



# THEIR FUTURE. OUR FUTURE.



**OPPORTUNITIES** 2019  
COMMUNITY REPORT



**“I would like to be an example, to encourage them to achieve their hopes and dreams.”**

Maria Rosalba Salazar  
Parent Graduate  
Learning Community Center  
of South Omaha

**ABOUT THE DATA**

This report highlights evaluation results from the 2017-2018 Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties Annual Report.

Visit [www.LearningCommunityDS.org/deeper-dive](http://www.LearningCommunityDS.org/deeper-dive) to explore data, demographics, and research.

# BECOMING A STRONGER, BETTER PLACE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Closing the achievement gap might have seemed impossible 20 years ago. In this Community Report, children and families show us how opportunities put success within reach, for all of us.

The Learning Community and its partners are focused on proven OPPORTUNITIES. Opportunity empowers children and families, inspires teachers, encourages community childcare providers and prepares our future teachers for urban classrooms.

At a time when more families experience hardship, easy access to community-wide supports is essential. That means connecting schools to our systems for health, business and higher education. We have much work to do, but the Omaha metro area is becoming a stronger, better place for children and families.

Let's keep building a culture of opportunity together!

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



**“Let's keep building a culture of opportunity together!”**

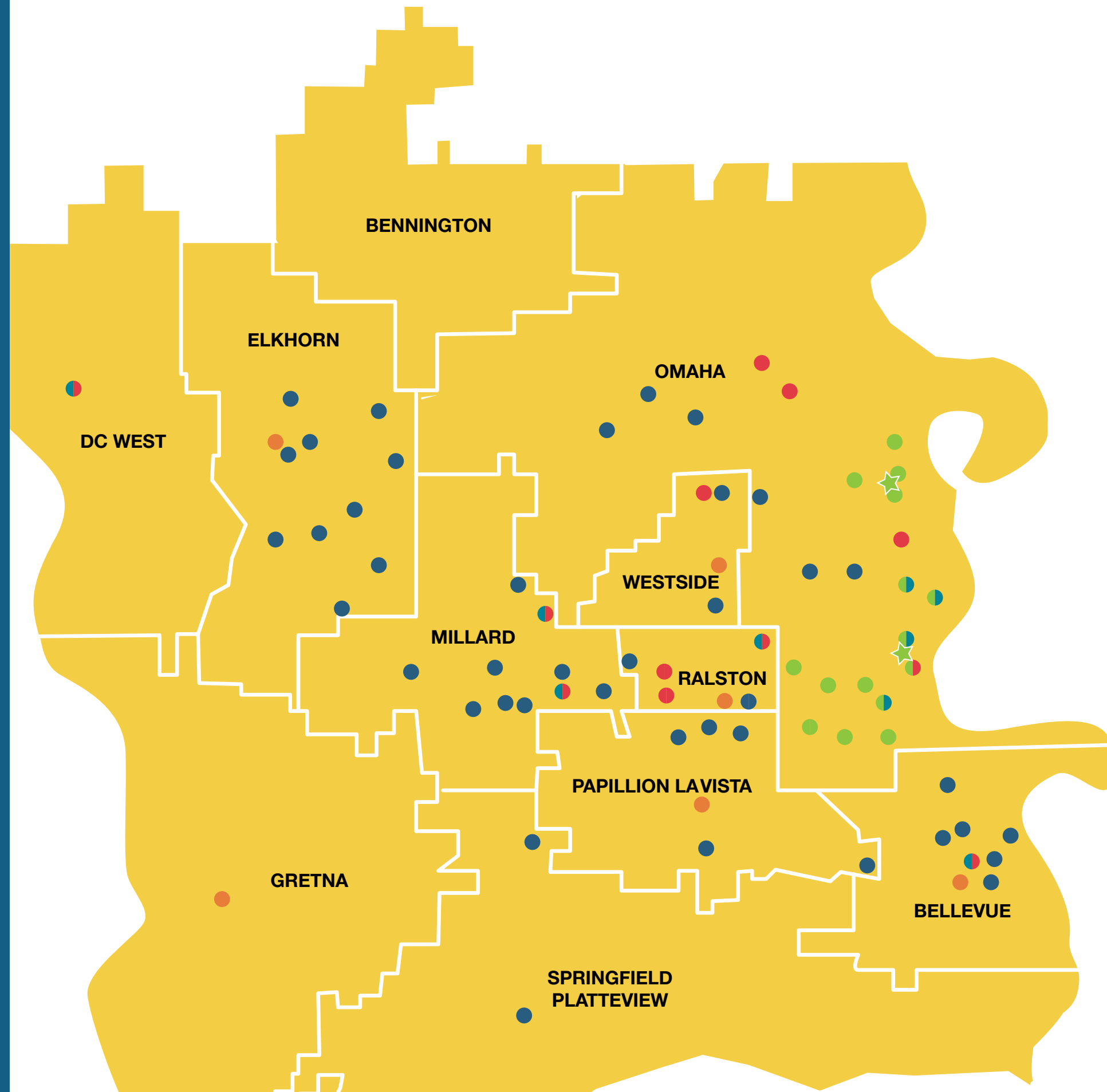
## LEARNING COMMUNITY MISSION

Together with school districts and community organizations as partners, we demonstrate, share and implement more effective practices to measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families in poverty.



“I see the value of the Learning Community in the way our unique strengths have come together. The result is powerful opportunities and a stronger future for children, families and our communities.”

