learn with and from each other.

Each year the PD for All series is organized around a central theme that introduces leading-edge research and innovative practices. The connecting theme for the 2017-18 PD for All series focused on practices to provide content-rich learning experiences for children, birth through Grade 3. Four institutes provided professional learning related to specific topics within this theme. These topics included:

- “Children as Scientists: Scientific Inquiry for Every Child” on Oct. 5 or 7, 2017
- “Children as Authors: Guiding Children on Pathways Toward Strong Writing” on Nov. 30, 2017
- “Children as Mathematicians: Early Math That Matters the Most” on Jan. 25 or 27, 2018; and
- “Children as Researchers: Reading to Learn Can Start Early” on March 1 or 3, 2018.

A fifth Spanish-language institute for bilingual Spanish-speaking professionals entitled “Los Niños como Investigadores: Leer para Aprender Puede Comenzar Temprano/ Children as Researchers: Reading to Learn Can Start Early” was held on May 30 and 31, 2018. The Spanish-language PD for All institute was facilitated by the Buffett Institute in collaboration with the Learning Community Center of South Omaha.

Over 200 attendees participated in each of the first four institutes. These attendees included representation from all school districts of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and over 80 community organizations, including early care and education programs. The Spanish-language institute in May had just over 30 participants.

METHODS

The evaluation of PD for All series addressed three questions:

- 1. Do attendees who participate in two or more PD for All institutes demonstrate increased knowledge of effective educational practices?
- 2. Do attendees who participate in two or more PD for All institutes apply the knowledge and skills that they gained in their professional work?
- 3. Do PD for All attendees share the knowledge and skills they gained with work colleagues?

Evaluation data were collected using surveys. Beginning with the Nov. 30 “Children as Authors” institute, PD for All participants completed a survey (Time 1) of their knowledge and skills related to teaching practices explored through the PD for All series. The surveys were offered in both English and Spanish. At the conclusion of the 2017-18 PD for All series, all attendees who completed a survey in English were invited via email to complete an evaluation survey (Time 2) using the online survey research platform Qualtrics. Participants who preferred to complete Spanish-language surveys or who attended PD for All sessions in Spanish received an email invitation to complete a Spanish version of the Qualtrics Time 2 survey in July 2018. The items in the Spanish Time 2 survey were identical to the English survey.

SURVEY FINDINGS

A total of 254 surveys were completed before first enrollment in PD for All, with 122 surveys completed in July.

TABLE 4. | PD FOR ALL SURVEY RESULTS

Total Time 1 Surveys Completed	254
Total Time 2 Surveys Completed	122

The majority of the survey participants at both time points worked primarily with preschool-age children. The next largest subset of survey participants were individuals working with children in Kindergarten through third grade. Those whose work focused on families were the least represented in this survey. In terms of job title, the majority of survey participants identified themselves as teachers at both time points. Beyond teacher, respondents’ identified job categories in rank order from most to least were “other,” assistant teacher, family facilitator, child care center owner or director, home visitor, and principal. Anecdotal evidence suggests that professionals from community-based early care and education programs comprised many of these participants who selected “other.”

Most survey participants worked in school-based programs. This included elementary schools, PreK within elementary schools and Head Start or Educare within elementary schools. As mentioned, many participants were from community-based programs, which included child care centers or preschools not located in elementary schools, religious-based child care centers, or the North and South Omaha Learning Community Centers.

