Learning Community Coordinating Council
Meeting Agenda

October 15, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

1612 North 24th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68110

Learning Community Vision Statement: *all children within the Learning Community achieve academic success without regard to social or economic circumstances.*

The subjects to be discussed or considered, or upon which any formal action may be taken, are as follows: **

1. **Opening the Meeting**:

    a. **Call to order:** The regular meeting of the Learning Community Coordinating Council is called to order on October 15, 2026, at _____ p.m.

    b. **Council Mission Statement**: 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.

    c. **Public Notice and Compliance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Law**: Public Notice was published in The Daily Record on **October 10, 2026,** and on the Learning Community Website.

    d. **Council Roll Call**: Present: ____ Excused: _____ Absent: _____ Quorum: _____

    e. **Pledge of Allegiance**: Please stand and face the flag for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Public Comment:** Are there any public comments?

3. **Reports:**

    1. **Good News Report:**
    2. **Chair Report:**
    3. **CEO Report:**
    4. **Treasurer Report:**
    5. **Legal Counsel:**
    6. **Foundation:**

4. **Consent Agenda:**

Unless removed motion from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted in the same motion.

a. Minutes of September 17, 2026 meeting of the Council.
b. Treasurer's Report – October 2026

Motion: To approve the consent agenda as presented.

First: _____ Second: _____
Discussion:
Moved to vote: _ No _____ Abstain_____
Motion: passed____ failed _____

5. **Subcommittee Reports**:

1. Elementary, Learning, and Diversity (ELD) subcommittee:
2. Budget, Finance, and Audit subcommittee:
3. Legislative and Policy subcommittee:
4. Administration and Personnel subcommittee:

6. **Programming Update**:

1. **Center Updates:**
2. **District Updates:** MMI Presentation - BECI
3. **Director of Strategic Initiatives:**

7. **New Business**:

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at: _____

Next Meeting –November 19, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. – Learning Community Center of North Omaha, 1612 North 24th Street, Omaha, NE 68110

***Executive/Closed Session:** If, during the meeting, a discussion of any item on the agenda should be held in a closed meeting, the council will conduct a closed meeting per the Nebraska Open Meetings Law.

****Sequence of Agenda:** The sequence of agenda topics is subject to change at the discretion of the Council. Please arrive at the beginning of the meeting.

UPCOMING LEARNING COMMUNITY EVENTS:

LC Coordinating Council	November 19, 2026, 6:00 p.m. Learning Community Center of North Omaha, 1612 N. 24th Street, Omaha, NE 68110
Subcouncil #1	TBA
Subcouncil #2	TBA
Subcouncil #3	TBA
Subcouncil #4	TBA
Subcouncil #5	TBA
Subcouncil #6	TBA

HANDOUTS TO ACCOMPANY THIS AGENDA ARE AS FOLLOWS

- CEO report
- Treasure report
- September Mins
- LCCNO Report
- LCCSO Report
- BECI 2025-2026 Annual Report
- BECI 2025-2026 Executive Summary

learning community
DOUGLAS SARPY

402-505-4301
1612 North 24th St
Omaha, NE 68110

Chief Executive Officer
Gerald M. Kuhn, II

COORDINATING COUNCIL OFFICERS
Chair
Sharnelle Shelton
Vice Chair
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Secretary
Tim Hall
Treasurer
Jason Taylor

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Achievement Subcouncil 1
David Preston, Jr
Cindy Johnson
Achievement Subcouncil 2
Carol Hahn
Sharnelle Shelton
Achievement Subcouncil 3
Mark Hoeger
Warren Whitted, Jr
Achievement Subcouncil 4
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Stephen Bloom
Achievement Subcouncil 5
Douglas Brady
Tonya Ward
Achievement Subcouncil 6
Jason Taylor
Tim Hall

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.

VISION

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

LearningCommunityDS.org

October 13, 2026

CEO Report:

1. LR434 Legislative Hearing and Legislative Engagement

The Learning Community had an opportunity to participate in the legislative hearing for LR434, an interim study sponsored by Senator Ashlei Spivey and conducted through the Urban Affairs Committee. LR434 was created to examine how the Learning Community impacts the metropolitan area it serves and to evaluate its governance, funding, outcomes, and broader community partnerships.

The hearing was a significant success for the Learning Community. We were able to share our story, including our history, the progress we have made, the impact of our investments and partnerships throughout the community, and our vision for the future. This provided legislators with a comprehensive understanding of the value and unique role the Learning Community plays in supporting children, families, schools, and communities across Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

Following the hearing, Senator Ashlei Spivey expressed her interest in continuing to work with the Learning Community and exploring opportunities to further build our capacity and strengthen our impact throughout the region.

In addition, Senator Dan Lonowski visited the Learning Community following our September Coordinating Council meeting. During his visit, he expressed his full support for the Learning Community and stated that he looks forward to helping advance our work in the future. He specifically asked how he could support our efforts moving forward, demonstrating a growing level of legislative engagement and partnership.

2. National Recognition for School as Hub

The Learning Community recently received national recognition through the School as Hub initiative. Representatives from AASA Early Learning (formerly the American Association of School Administrators) visited Omaha to learn more about the innovative work taking place in DC West Public Schools.

School administrators and educational leaders from across the country, including representatives from Nebraska, Kansas, Washington, Michigan, California, Indiana, and several other states, participated in the site visit and toured the elementary school at DC West. The Learning Community was invited to participate because our funding supports the School as Hub model and its implementation.

learning community
DOUGLAS SARPY

402-505-4301
1612 North 24th St
Omaha, NE 68110

Chief Executive Officer
Gerald M. Kuhn, II

COORDINATING COUNCIL OFFICERS
Chair
Sharnelle Shelton
Vice Chair
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Secretary
Tim Hall
Treasurer
Jason Taylor

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Achievement Subcouncil 1
David Preston, Jr
Cindy Johnson
Achievement Subcouncil 2
Carol Hahn
Sharnelle Shelton
Achievement Subcouncil 3
Mark Hoeger
Warren Whitted, Jr
Achievement Subcouncil 4
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Stephen Bloom
Achievement Subcouncil 5
Douglas Brady
Tonya Ward
Achievement Subcouncil 6
Jason Taylor
Tim Hall

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.

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

LearningCommunityDS.org

The interest generated by this visit highlights the growing national attention being given to the collaborative work occurring in our region and serves as recognition of the Learning Community's commitment to strengthening outcomes for children and families through innovative partnerships.

3. Focus Schools Discussion with Nebraska Department of Education

I met with Michelle Cartwright from the Nebraska Department of Education to discuss the Focus Schools process. Through our conversations, it became clear that the state views the Learning Community Coordinating Council as the body responsible for approving Focus Schools.
This process has not been utilized since the approval of Wilson Elementary as a Focus School in 2008, resulting in limited institutional knowledge regarding implementation and approval procedures. Applications were distributed last month, with submissions due October 17.
Both the Nebraska Department of Education and the Learning Community are seeking additional clarification regarding the approval process. Michelle and I are working collaboratively to better understand the statutory requirements and establish a clear process should applications be received for consideration.

