



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 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!”

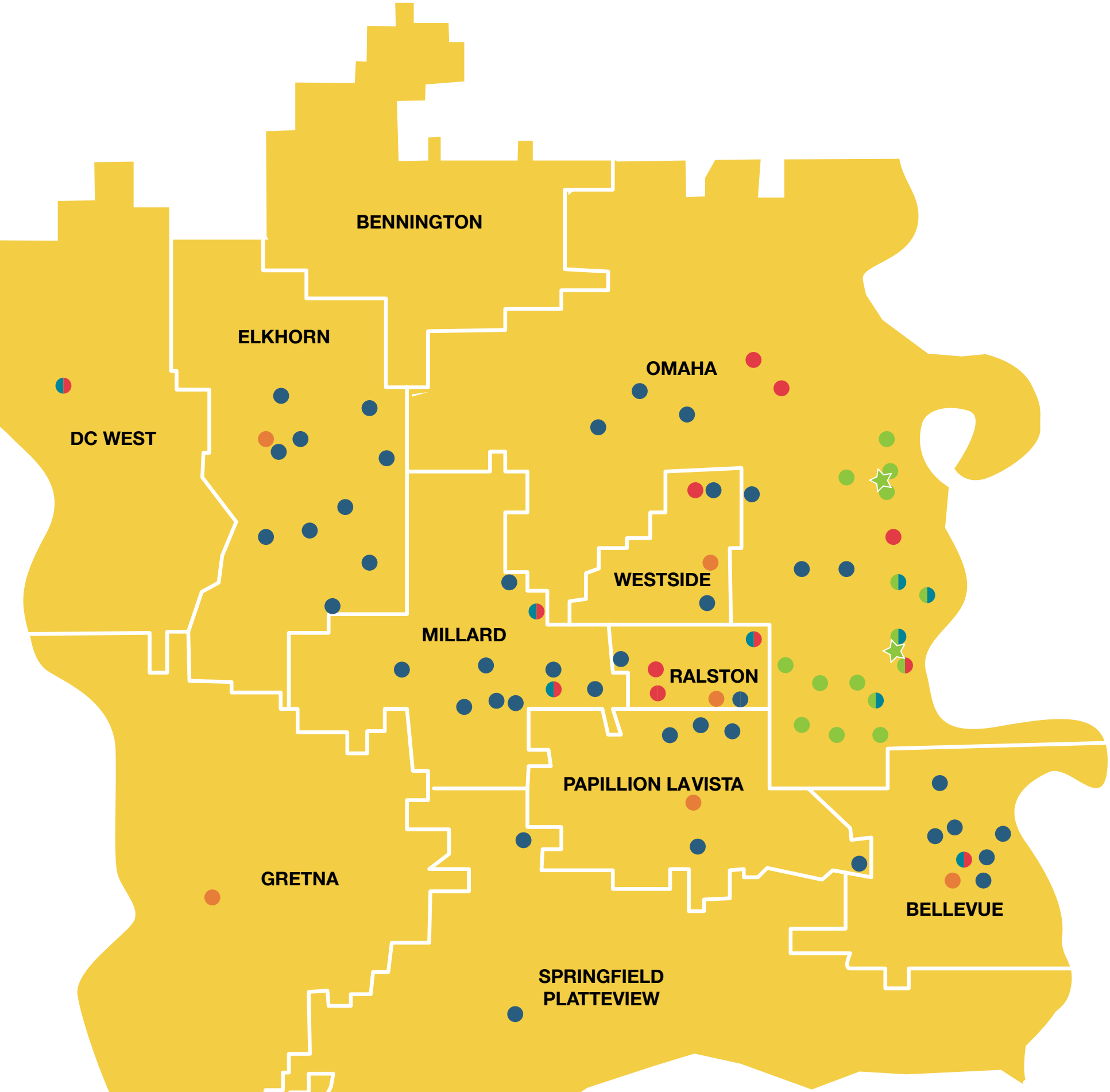
LEARNING COMMUNITY MISSION

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.