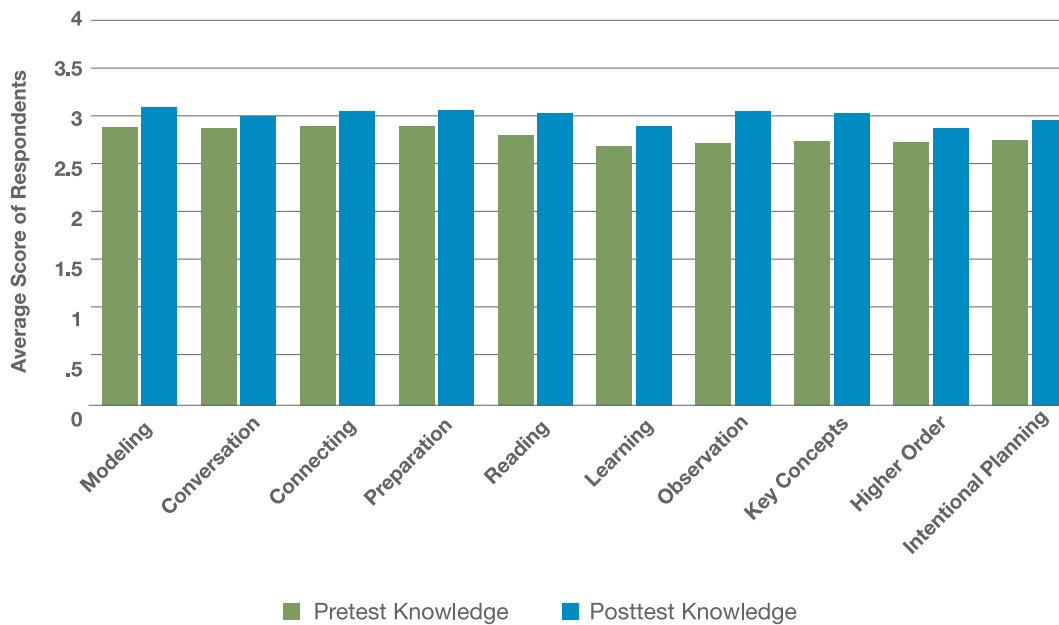
The surveys measured participants' self-reported knowledge about the cross-cutting content of the PD for All series before and after attending the institutes. Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge levels on various teaching skills and practices. The self-rating categories were on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 4 with the following options: Beginning Knowledge (1), Developing Knowledge (2), Refining Knowledge (3), or Mastery Knowledge (4). The teaching knowledge and practices that respondents were asked to rate themselves on were:

1. Intentionally modeling and using vocabulary words associated with content-area topics in science, math, and literacy, and talking with children about the words throughout the day and week.
2. Guiding high-quality conversations with children to encourage them to talk about the ideas they are learning about in content areas (e.g., science discoveries, math concepts, and topics for drawing and writing).
3. Intentionally connecting the topics of children's content-area learning experiences to children's cultures, life experiences, and interests.
4. Purposefully preparing the classroom environment and selecting materials that promote children's learning of content knowledge through exploration and application (e.g., artifacts for scientific observations and investigations, manipulative materials for mathematical problem-solving, and tools to write for authentic purposes).
5. Integrating reading, writing, speaking, and listening into content-area learning experiences (science, math, etc.).
6. Motivating young children's learning in the content areas by setting meaningful purposes for the children's work and play (e.g., children do scientific investigations and solve real-life mathematical problems, not just learn about science and math; children write for purposes that are meaningful to them).
7. Closely observing children's learning in the content areas (e.g., science, math) and using what they observe to provide differentiated questions and prompts that help advance each child's knowledge and thinking.
8. Understanding the key concepts and big ideas in each content area and using this knowledge to go beyond teaching children lower-level factual information and skills.

- 9. Using higher-order questions to help children extend their understanding of the key concepts and big ideas in the content areas.
- 10. Intentionally planning units of study that address goals for children’s learning in each of the content areas (science, math, literacy).

Using the scale above, the average Time 1 knowledge for survey participants across the 10 items was 2.69. The average knowledge for the Time 2 survey participants across the 10 items was 2.89, indicating a modest gain in self-reported knowledge and skills for participants at Time 2 compared to participants at Time 1. Also, participants at Time 1 reported modest gains in knowledge and skills, reflected in each of the 10 survey items, compared to participants at Time 2 (see Figure 33).