4. Facilities and Branding Enhancements

We continue to make strategic investments in our facilities to strengthen the Learning Community's presence and brand identity. During the month, interior accent walls throughout the building were refreshed using our organizational branding colors, creating a more cohesive and welcoming environment for staff, families, and community partners. In addition, Learning Community logos have been installed on several interior walls, further reinforcing our organizational identity and mission throughout the facility.
Construction is also underway on the new exterior signage at the front of the building. While recent weather conditions have impacted the construction timeline, we remain actively engaged with the contractor and are monitoring progress closely. We continue to emphasize the importance of timely completion and are working to ensure the project is finished as quickly as possible so that our external presence reflects the same professional image represented throughout our facilities.

Gerald Kuhn
Chief Executive Officer
Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

	2026-2027 Budget	9/30/2026	Year to Date Expense	Percentage Year to Date
Rent	**$ 998,000**	**$ 71,147**	**$ 71,147**	**7.13%**
North Center	*$ 632,000*	$ 50,790	$ 50,790	8.04%
South Center	*$ 242,000*	$ 20,357	$ 20,357	8.41%
North Center Updates	*$ 94,000*	$ -	$ -	0.00%
South Center Consultant	*$ 30,000*	$ -	$ -	0.00%
Research and Evaluation	**$ 778,000**	**$ 59,379**	**$ 59,379**	**7.63%**
MOEC	$ 50,000			0.00%
MMI	$ 698,000	$ 59,378.50	$ 59,378.50	8.51%
Other Research	$ 30,000			0.00%
Programming				
Parent University	**$ 1,710,349**	**$ 124,669**	**$ 124,669**	**7.29%**
Wages	$ 1,052,439	$ 70,550	$ 70,550	6.70%
Benefits	$ 263,110	$ 23,667	$ 23,667	8.99%
Other	$ 394,800	$ 30,453	$ 30,453	7.71%
ELC Programming	***$ 17,238,781***	***$ 947,024***	***$ 947,024***	**5.49%**
ELC Programs (Districts 1.0)	$ 1,323,376	$ 159,536	$ 159,536	12.06%
Districts 2.0	$ 3,419,903	$ 43,679	$ 43,679	1.28%
Avenue Scholars	$ 1,386,111	$ 127,502	$ 127,502	9.20%
Whispering Roots	$ 68,391	$ -	$ -	0.00%
D2 Center	$ 280,000	$ 73,780	$ 73,780	26.35%
One World	$ 3,279,088	$ 265,549	$ 265,549	8.10%
Superintendents Plan	$ 3,986,647	$ 276,978	$ 276,978	6.95%
OPS Early Childhood Partnership (Sub 5)	$ 1,150,705	$ -	$ -	0.00%
OPS Early Childhood Partnership (Sub 2)	$ 1,797,560	$ -	$ -	0.00%
Henry Doorly Zoo	$ 50,000	$ -	$ -	0.00%
Workforce Hub (New 2025-2026)	$ 250,000	$ -	$ -	0.00%
Bridge (New 2026-2027)	$ 35,000	$ -	$ -	0.00%
Millard Behavior Team	$ 212,000	$ -	$ -	0.00%
Central Admin	***$ 1,821,500***	***$ 154,072***	***$ 154,072***	**8.46%**
Salaries	$ 790,000	$ 55,231	$ 55,231	6.99%
Benefits	$ 272,000	$ 23,667	$ 23,667	8.70%
Other	*$ 759,500*	*$ 75,175*	$ 75,175	*9.90%*
Marketing/Advertising	$ 90,000	$ 5,500	$ 5,500	6.11%
Legal	$ 75,000	$ 96	$ 96	0.13%
Insurance	$ 102,500	$ 2,139	$ 2,139	2.09%

Lobbying	$	34,000	$	2,583	$	2,583	7.60%
Accounting/Audit	$	30,000	$	29,990	$	29,990	99.97%
Other	$	195,000	$	8,078	$	8,078	4.14%
Sponsorships	$	28,000	$	9,400	$	9,400	33.57%
HR/Operations	$	45,000	$	10,800	$	10,800	24.00%
Office Supplies	$	25,000	$	-	$	-	0.00%
Technology (computers, website, IT)	$	95,000	$	6,589	$	6,589	6.94%
Travel/Conference	$	40,000	$	-	$	-	0.00%

Coordinating Council	***$***	***106,000***	***$***	***33,787***	***$***	***33,787***	**31.87%**
Travel/Conferences	$	15,000	$	-	$	-	0.00%
Daily Record / Advertising	$	1,000	$	179	$	179	17.87%
Contracted Services	$	80,000	$	33,608	$	33,608	42.01%
Misc	$	10,000	$	-	$	-	0.00%

Total Expense	**$**	**21,826,990**	**$**	**1,390,078**	**$**	**1,265,409**	**5.80%**

Revenue						
Interest	$	500,000	$	53,380	$	53,380	10.68%
Elementary Learning Center	$	14,962,250	$	272,566	$	272,566	1.82%
Capital Projects	$	1,356,442	$	26,907	$	26,907	1.98%
General Funds	$	470,000	$	470,000	$	470,000	100.00%
Research and Evaluation	$	854,215	$	85,422	$	85,422	10.00%
NCFL Grant - PU	$	30,000			$	-	
Total Revenue	**$**	**18,172,908**	**$**	**908,274**	**$**	**908,274**	**5.00%**

YTD Percentage	8.33%

LEARNING COMMUNITY OF DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES

LEARNING COMMUNITY COORDINATING COUNCIL

September 17, 2026

A meeting of the Coordinating Council of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties was held on September 17, 2026, at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha, 1612 N 24th Street, Omaha, NE 68110. Notice of the meeting, containing the date, time and agenda, was given in advance thereof by publication in the Daily Record on Friday- September 11th, 2026. The proofs of publication have been received and will be made a permanent part of the record of the meeting. Notice of the agenda was given to all members of the Council on Friday- September 11th, 2026.

1. **Opening the Meeting:** The meeting was convened and called to order by Chair Shelton at ____.
1.a. **Call to order:** The regular meeting of the Learning Community Coordinating Council is called to order on September 17, at 6:00 p.m.
1.b. **Council Mission Statement:** 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.
1.c. **Public Notice and Compliance Nebraska Open Meetings Law:** Public Notice was published in The Daily Record on September 11 and on the Learning Community Website.
1.d. **Council Roll Call:**
1.e. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Please stand and face the flag for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Shelton discussed the outcome of the School Reports.
2. **Public Comment:** Are there any public comments?
3. **Good News Report!**
4. **Reports:**
4.a. Chair Report:
4.b. CEO Report
4.c. Treasurer Report:
4.d. Legal Counsel:
4.e. Foundation:
5. **Consent Agenda:**

Unless removed from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted on at one time.