Susan Kelley  
Coordinating Council



## PROGRAM IMPACT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### ★ LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER

#### ● NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

**OMAHA (north)**  
Conestoga  
Franklin  
Kellom  
Lothrop

**OMAHA (south)**  
Ashland Park-Robbins  
Bancroft  
Castelar  
Chandler View  
Gomez Heritage  
Gateway

Gilder  
Highland  
Indian Hill  
Pawnee  
Spring Lake

#### ● SUPERINTENDENTS' PLAN SCHOOL SITES

**OMAHA**  
Gomez Heritage  
Pinewood  
Liberty  
Mount View  
**WESTSIDE**  
Westbrook  
**BELLEVUE**  
Belleaire

**RALSTON**  
Karen Western  
Meadows  
Mockingbird  
**MILLARD**  
Cody  
Sandoz  
**DC WEST**  
DC West

#### ● CUSTOMIZED ASSISTANCE BY DISTRICT

Bellevue  
Elkhorn  
Gretna  
Papillion La Vista  
Ralston  
Westside

#### ● DISTRICT PILOTS

**OMAHA**  
Bancroft  
Beals  
Boyd  
Castelar  
Field Club  
Highland  
Masters  
Spring Lake  
Sunny Slope  
Western Hills  
**WESTSIDE**  
Hillside  
Westgate  
**RALSTON**  
Blumfield  
Karen Western  
Wildewood

**BELLEVUE**  
Avery  
Belleaire  
Bertha Barber  
Betz  
Birchcrest  
Central  
Twin Ridge  
**PAPILLION LA VISTA**  
Carriage Hill  
G. Stanley Hall  
Golden Hills  
Parkview Heights  
La Vista West  
**MILLARD**  
Bryan  
Cody  
Disney  
Holling Heights  
Montclair  
Neihardt  
Norris  
Rockwell  
Sandoz  
Willowdale

**ELKHORN**  
Arbor View  
Fire Ridge  
Hillrise  
Manchester  
Sagewood  
Skyline  
Spring Ridge  
West Bay  
West Dodge Station  
Westridge  
**DC WEST**  
DC West  
**SPRINGFIELD**  
**PLATTEVIEW**  
Springfield  
Westmont

# BETTER OPPORTUNITIES. BETTER OUTCOMES.

## WHAT DOES 100% POVERTY MEAN?



FAMILY  
OF THREE  
**\$410**  
WEEKLY  
INCOME<sup>1</sup>

In the Learning Community, closing the achievement gap means opening doors to opportunity for the whole family. Positive outcomes make our communities stronger. That's why we're so passionate about our 2-Gen approach.