FIGURE 33. | KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING SKILLS AND PRACTICES



Additional PD for All evaluation questions focused on whether participants applied the knowledge and skills learned from the institutes in their own work and whether they shared their new learning with colleagues. On the Time 2 survey all but one of the respondents indicated that they did apply the knowledge, skills, and practices they learned during the 2017-18 PD for All institutes to their own work. These data were further supported during a focus group discussion, where discussants all agreed that PD for All is a valuable learning opportunity for teachers, one that balances presentations from national experts and local practitioners. One focus group participant even mentioned contacting a local PD for All presenter for further information and a follow-up PD session with colleagues at the discussant's place of work. Another reported benefit of PD for All is practical advice and ideas that teachers could use in their classrooms and share with their colleagues who were unable to attend PD for All institutes. Several focus group participants gave examples of attempting to re-create projects and use techniques suggested by presenters at the PD for All institutes.

The Time 2 survey also provided findings about the respondents' practices related to sharing their new knowledge with colleagues from their work settings who were not able to attend PD for All as well as sharing knowledge with other PD for All attendees. Over 92% of survey respondents indicated that they shared knowledge and ideas learned from PD for All institutes with colleagues at their place of work. Several of the focus group participants likewise reported sharing ideas from PD for All with work colleagues who did not attend institutes. Of those who reported idea sharing, using project-based learning activities was the most popular practice that was shared with work colleagues.

When asked about networking across school buildings and districts during PD for All seminars, the survey respondents again indicated that an exchange of ideas did take place during the events. Over 70% of the survey respondents engaged in idea sharing across work settings while 26% did not. Interestingly, in the focus group discussion few of the participants reported exchanging ideas with colleagues from different work settings.

PD for All provides early education professionals in the Omaha metro area with opportunities for engaging with leading scholars and innovators in the field, networking across local early childhood settings, and gaining practical skills and ideas for applying their newfound knowledge to their own work. Opportunities for reaching a more diverse workforce audience include considering location of events, continuing to expand Spanish-language institutes, and scheduling. Ongoing evaluation and program improvement will allow PD for All to expand its reach as a resource for evidence-based professional learning for the birth – Grade 3 and early childhood affiliated workforce in the Omaha region.

Concluding Thoughts

Schools are engaging more intentionally and intensively with families. Families are experiencing increased supports, decreased caregiver depression, and enhanced perceptions of being welcomed in public school. Schools are enhancing classroom supports of child learning and development, and demonstrating improved classroom instruction, PreK language gains, achievement gains at all levels, and enhanced gains for children placed at risk for school failure.

Going forward, it will be important to continue to follow and observe the progress of children, families, and schools. In order to build on current evidence, we need to know more about the School as Hub processes and perceptions of families and school personnel. In order to understand engagement with families, evaluation procedures will examine home visiting quality even more intensively, increase our examination of family perspectives of engagement with schools, and solicit the perspectives of home visitors, family facilitators, and school leaders. To understand how child learning and development are progressing, we will examine achievement and social-emotional development with the larger population of birth through Grade 3 children in the Superintendents' Plan.

In the program aspects of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, partnerships with community-based early childhood programs will be implemented at two School as Hub schools. Ongoing coaching will continue to use district and school level data to elevate classroom practices and support home visiting interactions. In the coming year, program staff will collaborate with school partners to produce an online guidebook for School as Hub for Birth through Grade 3.

This is by no means a conventional "conclusion". The ongoing, systemic work of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is still in its infancy. Changing how "schools do school" is hard work and requires a disposition of continuous learning in the program and its evaluation. In order to elevate the learning and developmental progress of young children, schools must engage with families intentionally and intensively. In order to provide equitable access to opportunity and achievement, communities, schools, and the university must work together and identify what works best for children.