5.a. Minutes of the September 17, 2026, meeting of the Council.

LEVY MEETING
Call meeting to order 5:01pm Sharnelle Shelton

Council Roll call –
Present: Cynthia Johnson, David Preston Jr, Sharnelle Shelton, Carol Hahn, Warren Whitted Jr, Mark Hoeger, Stephen Bloom

Absent: Raquel Rodriguez, Tonya Ward, Doug Brady, Tim Hall, Jason Taylor

Staff: Gerald Kuhn, Andrew Keck, Josue Covarrubias, Juliana Lopez, Kristine Sorenson

Call to meeting – 5:15pm – Sharnell Shelton

No public comment

LEVY EVALUATION
75k increase in tax increase
ELC Levy – 22 million to fund programming
2 million will fund existing programming

5:23 pm closed to the public

- Increase of programming
- New ovens $40k
- Projectors $10k, looking for bids
- Carpet $15k
- Consultant fee $30k
- Decrease in budget for programming
- Evaluating new laptops

New motion for approval for Bridge Programming
The biggest increase is for the Coordinating Council.
Budget increase of 3%
Funding April and August
The meeting ended at 5:52 pm.

BUDGET MEETING/LCCC
Council Roll call –
Present: Cynthia Johnson, David Preston Jr, Sharnelle Shelton, Carol Hahn, Warren Whitted Jr, Mark Hoeger, Stephen Bloom, Jason Taylor

Absent: Raquel Rodriguez, Tonya Ward, Doug Brady, Tim Hall

Staff: Gerald Kuhn, Andrew Keck, Josue Covarrubias, Juliana Lopez, Kristine Sorenson

Call meeting to order at 6:00 pm — Sharnelle Shelton

Public Comment – none

Good News report – Vala's fall celebration

Chair Report – Reminder of upcoming CEO evaluation

CEO Report – staff retreat/outings, employee survey results, created a workforce stabilization plan to keep employees staffed. Creating a master calendar so that things don't change; payroll, family events. Kutak rock – New legal partner, GiGi- very well versed in employee training. One World change in leadership. Nationwide search for a new CEO for One World. Lauritzen Gardens has become a new partnership. Sponsorship policy was presented. Tour is coming up with Senator Lonoski next week (9/22 3:30-5:00 pm) for the North and South location. Senator Ashlei Spivey hearing for October 2nd. Senator Margo Juarez date request. Working with the team to get ready for October 2nd. Documentary on the history of the Learning Community. Future Developments.

Treasurer Report – Budget

Agenda – Vote – Whitted voted to approve. Shelton seconded. Motion passed.

Subcommittee Report – No vote

Admin and personnel subcommittee – next meeting as a retention plan, working on a dashboard running metrics. Initial data on a monthly report. CLS change in mindset for on-call service. Made that change in NetSuite.

Center updates – new paint, new signs, paint is not completed, logos are pending to be put up. Classes are resuming and classes are full, focusing on kindergarten readiness. New partnership with CK – onsite programming with onsite classes. Castelar elementary 24 families in attendance, increasing programming even more. Micro business class.

New Business – Bridge one year agreement 35k, general budget, motion to approve, motion passed. No motions to amend, motion passed.

Property tax levy for 2027
Splitting ELC and max
Motion passed for tax

7:04 completed

Keep meeting the same October 15th 6-8pm

5.b. Treasurer's Report – dated August 31, 2026
Motion by Warren Whitted Jr, seconded by Sharnelle Shelton, to Approve. Motion **Passed.**
Bloom: Yea, Brady: Absent, Hahn: Yea, Hall: Absent, Hoeger: Yea, Johnson: Yea, Preston: Yea, Rodriguez: Absent, Shelton: Yea, Taylor: Yea, Ward: Absent, Whitted: Yea
Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Absent: 4
6. **Subcommittee Reports:**
6.a. Elementary, Learning, and Diversity (ELD) subcommittee:
6.b. Budget, Finance & Audit Subcommittee:
6.c. Legislative and Policy subcommittee:
6.d. Administration and Personnel subcommittee:
7. **Programming Update:**
7.a. **Center Updates:**
I. LCCNO
II. LCCSO
8. **New Business:**
9. Motion to Approve "The Bridge" partnership agreement
Motion by Stephen Bloom, seconded by Jason Taylor, to a. Motion to authorize the CEO to enter an ELC programming agreement to "The Bridge" for an amount of $35,000 for FY 2027 (September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027). Approval is contingent upon Council approval of authorization of the elementary learning center levy and the fiscal year 2027 budget of the Learning Community.. Motion **Passed.**
Bloom: Yea, Brady: Absent, Hahn: Yea, Hall: Absent, Hoeger: Yea, Johnson: Yea, Preston: Yea, Rodriguez: Absent, Shelton: Yea, Taylor: Yea, Ward: Absent, Whitted: Yea
Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Absent: 4

10. Approval of the 2026-2027 Learning Community Budget
Motion by Mark Hoeger, seconded by Cynthia Johnson, to Motion to approve the General Fund Budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the amount of $470,500 calling for a total property tax requirement of $0. Motion to approve the Capital Projects Fund Budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the amount of $998,000 calling for a property tax requirement of $1,356,442 plus a 1% County Treasurer Collection Fee of $13,701 for a total property tax requirement of $1,370,143. Motion to approve the Elementary Learning Center Fund Budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the amount of $ $20,406,130 calling for a property tax requirement of $14,962,250 plus a 1% County

Treasurer Collection Fee of $151,133 a total property tax requirement of $15,113,383. Motion to approve the Research & Evaluation Fund Budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the amount of $778,000 calling for a total property tax requirement of $0.. Motion **Passed.**
Bloom: Yea, Brady: Absent, Hahn: Yea, Hall: Absent, Hoeger: Yea, Johnson: Yea, Preston: Yea, Rodriguez: Absent, Shelton: Yea, Taylor: Yea, Ward: Absent, Whitted: Yea
Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Absent: 4