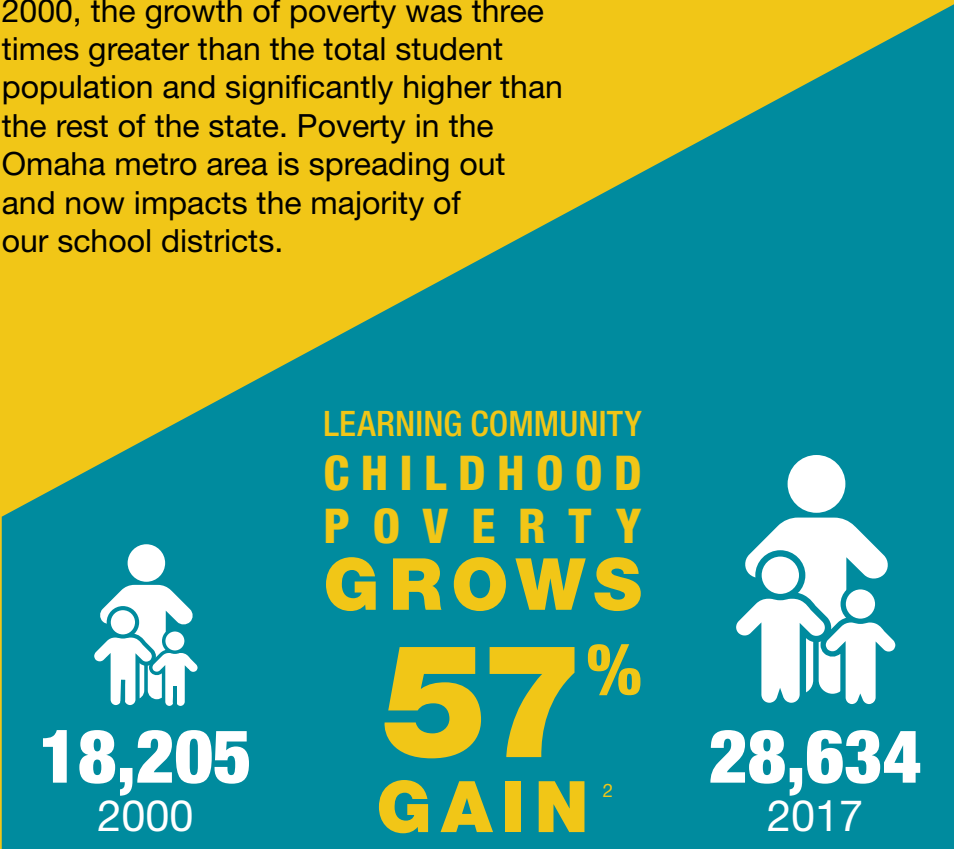
WHAT DOES 100% POVERTY MEAN?



FAMILY
OF THREE
\$410
WEEKLY
INCOME ¹

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 CLASSES¹

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%



¹ Source: 2019 HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines
² Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2000 and 2013-2017; UNO Center for Public Affairs Research.

¹ 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

 **ASCEND**
THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
NETWORK MEMBER



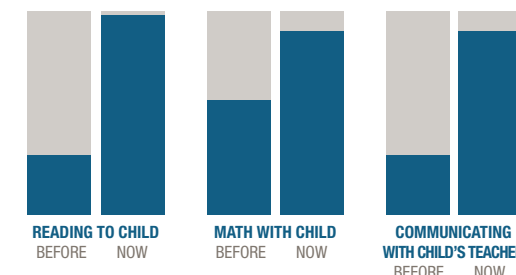
“I don’t need a translator anymore. I feel excited that I’m able to talk with the teachers.”

*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

Sensitivity
Positive Interactions
Involved

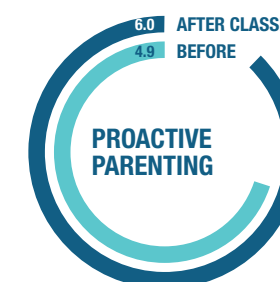


COMMON SENSE PARENTING WORKS

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

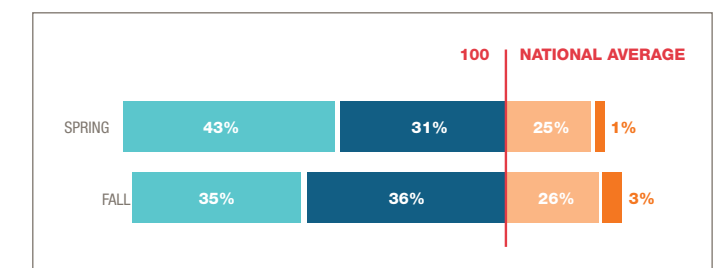
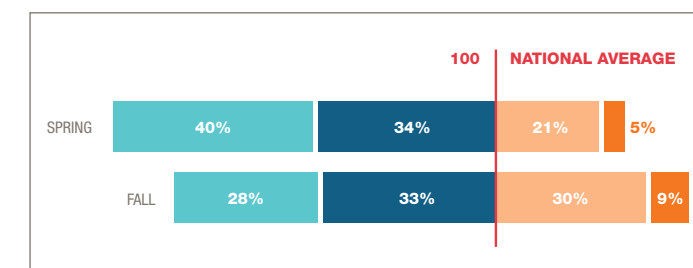


VOCABULARY MATTERS

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 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%

MATH

38%

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

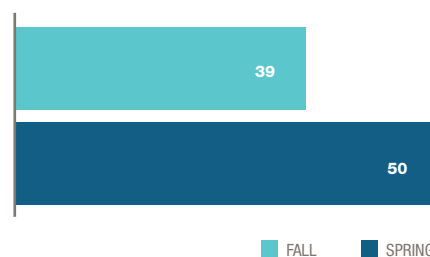
Our second class of community childcare directors actively trained staff and modeled what quality childcare looks like.