So what happened to children and families over the last 20 years? Since 2000, the growth of poverty was three times greater than the total student population and significantly higher than the rest of the state. Poverty in the Omaha metro area is spreading out and now impacts the majority of our school districts.



**WHAT'S THE TREND?**  
MORE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN SCHOOLS  
ACROSS THE LEARNING COMMUNITY WILL NEED  
SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES.

## CREATING PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY

Everyone has a role to play in the innovative can-do spirit that drives growth and prosperity in Omaha. Our workforce needs well-educated children and families. That's why the Learning Community and its partners work with the Omaha Chamber and business leaders to identify critical gaps in our local economy. Internships, college prep sessions, apprenticeships, skills-based certifications – we're making real progress in cradle to career pathways.

**74%** COMMUNITY  
CENTER  
NEIGHBORHOODS  
**WORK  
& TAKE  
CLASSES<sup>1</sup>**

## READY FOR WORK

Long hours for less than a living wage. That's a typical experience for families in our community centers. They helped us take a fresh look at what children and families need to succeed. The result is new workforce development classes in partnership with Metropolitan Community College. Our evaluations show parents develop valuable skills to guide their children AND land better paying jobs. Why does that matter? Research shows children are more likely to succeed in school when their families are financially stable.

## COLLEGE & CAREER PARTNERSHIPS

Families join our programs with dreams of a college education for their children. They graduate with a plan. The University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) Service Learning Academy hosts a series of weekly workshops where families discover college is within reach. This model partnership gets a tremendous result – children who are more likely to attend college after high school and parents who realize it's not too late for them.

**“Homework (for my children) is not so difficult now. And I have homework too, so we're together.”**

*Suk Tamang, Parent University member*

**TOP SKILLS**  
**RESOURCEFUL**  
**APPLYING**  
**STRENGTHS**  
**RESOLVING**  
**CONFLICT**  
**USING**  
**TECHNOLOGY**

EARNED  
**WORKPLACE  
READINESS  
CERTIFICATE**  
**72%**



<sup>1</sup> Source: 2019 HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines

<sup>2</sup> Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2000 and 2013-2017; UNO Center for Public Affairs Research.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Learning Community centers attendance areas, U.S. Census, 2013-2017; UNO Center for Public Affairs Research.



# LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA

STRONG PARENT IMPACT FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

# 1,232

## CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- FAMILY LEARNING:**
- ENGLISH FOR PARENTS
  - EDUCATIONAL NAVIGATORS
  - PARENT WORKSHOPS
  - PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES
  - ADULT EDUCATION

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

In the Learning Community Center of South Omaha, outcomes demonstrate the power of a two-generation approach. We strive to connect every opportunity because children and family succeed best together.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ONEWORLD COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

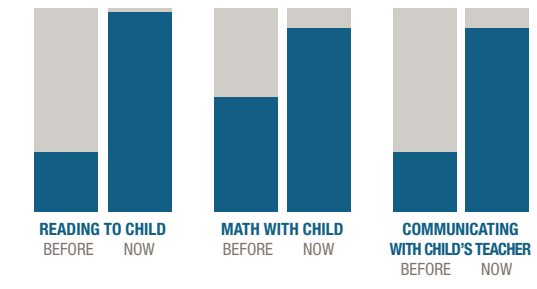


**“I don’t need a translator anymore. I feel excited that I’m able to talk with the teachers.”**

*Learning Community Center of South Omaha parent*

### COMFORTABLE, CONFIDENT AND COMMUNITY-INVOLVED

**ENGAGED IN ACADEMICS & TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS**  
 A parent is a child’s first teacher. In Family Learning classes, parents gained confidence to help with homework, advocate for their children and support their success in school.