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Appendix 1: Birth – Age 3 Measures

CHILD BIRTH – AGE 3	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD
Cognitive- Language- Academic	Preschool Language Scales, Fifth Edition (PLS 5)	An interactive, play-based assessment of developmental language skills in the areas of auditory comprehension and expressive communication. Administered annually at time of enrollment.	Direct assessment by Evaluation Team
Social- Emotional	Infant Toddler Social- Emotional Assessment (ITSEA)	Provides in-depth analysis of emerging social-emotional development and intervention guidance. Four domains include externalizing, internalizing, dysregulation, and competence. Forms are designed to be applicable to a wide range of parents including those with limited education and from different cultural backgrounds.	Parent report via Evaluation Team
Language	Preschool Language Scales – Spanish Edition (PLS-S) Spanish speakers only	An interactive assessment for monolingual and bilingual Spanish-speaking children.	Direct assessment by Evaluation Team
PARENT BIRTH – AGE 3	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD
Parent-Child Interactions	Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)	A structured observation tool for parent-child interactions; assesses interaction during play in a familiar environment.	Video observation by Evaluation Team

Appendix 1: Birth – Age 3 Measures

Social Support Networks	Parenting Stress Index (PSI 4)	<p>Screening measure for evaluating the parenting system and identifying issues that may lead to problems in the child's or parent's behavior. Focuses on three domains of stress: child characteristics, parent characteristics, and situational/demographic life stress.</p> <p>Only the Parental Distress and Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction were assessed in the School as Hub program evaluation.</p>	Parent report by Evaluation Team								
	Protective Factors Survey (PFS)	<p>Primary purpose is to provide a snapshot of the families served, changes in protective factors, and areas where workers can focus on increasing individual family protective factors. It is not intended for individual assessment, placement, or diagnostic purposes. Five protective factors are included in the complete PFS. Only social-emotional support and concrete support protective factors were assessed in the School as Hub program evaluation. Social-Emotional Support = perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs. Concrete Support = perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.</p>	Parent report by Evaluation Team								
	Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale Revised (CESD-R)	<p>A screening test for depression. Measures symptoms defined by the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V) for a major depressive episode.</p>	Parent report by Evaluation Team								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>HOME VISIT BIRTH – AGE 3</th> <th>MEASURE</th> <th>DESCRIPTION</th> <th>METHOD</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>HV-Parent & HV-Child Interactions</td> <td>Home Visit Rating Scales (HOVRS)</td> <td>Developed to describe and evaluate strategies used in home visiting interventions. Measures the home visitor's effectiveness in engaging the parent and the child in home visiting activities and in interactions with each other.</td> <td>Video or direct observation by Evaluation Team</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				HOME VISIT BIRTH – AGE 3	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD	HV-Parent & HV-Child Interactions	Home Visit Rating Scales (HOVRS)	Developed to describe and evaluate strategies used in home visiting interventions. Measures the home visitor's effectiveness in engaging the parent and the child in home visiting activities and in interactions with each other.	Video or direct observation by Evaluation Team
HOME VISIT BIRTH – AGE 3	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD								
HV-Parent & HV-Child Interactions	Home Visit Rating Scales (HOVRS)	Developed to describe and evaluate strategies used in home visiting interventions. Measures the home visitor's effectiveness in engaging the parent and the child in home visiting activities and in interactions with each other.	Video or direct observation by Evaluation Team								

Appendix 2:

PreK – Grade 3 Measures

CHILD PREK – GRADE 3	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD
Demographics	N, F/R, ELL, SPED, Gender		District NDE Data
Cognitive-Language-Academic	Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Academic Skills Battery (KTEA-ASB) PreK (age 4+)	Individually administered, norm-referenced battery of key academic skills including a composite score and three subtests (Math Concepts and Applications, Letter and Word Recognition, Written Expression).	Individual assessment by Evaluation Team
	Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Third Edition (KTEA BA-3) Kindergarten	Individually administered norm-referenced battery that provides assessment of key academic skills including a brief achievement composite score and three subtests (Letter and Word Recognition, Math Computation, Spelling).	Individual assessment by Evaluation Team
Social-Emotional	Behavior Assessment System for Children: Behavioral & Emotional Screening System (BASC 3– BESS) PreK & Kindergarten	A brief, universal screening system for measuring behavior and emotional strengths and weaknesses in children and adolescents in preschool through high school.	Teacher report
	Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF-P) PreK	A standardized behavior rating scale of executive function. In addition to a Full-Scale Score, CEFI uses nine rationally derived scales to pinpoint targets for intervention: Attention, Emotion Regulation, Flexibility, Inhibitory Control, Initiation, Organization, Planning, Self-Monitoring, and Working Memory.	Teacher report