11. Property Tax Levy of the Learning Community for 2026-2027
Motion by David Preston Jr, seconded by Sharnelle Shelton, to Motion to adopt of the following resolutions. WHEREAS, Nebraska Revised Statute § 77-1601.02 provides that the Coordinating Council, as the governing body of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (the "Learning Community"), passes by majority vote a resolution setting the Learning Community's tax requests for its Capital Projects Levy and Elementary Learning Center Levy after holding a public hearing for the purpose of discussing and approving or modifying the Learning Community's tax requests for the 2026-2027 fiscal year; WHEREAS, such special public hearing was held on September 17, 2026 as required by law to receive and consider public comments regarding the proposed property tax requests of the Learning Community's Capital Projects Levy and Elementary Learning Center Levy, notice of the special public hearing having been given in accordance with Nebraska Revised Statute § 77-1601.02; WHEREAS, the total assessed value of the property differs from the previous year's total assessed value by 5.86%; the tax rate which would levy the same amount of property taxes as the previous year, when multiplied by the new total assessed value of property would be $ 0.015760561 per $100 of assessed value; the Learning Community proposes to adopt a property tax requests that will cause its tax rate to be $ 0.014887755 per $100 of assessed value for the 2026-2027 fiscal year; WHEREAS, based on the proposed property tax request and changes in other revenue, the total operating budget of Learning Community will increase last year's budget by 3.78% percent; and WHEREAS, the Coordinating Council, after having reviewed the Learning Community's tax requests for each said levy, and after public consideration of the matter, has determined that the tax requests as listed are necessary in order to carry out the functions of the Learning Community, as determined by the Coordinating Council for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.. Motion **Passed.**
Bloom: Yea, Brady: Absent, Hahn: Yea, Hall: Absent, Hoeger: Yea, Johnson: Yea, Preston: Yea, Rodriguez: Absent, Shelton: Yea, Taylor: Nay, Ward: Absent, Whitted: Yea
Yea: 7, Nay: 1, Absent: 4

12. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at: Motion by Stephen Bloom, seconded by Carol Hahn, to motion to adjourn. Motion **Passed.**
Bloom: Yea, Brady: Absent, Hahn: Yea, Hall: Absent, Hoeger: Yea, Johnson: Yea, Preston:

Yea, Rodriguez: Absent, Shelton: Yea, Taylor: Yea, Ward: Absent, Whitted: Yea
Yea: 8, Nay: 0, Absent: 4

13. **Next Meeting - October 15, 2026 at 6:00 PM**

learning community
DOUGLAS SARPY

402-505-4301
1612 North 24th St
Omaha, NE 68110

Chief Executive Officer
Gerald M. Kuhn, II

COORDINATING COUNCIL OFFICERS

Chair
Sharnelle Shelton

Vice Chair
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez

Secretary
Tim Hall

Treasurer
Jason Taylor

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Achievement Subcouncil 1
David Preston, Jr
Cindy Johnson

Achievement Subcouncil 2
Carol Hahn
Sharnelle Shelton

Achievement Subcouncil 3
Mark Hoeger
Warren Whitted, Jr

Achievement Subcouncil 4
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Stephen Bloom

Achievement Subcouncil 5
Douglas Brady
Tonya Ward

Achievement Subcouncil 6
Jason Taylor
Tim Hall

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.

VISION

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

LearningCommunityDS.org

Learning Community Center of North Omaha
September 2026 Program Report
Reporting Period: September 1–30, 2026

General Information

During September, LCCNO continued providing educational programming, family support, and community resources through a two-generation (2Gen), equity-centered approach. The center focused on strengthening adult learning, family engagement, community partnerships, and opportunities for family growth and leadership.

Center Programming

Adult Education: ESL Levels 1–6 continued through daytime and evening classes, alongside U.S. Citizenship programming.

Parent and Family Programming: Families had opportunities to participate in Parents Know Best, Whispering Roots, String Sprouts, and North Omaha Collective, offering family education, nutrition, music, and healing-centered engagement.

Workforce Development: Career readiness programming was reviewed after staff identified the need for additional foundational and digital literacy support. Future sessions will be adjusted to better prepare participants for training and employment opportunities.

Parent Education: Community Conversations for Parents was placed on hold while the team reviews family needs and determines an appropriate program structure.

Family Engagement and Resource Navigation

Educational Navigators and family engagement staff continued connecting families to resources, educational opportunities, and community partners. LCCNO remains committed to addressing barriers, strengthening family voice, and helping parents build confidence in advocating for themselves and their children.

Professional Development and Program Improvement

September's program adjustments emphasized aligning instruction with participants' needs and readiness. Next steps include reviewing foundational learning needs, coordinating with partners, gathering participant feedback, and improving program accessibility and effectiveness.

Success Story: Supporting Employment Goals

Social Assistant Sandra Gijon accompanied Lydia to JBS to assist with an in-person job application. Educational Navigators Ku and Dah provided translation support. After completing the application, Lydia was informed she would receive a call regarding next steps and a potential interview. Lydia expressed gratitude, sharing that she had felt lost and unsure where to apply in person. With LCCNO's support, she felt relieved and more confident pursuing her employment goals.

learning community
DOUGLAS SARPY

402-505-4301
1612 North 24th St
Omaha, NE 68110

Chief Executive Officer
Gerald M. Kuhn, II

COORDINATING COUNCIL OFFICERS

Chair
Sharnelle Shelton

Vice Chair
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez

Secretary
Tim Hall

Treasurer
Jason Taylor

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Achievement Subcouncil 1
David Preston, Jr
Cindy Johnson

Achievement Subcouncil 2
Carol Hahn
Sharnelle Shelton

Achievement Subcouncil 3
Mark Hoeger
Warren Whitted, Jr

Achievement Subcouncil 4
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Stephen Bloom

Achievement Subcouncil 5
Douglas Brady
Tonya Ward

Achievement Subcouncil 6
Jason Taylor
Tim Hall

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.

VISION

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

LearningCommunityDS.org

September Highlights and Next Steps

- **Adult Education:** Continue ESL and citizenship classes.
- **Career Readiness:** Assess foundational learning needs and coordinate additional support with partners.
- **Parent Education:** Review the future structure of Community Conversations for Parents.
- **Family Engagement:** Continue resource navigation and referrals.
- **Partnerships:** Confirm schedules, room assignments, and upcoming programming.
- **Program Quality:** Track participation, feedback, barriers, and family outcomes.

Overall Summary

September reflected continued educational programming, community collaboration, and program improvement at LCCNO. By responding to family needs, strengthening resource navigation, and refining career readiness supports, the center continues working to connect participation with meaningful outcomes for children and adults. Moving forward, LCCNO will prioritize family empowerment, connection, growth, and leadership.

learning community center
OF SOUTH OMAHA

402-502-5512
2302 M St.
Omaha, NE 68107

Chief Executive Officer
Gerald M. Kuhn, II

COORDINATING COUNCIL OFFICERS
Chair
Sharnell Shelton
Vice Chair
Mark Hoeger
Secretary
Cindy Johnson
Treasurer
Tim Hall

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Achievement Subcouncil 1
David Preston, Jr
Cindy Johnson
Achievement Subcouncil 2
Carol Hahn
Sharnelle Shelton
Achievement Subcouncil 3
Mark Hoeger
Warren Whitted, Jr
Achievement Subcouncil 4
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Stephen Bloom
Achievement Subcouncil 5
Douglas Brady
Tonya Ward
Achievement Subcouncil 6
Jason Taylor
Tim Hall

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.