### BUILDING STRONGER PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

#### TOP 3 PARENT STRENGTHS



### COMMON SENSE PARENTING WORKS

Parents learned new skills to improve their relationships. By the end of the class, they reported reduced parenting stress and greater confidence in positive interactions with their children.

#### SIGNIFICANT PARENT GAINS

100% Reported Improvement in Parenting Skills





# LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTH OMAHA

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT GETS RESULTS

# 2,387

## CHILDREN, FAMILIES & TEACHERS

**EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP:**  
INTENSIVE EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
CHILDCARE DIRECTOR TRAINING  
FUTURE TEACHER TRAINING  
PARENT UNIVERSITY

Our North community center is home to one of the most amazing partnerships in the country. The center empowers the caring adults in every child's life with new opportunities that change lives. The result is more resilient children and families, better academic outcomes and teachers prepared for urban classrooms.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
AND OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

**ASCEND**  
THE ASPEN INSTITUTE  
NETWORK MEMBER



### INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Our teaching teams successfully focused on school readiness and vocabulary. These skills are essential when children experience fewer learning opportunities than their peers. The good news is children made gains where it matters the most.

**PRESCHOOLERS  
GAINED VOCABULARY**

# 39%

**ACHIEVE/EXCEED  
NATIONAL AVERAGE**

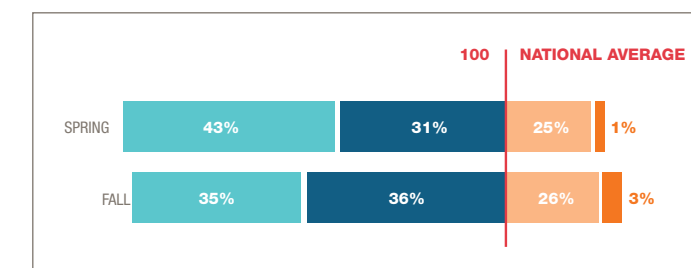
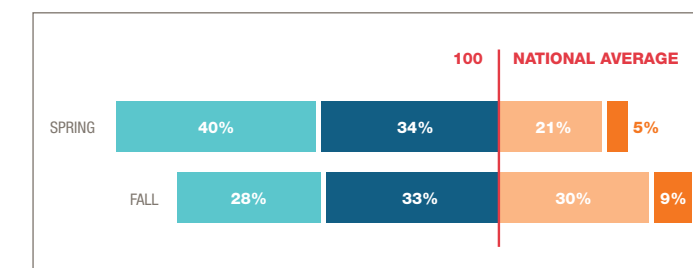


### VOCABULARY MATTERS

The ability to recognize words is a predictor of grade level reading skills. Most preschoolers made significant progress closing the vocabulary gap by spring.

### ACADEMIC GAINS FOR SCHOOL READINESS

Colors, letters, shapes and counting. Children made gains in basic concepts that contribute to school readiness. By spring, 65 percent were within the average range or higher.



PARTNERSHIP TEACHING TEAMS WILL EXPLORE ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS STILL AT RISK ACADEMICALLY.

BELOW AVERAGE AVERAGE ABOVE AVERAGE

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

# 64%

**NATIONAL AVERAGE  
OR HIGHER**

### POSITIVE SKILLS FOR LEARNING

Children need to learn kindness, empathy and self-control to succeed. By the end of the school year, children gained stronger social-emotional skills.

### TEACHER COACHING GETS RESULTS

How do we know that coaching teachers helps children? All grade K-1 students showed positive growth in math and reading. Compared to national rankings, students made greater gains than expected.