Appendix 2: PreK – Grade 3 Measures

	Comprehensive Executive Functioning Inventory (CEFI)	A standardized behavior rating scale of executive function. In addition to a Full-Scale Score, CEFI uses nine rationally derived scales to pinpoint targets for intervention: Attention, Emotion Regulation, Flexibility, Inhibitory Control, Initiation, Organization, Planning, Self-Monitoring, and Working Memory.	Teacher report
Language	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) PreK & Kindergarten	A measure of receptive vocabulary for Standard American English.	Direct assessment by district Speech Language Pathologist

PARENT PREK – GRADE 3			
	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD
Parent-Child Interactions	Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS) PreK & Kindergarten	A self-report instrument completed by mothers or fathers that assesses their perceptions of their relationship with their child. The 15 items are rated on 5-point Likert scales and the ratings can be summed into groups of items corresponding to conflict and closeness subscales. Applicable to children ages 3 to 12.	Parent report
Social Support Networks	Protective Factors Survey (PFS) PreK & Kindergarten	Primary purpose is to provide a snapshot of the families served, changes in protective factors, and areas where workers can focus on increasing individual family protective factors. It is not intended for individual assessment, placement, or diagnostic purposes. Five protective factors are included in the complete PFS. Only the Social-Emotional Support and Concrete Support Protective Factors were assessed in the School as Hub program evaluation. Social-Emotional Support = perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs. Concrete Support = perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.	Parent report
CLASSROOM/ TEACHER PREK – GRADE 3			
	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD
Teacher-Child Classroom Interactions	Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) All PreK – Grade 3 teachers	An observational instrument to assess teacher-student interactions in PreK-12 classrooms and in settings serving infants and toddlers. It describes multiple dimensions of interaction that are linked to student achievement and development and has been validated in over 6,000 classrooms. Can be used to reliably assess classroom quality for research and program evaluation and also provides a tool to help new and experienced teachers become more effective.	Video observation by Evaluation Team

Appendix 3:

Customized Assistance Measures

DISTRICT	MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	METHOD
Gretna	The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)	The TPOT was designed by the creators of the Pyramid Model. Gretna teachers made modifications to the indicators in collaboration with trained Pyramid coaches, the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the district, and Buffett Institute staff to better reflect their experiences working with children in the district and their developmental progression.	Trained, objective Pyramid Coaches
	The Work Sampling System (WSS)	The Work Sampling System® is a curriculum-embedded, authentic performance assessment used to assess the skills of children age 3 through Grade 3 in multiple domains. Four areas were utilized: 1) self-concept, 2) self-control, 3) approaches to learning, and 4) interaction with others.	Teacher report
Ralston	CLASS	See Appendix 2 for details.	
	Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment	Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment guides teachers through the assessment cycle, helping them to link observable behavior to essential early learning requirements and predict likely next steps in development and learning. Each objective consists of two items. Children are rated on each item, and the rating scale is as follows: below proficiency expectations, meeting proficiency expectations, or exceeding proficiency expectations.	Teacher report
Westside	Self-report	The program was evaluated using an anonymous and confidential online survey. The educator survey contained 11 questions, and the administrator survey contained 14 questions. Participants were asked to detail their barriers to meeting attendance, rank order the utility of the meeting topics for their work, and share their ideas for future meetings.	Self-report



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