VISION

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

LearningCommunityDS.org

learning community DOUGLAS SARPY

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA

9/4/26 – 10/5/26

General Info

- Fall programming is up and running and is a very busy time of year for the LCCSO. During this time of year, we offer extra programming, including Prime Time Family Reading Program (45 parents and children), College Prep for Families (45 parents and children), and String Sprouts violin (39 children plus caregivers).
- We met with Bancroft Elementary leadership to plan for the upcoming program year and help meet their expectations of our program. They asked that we focus on literacy, so our LCCSO team at Bancroft Elementary launched a weekly family reading program for each group after their other class ends. Parents read a short book with their children, then color it or complete an activity related to the book's content. Parents whose children are not in childcare are encouraged to join a family that has more than one child. The initiative aims to increase parent-child interaction and strengthen reading skills for both children and parents.
- We began a therapist-moderated mental health support group on-site, provided through grant funding.
- As our participants' needs are changing, we are also adjusting our hours and offerings. For example, because the evening programming has a waitlist and the afternoon time slot does not, we are moving some courses currently offered in the afternoon to the evening.
- We continue planning for our next satellite location at MCC South Express on 24th and Vinton.
- Our Completely Kids partnership is going well, and school-aged children are motivated to attend class with their parents in the evenings.
- We recruited at the Molina Baby Shower and have other recruitment events at the schools planned for this Fall.
- We participated in the UNO Social Work Practicum Fair to be considered for a site for a social work practicum student.

Center Programming

September was the first full month of our 2026/27 program year. Classes were offered Monday to Friday from 9 am-12 pm (Bancroft Elementary and main center locations) and 12:45 pm-2:45 pm (both locations on certain days of the week). LCCSO evening program is Monday to Thursday from 5 pm-8 pm, and Saturday programming is offered once a month and lasts 2 to 6 hours.

- Interactive Parent/Child Programming
  - College Prep for Families program
  - String Sprouts violin program for 3-5 year olds
  - Home visits are scheduled approximately every three to four weeks
- Parent Programming
  - ESL for Parents: 15 cohorts
  - GED for Parents: 3 cohorts
  - Parent Workshops included:
    - Microbusiness Class (Greater Omaha Chamber)

learning community center
OF SOUTH OMAHA

402-502-5512
2302 M St.
Omaha, NE 68107

Chief Executive Officer
Gerald M. Kuhn, II

COORDINATING COUNCIL OFFICERS
Chair
Sharnell Shelton
Vice Chair
Mark Hoeger
Secretary
Cindy Johnson
Treasurer
Tim Hall

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Achievement Subcouncil 1
David Preston, Jr
Cindy Johnson
Achievement Subcouncil 2
Carol Hahn
Sharnelle Shelton
Achievement Subcouncil 3
Mark Hoeger
Warren Whitted, Jr
Achievement Subcouncil 4
Raquel Dixon Rodriguez
Stephen Bloom
Achievement Subcouncil 5
Douglas Brady
Tonya Ward
Achievement Subcouncil 6
Jason Taylor
Tim Hall

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.

VISION

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

LearningCommunityDS.org

learning community
DOUGLAS
SARPY

- Digital Literacy classes (LCCSO staff)
- Circle of Security Parenting (LCCSO staff)
- Mind in the Making (ESU #3 trainer)
- Intro to Finances (Lending Link)
- Bienvenido Mental Health (UNMC Center for Reducing Health Disparities)
- Project Harmony series (Project Harmony)
- Workforce Development class (LCCSO staff)
- Community Café (The BRIDGE, facilitated by LCCSO participants)
- Nurturing Parenting (LCCSO staff)
  - Child Learning programming during parent classes
    - Regular programming for children aged 0-5
      - Lil' Rosies Storytime through the Rose Theater twice a month in both toddlers and preschool classrooms
      - Opera Omaha Storytime and child-focused programming (both locations)
  - Community Childcare training/coaching for South Omaha childcare providers
    - 16 childcare providers receiving weekday coaching and Saturday trainings/collaboration meetings

Professional Development

- Early Learning Guidelines – Science and Math (2 child learning staff)
- OneWorld Leadership Growth Series (LCCSO management)
- Child Development Associate in process (LCCSO Program Manager)
- Home Visit Rating Scale Training to learn about best practices (Educational Navigator team)
- Facilitating Attuned Interactions training (3 staff) and reflective coaching (4 staff)
- BECI's Len's Series training (Family Engagement Team, some on Child Learning team)
- Biweekly MSW consulting on difficult cases (2 Social Assistance Navigators)
- Circle of Security Classroom (daytime Child Learning Providers)
- Community Health Worker Apprenticeship Program through Creighton University (one Educational Navigator)
- Leadership Omaha Class 49 retreat (LCCSO Director)
- COSP Facilitator Training (1 Parent Time Faciliator)
- Food Handlers Training through Douglas County Health Department (staff who handle snacks)

Success Stories

#1

ALL of my students are borrowing books from the classroom library to take home and read to their children!!! This inspired me to develop a lesson that should increase their engagement in reading to their kids. We will work on writing reviews for the books in the classroom library so people who may wish to borrow them have some sense of what the books are about. Authentic learning experiences like this are exceptionally powerful because it driven from an internal

domain and because their writing will have an impact on other people in their community.

Submitted by Kim Swanger, ESL Instructor

#2

I regularly ask my students where they have used English throughout the last week in the beginning of class. When I first began this exercise, many of my students would often admit they have not practiced their English other than in class. However, this week, when I asked the question to my students, every single one of my students had an answer for a place in which they had tried to practice their English this week. There were answers about introducing themselves to neighbors, returning merchandise to a store, calling a son's soccer coach to ask for the details of a game, speaking with a doctor about a prescription, talking on the phone with a schoolteacher, and more. Many of the students were incredibly excited to share their stories and the success they had speaking in English.
One student in my class told me she has a meeting once a week with someone from the Salvation Army. She says that she has now been conducting these meetings entirely in English for a few weeks, and the worker told her that her English is fantastic.

Submitted by Maddie Shoemaker, ESL Instructor

#3

Lisset, who is a local childcare provider participating in the LCCSO's Cultivando Generaciones Futuras training and coaching cohort, spoke about early childhood care in Omaha during Mayor Ewing's press conference on 9/24 regarding the launch of a citywide parent survey with the goal of supporting early childhood.

Submitted by Carolina Ibarra Nielsen, Program Manager



The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

learning community DOUGLAS SARPY

2025-2026 Evaluation Report

Buffett Early Childhood Institute



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER™
MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE

Acknowledgements

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is an initiative of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska in collaboration with the 11 School District Superintendents and the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The annual evaluation of the Superintendents' Plan is conducted by the Munroe Meyer Institute (MMI) within the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) under contract with the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The following report presents MMI's comprehensive evaluation of programmatic activities conducted during the 2025-2026 academic year.