### GREATER GAINS

# 44% 38%

MATH READING

**OVER A THIRD OF STUDENTS IN GRADES  
K-1 MADE GREATER THAN EXPECTED  
GAINS IN MATH AND READING.**



**CHILDCARE DIRECTOR TRAINING**  
 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEBRASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATIVE



**FUTURE TEACHER TRAINING**  
 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCARE, METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
 AND CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

**10**  
 DIRECTORS

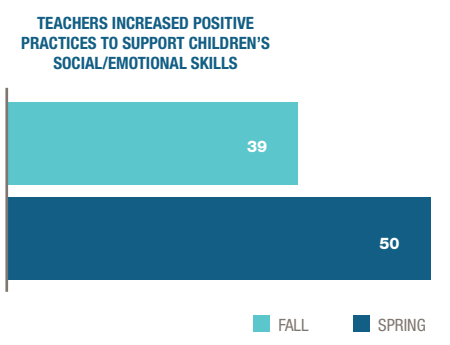
**721**  
 CHILDREN  
 SERVED

**TRAINING IMPROVES TEACHING**  
 Our second class of community childcare directors actively trained staff and modeled what quality childcare looks like.

The director-coaching and monthly workshops clearly resonated with staff. Program outcomes directly supported healthy child development and school readiness.

The free training inspired every director to voluntarily join the statewide initiative for quality childcare, Nebraska Step Up to Quality.

DIRECTOR PARTICIPATION  
**100%**  
 STEP UP TO QUALITY



POSITIVE PRACTICES  
**28%**  
 GAIN

FUTURE TEACHER PIPELINE

**81**

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STUDENTS  
 LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER NORTH

**14**  
 GRADUATES

**READY TO TEACH IN URBAN CLASSROOMS**  
 How do we better prepare our future teachers? This partnership takes an innovative approach. Robotic cameras connect college classes in our center to Educare Omaha. Real-time access to preschool classrooms gives students a way to explore beyond the textbook. It's a great way to show them what quality early childhood education really means.

**A TO B: A PATHWAY TO THE CLASSROOM**  
 Some early childhood graduates need affordable pathways to an elementary teaching degree. Through an MCC-Creighton University partnership, students continue their education seamlessly. Best of all, they can be ready for their own classroom in just two years.



The MCC-Creighton A to B pathway made it possible for Katie Norris to finish her elementary teaching degree in just two years.

**“I wanted to teach where I could make the biggest difference.”**  
 Katie Norris, First year teacher, OPS Kellom Elementary

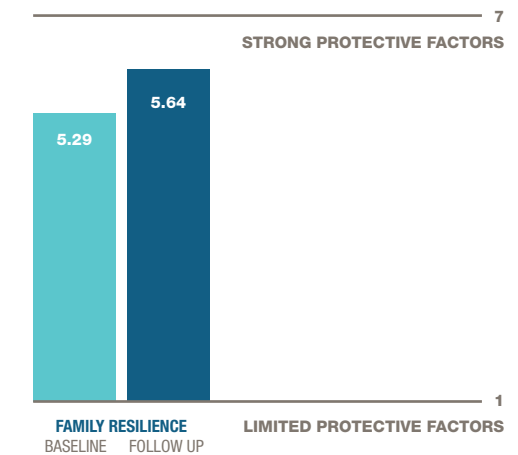


### WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

How did Tiffany and Cosmos Awortwi achieve big goals as a family? Home visits with their educational navigator, Andrea Foster, helped them move forward.

### PARENT UNIVERSITY FAMILIES MAKE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN RESILIENCE

Stability at home supports success in school. Parent University families showed progress in solving problems that can disrupt family life.



**A 2- GEN COMMUNITY**  
Parent University is a 2-Gen community actively engaged in learning. Families find a supportive environment where they can network and learn from others. The positive outcomes add up to stronger families.