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

TEACHERS INCREASED POSITIVE
PRACTICES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SKILLS



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.



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

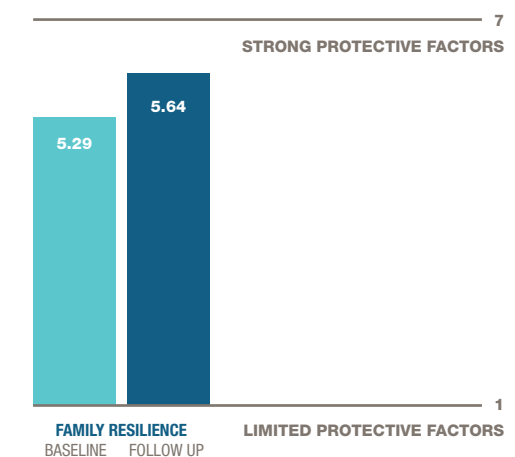
100%

**ESL STUDENTS
ADVANCING ONE
OR MORE LEVELS**

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

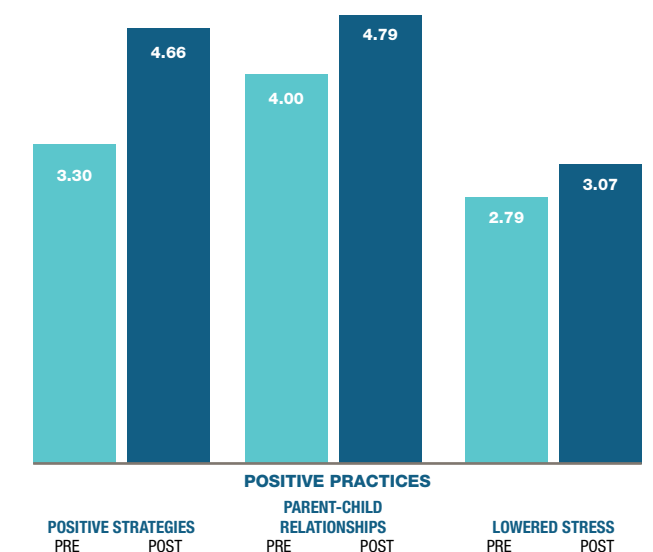
PARENT UNIVERSITY FAMILIES MAKE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN RESILIENCE

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



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

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LEARNING COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

PROGRAMS:
INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING
JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN
EXTENDED LEARNING

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IMPACTS STUDENTS

BELLEVUE, OMAHA, WESTSIDE, RALSTON

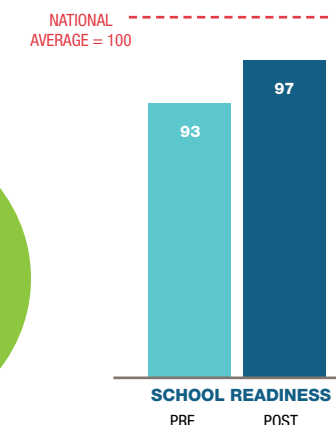
The trusting partnership that develops in this pilot program gets results in the classroom. New and veteran teachers demonstrated improvements in areas that directly impact students.

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.



PARTICIPANTS	APPLIED NEW PRACTICES	SHARED NEW KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHERS
1,003	98%	70%



HOME VISITATION IMPACT

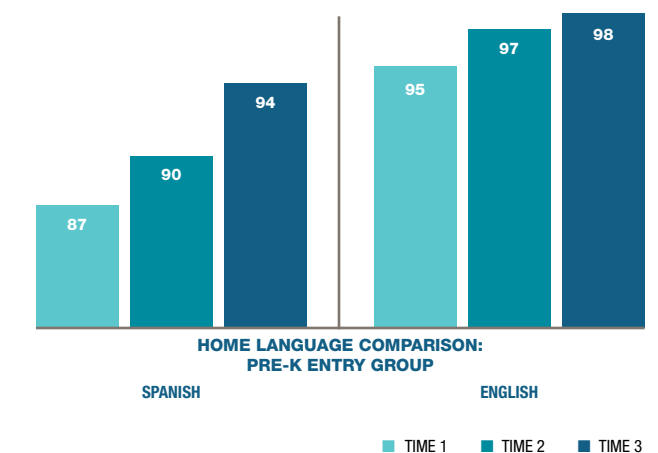
The school is becoming a hub as families of young children build relationships with their local schools. Perceptions of social support increased for families engaged in home visiting. When families received more home visits, children from birth through age 3 showed significantly higher language development.

SOCIAL SUPPORT INCREASES

67%	79%
2016-17	2017-18

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**

1612 NORTH 24 STREET | OMAHA, NE 68110
402-964-2405 | 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