Evaluation Report prepared by

Sangyoo Lee, PhD., sanlee@unmc.edu
Allison Jadoobirsingh, MS
Kailey Snyder, Ph.D., University of Nebraska, Omaha

Primary Investigator: Jolene Johnson, Ed.D., Director,
MMI Department of Education and Child Development

Evaluation staff within MMI that supported the evaluation design, data collection, and analyses of this report include:

Cynthia Villanueva Castro, BS
Olivia Arroyo Kotinek, MA
Nataly Biodrowski, BS
Nicole Buchholz, MS
Briseyda Ceballos Cornejo, BSEd, BA
Stefanie Contreras, BSW, BA
Yaritza Estrada Garcia, BA
Jennifer Harmon, LICSW
Sasha Spencer, MEd
Linda Villagomez, MA
Rebecca Zessin, MEd

The suggested citation for this report is: Munroe Meyer Institute (2026). Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan: 2025-2026 Evaluation Report



The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is funded by the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. https://learningcommunityds.org/

Table of Contents

Program Overview ---- 4

Evaluation Overview ---- 5

Academic Achievement Reflections ---- 6

Ages and Stages Questionnaires ---- 11

Family Engagement Survey ---- 13

Family Engagement: Perceptions of Social Support ---- 19

Professional Learning Opportunities ---- 33

Lens of the Child ---- 36

Teacher Leadership Network ---- 39

Teacher Self-Efficacy ---- 45

Leadership Effectiveness ---- 46

Action Planning Progress ---- 48

Districts & Institute Collaboration ---- 50

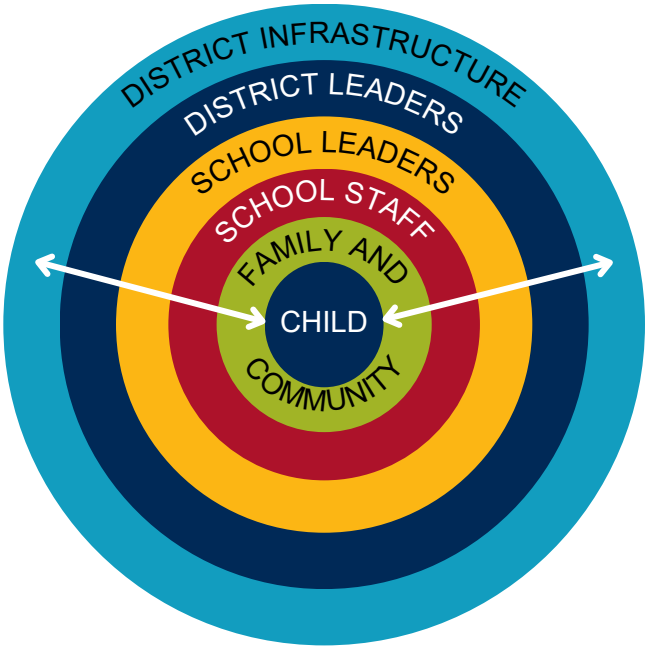
Definitions & References ---- 78

Program Overview: The School as Hub Approach

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan was introduced in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the fall of 2015. It offers an innovative, comprehensive approach to reducing achievement gaps for young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. The 2025-2026 school year marks the 11th program year of the Superintendents' Plan. The program is guided by the School as Hub Birth through Grade 3 approach.

This framework serves as a flexible resource, allowing districts to tailor their approach to their unique needs and ongoing processes. There are School as Hub sites in ten elementary schools across six school districts in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. The evaluation was grounded in a value-engaged approach with primary outcomes of focus on program improvement and program quality assessment. A combination of assessments and methodologies was used to evaluate the collaborative relationship between the Buffett

Systems Focus



Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska and school districts, as well as district-level and school-level changes. Specific focus was given to assessing the various components in the School as Hub framework; see the figure below for additional details.

Framework

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

Evaluation Overview

Child-Level Outcomes

- How does engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan influence students' academic growth within School as Hub sites?
  - **Measure:** Academic Achievement Reflections
- How does engagement in the Superintendents' Plan influence students' social-emotional development within School as Hub sites?
  - **Measure:** Ages and Stages Questionnaires

Family-Level Outcomes

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

Systems-Level Outcomes

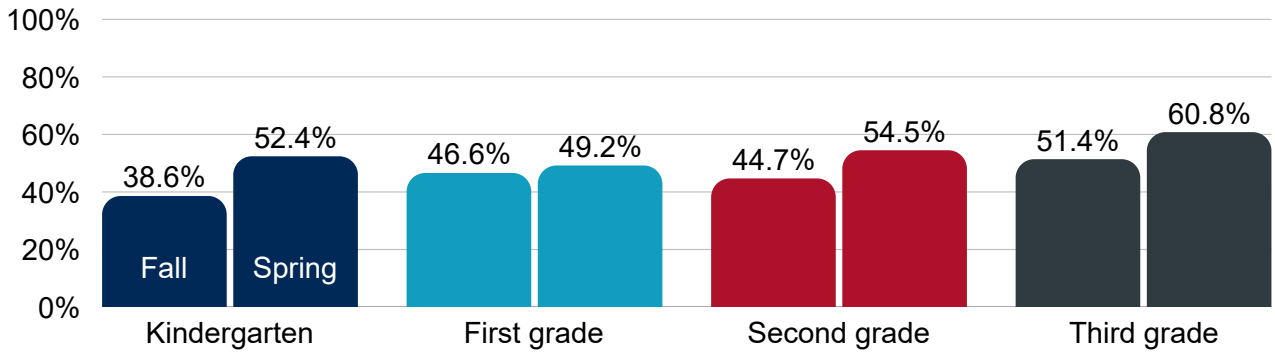
- What was the depth of learning from participants engaged in professional learning opportunities?
  - **Measure**: Professional Learning Survey
- How has participation in the Lens of the Child series shaped educators' knowledge and confidence in implementing the six essential child experiences?
  - **Measure**: Lens of the Child Survey
- How has participation in the Teacher Leadership Network shaped teachers' leadership roles and their implementation of the School as Hub approach in their schools?
  - **Measure**: Teacher Leadership Network Focus Groups
- How did engagement in the Superintendents' Plan communities of practice influence teacher and principal perceptions of self-efficacy for teaching and leadership?
  - **Measure**: Self-Efficacy Surveys
- How much progress was made towards district-level action plan goals?
  - **Measure**: Action Plan Focus Groups
- What are the barriers and facilitators to collaboration between district stakeholders and Institute staff members?
  - **Measure:** Collaboration Survey

Academic Achievement Reflections

Principals at each School as Hub site and one district leader were asked to report the percentage of students who scored at or above the 50th percentile, as well as the average national percentile rank in reading and math for each grade level, using the district's chosen assessment tool (e.g., FastBridge, MAP, NSCAS). Principals were then asked to reflect on whether growth was achieved at each grade level and how engagement in the Superintendents' Plan supported academic achievement at their school. Finally, principals were asked what is needed from the plan to achieve academic goals for the 2026-2027 school year.