**“I can advocate and work with teachers better.”**  
*Parent University member*

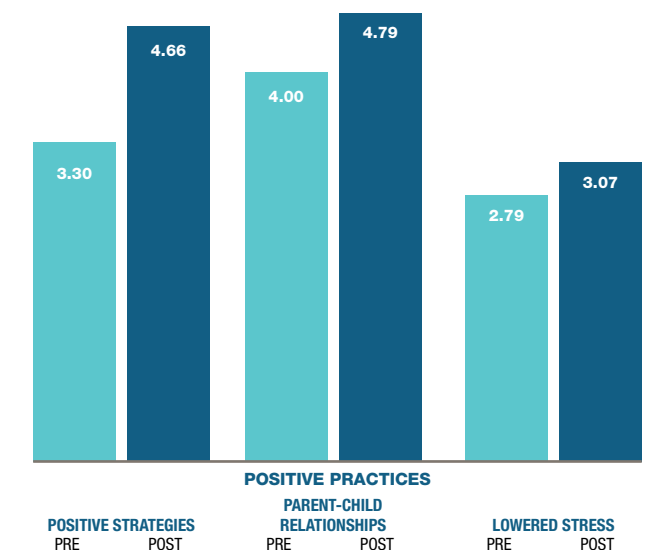
PARENT UNIVERSITY FAMILIES  
**71%**  
**READING TO CHILDREN 3 OR MORE TIMES PER WEEK**

PARENTS LEARNED ENGLISH  
**100%**  
**ESL STUDENTS ADVANCING ONE OR MORE LEVELS**

**STRONGER PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS**  
**BIG GAINS POSITIVE PARENTING**

### PARENT UNIVERSITY FAMILIES EMBRACE POSITIVE STRATEGIES

Parent classes connect positive practices to the parent-child relationship. Parent University families appreciated the positive differences, including lower stress levels.





# SCHOOL DISTRICT PILOTS



**6,155**  
STUDENTS &  
TEACHERS

**9**  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICTS

**50**  
SCHOOL  
BUILDINGS

**PROGRAMS:**  
INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING  
JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN  
EXTENDED LEARNING

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LEARNING COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

## INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IMPACTS STUDENTS

BELLEVUE, OMAHA, WESTSIDE, RALSTON

The trusting partnership that develops in this pilot program gets results in the classroom. New and veteran teachers demonstrated improvements in areas that directly impact students.

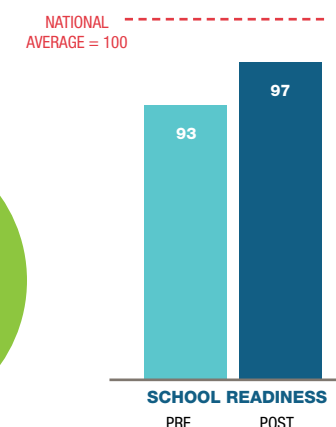
### COACHING HELPS NEW TEACHERS

New teachers appreciate the opportunity to work in partnership with a coach at a critical time in their careers. In surveys of new teachers, 95 percent reported improvements in their teaching.

**STRONG TEACHING SKILLS**  
**POSITIVE CLIMATE**  
**TEACHER SENSITIVITY**  
**PRODUCTIVITY**

**SIGNIFICANT TEACHER IMPROVEMENT**

**SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN SCHOOL READINESS**



## JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN

ELKHORN, MILLARD, PAPILLION LA VISTA

### IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS

Jump Start to Kindergarten provides a critical opportunity for children who have little classroom experience. Students made strong progress in academic readiness. By the end of the program, the majority of student scores moved much closer to the national average.

## EXTENDED LEARNING

DC WEST, COMPLETELY KIDS, ELKHORN, MILLARD, SPRINGFIELD PLATTEVIEW

**REDUCED SUMMER LEARNING LOSS**

**STUDENTS MAINTAINED OR IMPROVED ACHIEVEMENT**

### REDUCING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Extended Learning is a targeted intervention that can reduce the achievement gap between struggling students and their peers. While results varied, the program clearly helped students from falling behind over the summer months. Again this year, the majority of students maintained or raised their achievement level.