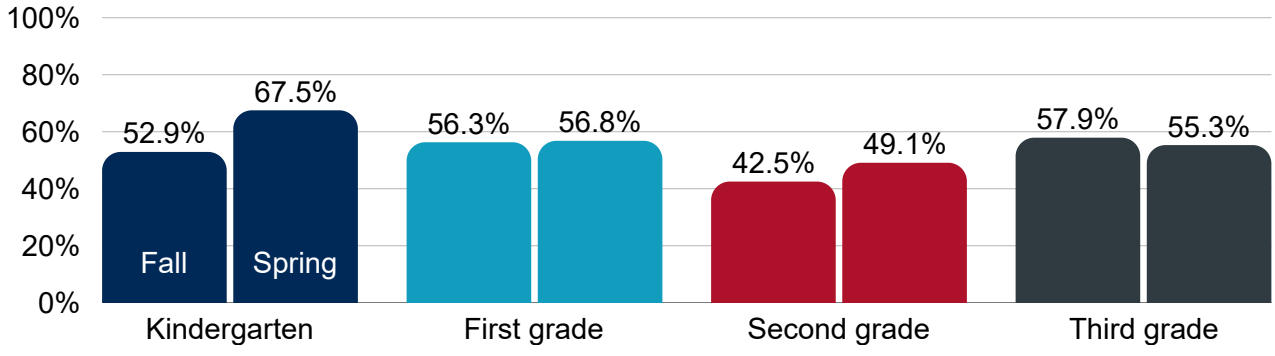
Students at or above the 50th percentile in reading

The average percentage of students who scored at or above the 50th percentile in reading is reported for fall and spring by grade level. Overall, the percentage of students scoring at or above the national median in reading increased across all grade levels. The largest increase was observed in kindergarten, with an increase of 13.8 percentage points.



Students at or above the 50th percentile in math

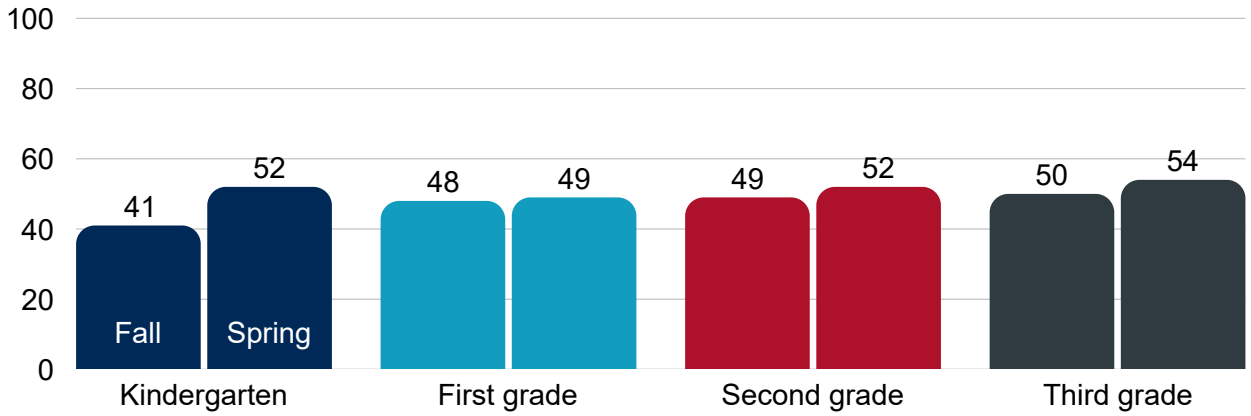
The average percentage of students who scored at or above the 50th percentile in math is reported for fall and spring by grade level. Overall, the percentage of students scoring at or above the national median in math increased over time for kindergarten and second grade, with the largest increase observed in kindergarten, at 14.6 percentage points. The percentage remained steady for first grade and decreased slightly for third grade.



Academic Achievement Reflections

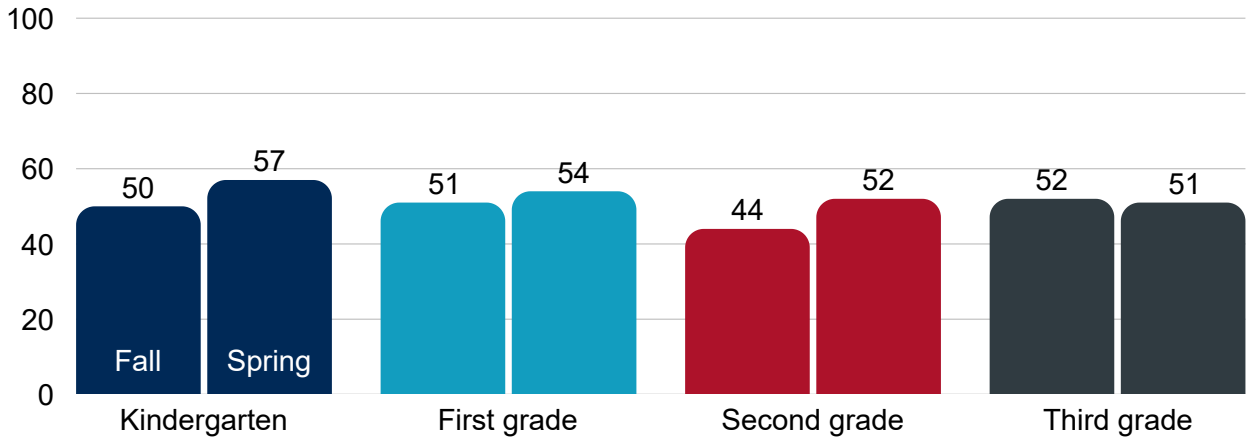
Average national percentile rank in reading

The average national percentile rank in reading is reported for fall and spring by grade level. Overall, average national percentile ranks increased from fall to spring across all grade levels, with kindergarten students showing the largest increase by 11 percentile points.



Average national percentile rank in math

The average national percentile rank in math is reported for fall and spring by grade level. Overall, average national percentile ranks increased from fall to spring for students in kindergarten through second grade, with kindergarten and second-grade students showing the largest increases of 7 percentile points.



Academic Achievement Reflections

VARIATION IN ACADEMIC GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES

School leaders described variation in achievement patterns across grades and subjects. Several schools reported gains in reading and mathematics, while others expressed concerns about limited growth in specific grades or content areas. Despite some positive improvements, many leaders noted that achievement levels remained below desired targets and highlighted the need for continued improvement efforts. School leaders remain determined to push forward.

"Our literacy achievement scores are not yet where we want them to be, and we recognize there is important work ahead to reach our goals. We are using this data as a call to action to sharpen our instruction, deepen our interventions, and more closely align our practices with evidence-based literacy strategies so that more students meet and exceed expectations."