# SUPERINTENDENTS' PLAN

PROMISING PROGRESS

# 6,785

## STUDENTS, FAMILIES & TEACHERS

- FEATURES:**
- BIRTH TO GRADE 3 APPROACH**
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL**
- CUSTOMIZED ASSISTANCE**

Eleven school districts are working together to improve early learning across the Omaha metro area. The Superintendents' Plan is the nation's largest, most comprehensive early childhood initiative. The goal is to reduce income- and race-based achievement gaps among young children.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BUFFETT EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE & LEARNING COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

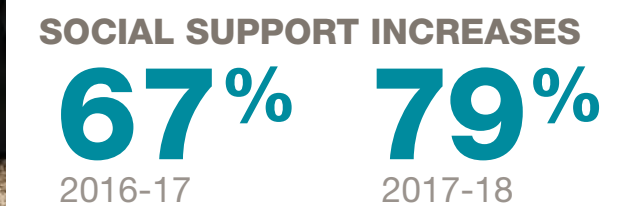
### PD FOR ALL 11 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

School district staff, community child care providers, and nonprofit teams came together for a series of professional learning institutes. During each session, experts shared the latest research and best practices to promote a child's academic and social-emotional growth. Participants engaged actively in new learning to apply in their work with children and families.



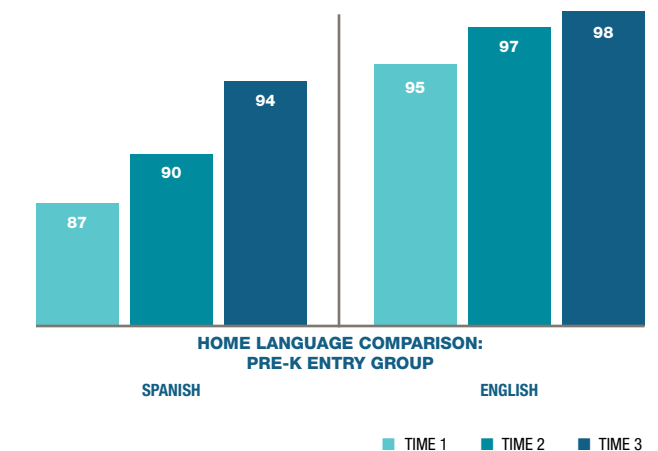
### HOME VISITATION IMPACT

The school is becoming a hub as families of young children build relationships with their local schools. Perceptions of social support increased for families engaged in home visiting. When families received more home visits, children from birth through age 3 showed significantly higher language development.



### CHILDREN GAINED

Educational achievement improved overall for students from Pre-K through Grade 3. Children whose home language is Spanish improved at a greater rate, demonstrating progress in reducing the achievement disparity.



# LEARNING COMMUNITY PARTNERS EXPAND OUTREACH

## BUILDING ON OMAHA'S STRENGTH

The Learning Community partnership network is unique to Omaha. The level of commitment here is an amazing advantage that few communities could match. As a result, the Learning Community stretches every dollar for even greater impact. Positive outcomes speak loudly to proven opportunities and the growing resilience of children and families in our communities.

## HOW DO WE SHARE PROVEN OPPORTUNITIES WITH MORE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?



The new Learning Community Foundation goes to work later this year. We're excited to welcome volunteer board members to share the success stories of our children and families. With their support, we can expand proven opportunities that change lives.

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

How do we build cradle to career pathways after high school? The Community Achievement Plan. The Learning Community guides the process which takes partnership and collaboration to the next level. By connecting systems, the goal is more accessible student pathways for success in college, career and community.

## LEARNING COMMUNITY PARTNER NETWORK

### 1 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Bellevue Public
- Bennington Public
- DC West Community
- Elkhorn Public
- Gretna Public
- Millard Public
- Omaha Public
- Papillion La Vista Community
- Ralston Public
- Springfield Platteview Community
- Westside Community

### 2 HIGHER EDUCATION

- Bellevue University
- Buffett Early Childhood Institute
- Creighton University
- Metropolitan Community College
- University of Nebraska Omaha

### 3 RESEARCH

- Aspen Institute Ascend Network
- National Centers for Family Learning
- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Munroe Meyer Institute

### 4 FOUNDATIONS

- Buffett Early Childhood Fund
- Dillon Foundation
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Richard Brooke Foundation
- The Sherwood Foundation
- Union Pacific Foundation
- U.S. Bank Foundation
- Wells Fargo Foundation

### 5 HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- Abundant Life Consulting
- Boys Town
- Douglas County Health Dept.
- Educare
- Foodbank of the Heartland
- Grief's Journey
- Lutheran Family Services
- Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative
- Omaha Public Library
- OneWorld Community Health Centers
- Project Harmony *Connections*
- UNMC Center for Reducing Health Disparities
- Williams Consulting
- Women's Center for Advancement

### 7 COMMUNITY

- Bellevue University
- Child Saving Institute
- City Sprouts
- Completely Kids
- Creighton Financial Hope
- Do Space
- Durham Museum
- ESU3 Early Learning Connection
- Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership
- Empowerment Network
- Family Housing Advisory Services
- First National Bank Omaha
- Goodwill Industries
- Heartland Workforce Solutions
- Humanities Nebraska
- Joslyn Art Museum
- Latino Center of the Midlands

### 6 COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT PLAN

- Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties
- Buffett Early Childhood Institute
- Educational Service Units 3 & 19
- Iowa Western Community College
- Metropolitan Community College
- Metropolitan Omaha Education Consortium
- Nebraska Department of Education
- University of Nebraska Omaha

- Life Coach Academy
- Nebraska Children's Home Society
- Nebraska Enterprise Fund
- Nebraska Extension Office
- Nonprofit Association of the Midlands
- Omaha Bridges out of Poverty
- Omaha Conservatory of Music
- Omaha Economic Development Corporation
- Omaha Fire Department
- Omaha Police Department
- Opera Omaha
- PTI Nebraska
- Smart Girls Society
- Sparkpositivity
- The Big Garden
- University of Nebraska Omaha
  - College of Education
  - School of Music
  - Service Learning Academy

INVESTING IN CHILDREN  
AND FAMILIES WORKS

**STRONG IMPACT  
IN THE LIVES OF**  
MORE THAN **16,000**  
CHILDREN  
& ADULTS

**CHILDREN MORE LIKELY  
TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL**

**STRONGER AND MORE  
INDEPENDENT FAMILIES**

**MORE PROVEN  
STRATEGIES FOR  
TEACHERS**

**MORE SCHOOLS  
EMBRACING EARLY  
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

**BETTER FAMILY-FRIENDLY  
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES  
COMMUNITYWIDE**



## COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Council invests in research-based programs and practices to change lives. Programs must demonstrate strong and measurable impact for continued funding.



**SUSAN  
KELLEY**  
Chair  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 4



**ALLEN  
HAGER**  
Vice Chair  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 4



**JILL  
WOODWARD**  
Secretary  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 6



**CAROL  
HAHN**  
Treasurer  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 2



**DR. BRADLEY  
EKWEREKWU**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 1



**BRIAN  
THOMMES**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 1



**DR. CORNELIUS  
WILLIAMS**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 2



**MARK  
HOEGER**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 3



**MELINDA  
KOZEL**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 3



**ANAYELI  
MARTINEZ REAL**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 5



**TONYA  
WARD**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 5



**MIKE  
AVERY**  
Achievement  
Subcouncil 6

## OUR VISION

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

## LEADERSHIP TEAM



**DAVID  
PATTON**  
Chief  
Executive  
Officer



**JAMALIA  
PARKER**  
Director  
Family  
Engagement  
Services



**ANNE  
O'HARA**  
Program  
Director  
Family  
Learning



**DALE  
KREHER**  
Finance  
Director



**RENEE  
FRANKLIN**  
Executive  
Director  
Elementary  
Learning Centers



**learning  
community**  
DOUGLAS  
SARPY

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402-964-2405 | [LearningCommunityDS.org](https://www.LearningCommunityDS.org)

**“Taking all of these classes has made me want to be the best parent I can be. If I make education important in their lives, they’re more likely to want to go to school and do well.”**

Amira Blanco-Liggins  
Learning Community parent