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL TRANSITIONS

Several school leaders discussed the implementation of new literacy and math programs during the past one to two years. Leaders described a learning curve for both teachers and students as they adapted to new instructional approaches, curricula, pacing guides, and assessments. Many noted that the current year represented an adjustment period and anticipated that student outcomes would improve as implementation becomes more established and students become more familiar with the new programs.

"We will evolve our pacing guide, instructional practices, and our students will become more familiar with the process, verbiage, and approach of the curriculum, which will help when looking at data for next year."

COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT THROUGH INSTRUCTION AND COLLABORATION

School leaders frequently described using achievement data to guide instructional improvement efforts. Strategies included strengthening instructional practices, refining intervention supports, improving planning and pacing, and implementing evidence-based literacy approaches. Several leaders also emphasized collaboration among educators as an important mechanism to support student growth and address learning needs.

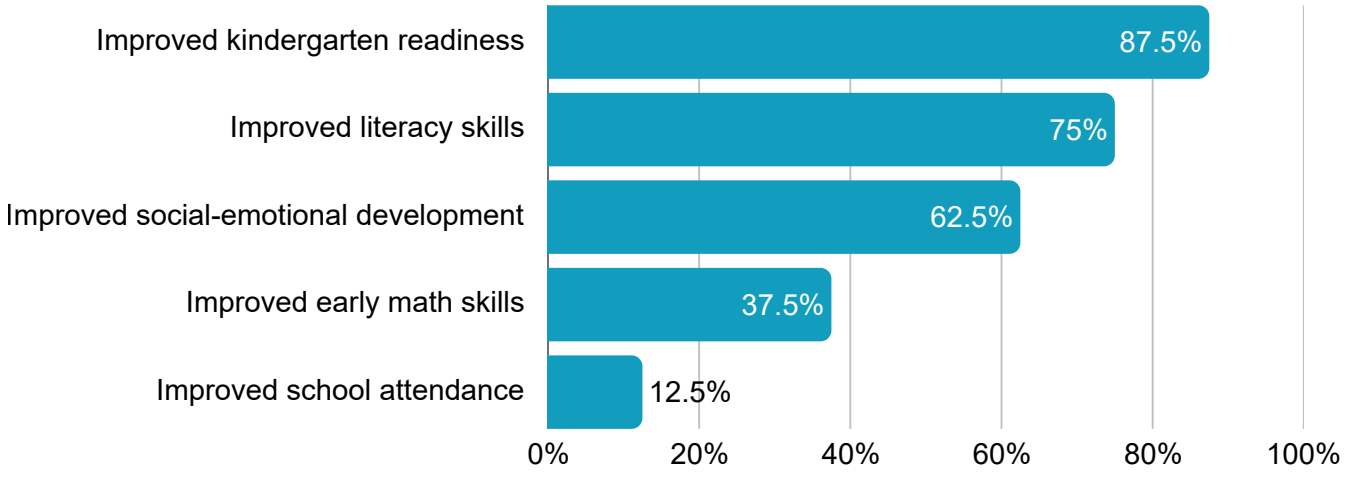
"We met this Spring about making sure [to] supplement the new curriculum with tasks and activities that will support students will all parts of the learning process for reading."

"[We have] good collaboration amongst our intervention staff and classroom teachers to find ways for all students to grow no matter their background knowledge or lack of fundamental skills."

Outcomes from Engagement in Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

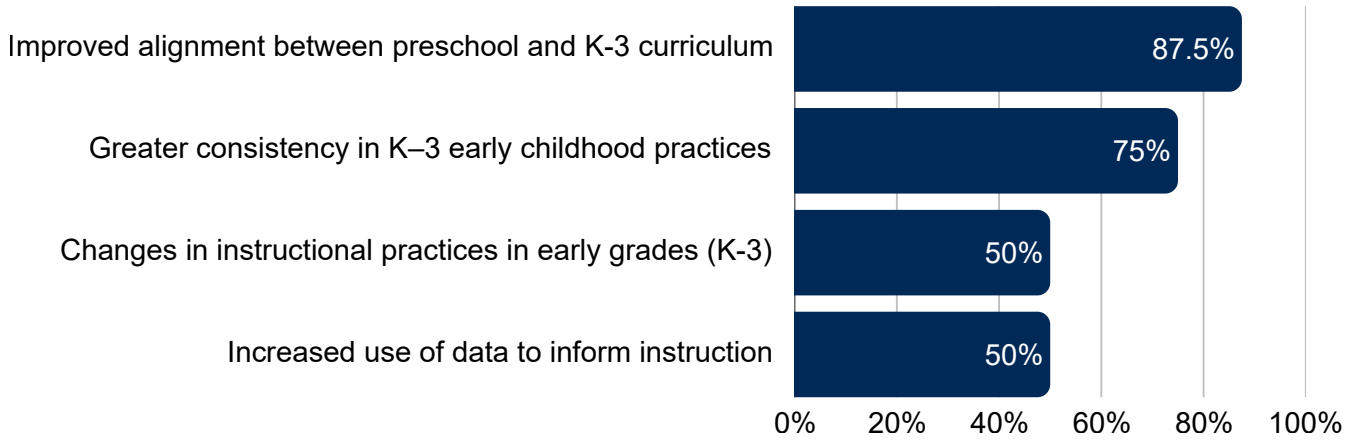
School leaders were asked how their school's engagement in the Superintendents' Plan contributed to student outcomes, instructional and practice outcomes, accountability and achievement, and school and system outcomes.

Contributions to Student Outcomes (n=8)



Leaders reported improved kindergarten readiness, improved literacy skills, and social-emotional development as key student outcomes.

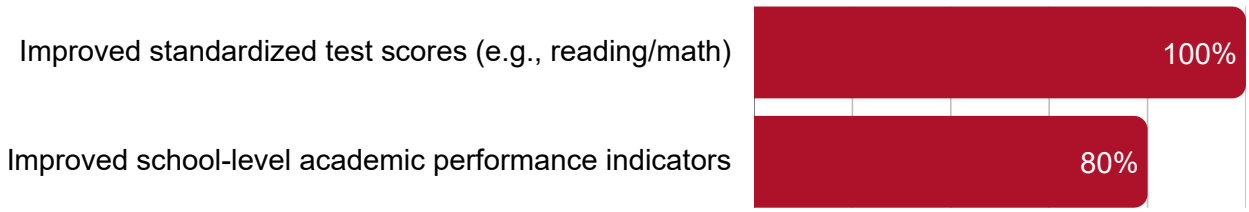
Contributions to Instructional/Practice Outcomes (n=8)



Improved alignment between preschool and K-3 curriculum and greater consistency in early childhood practices across grades were identified as key contributions to instructional and practice outcomes by 75% or more of participants.

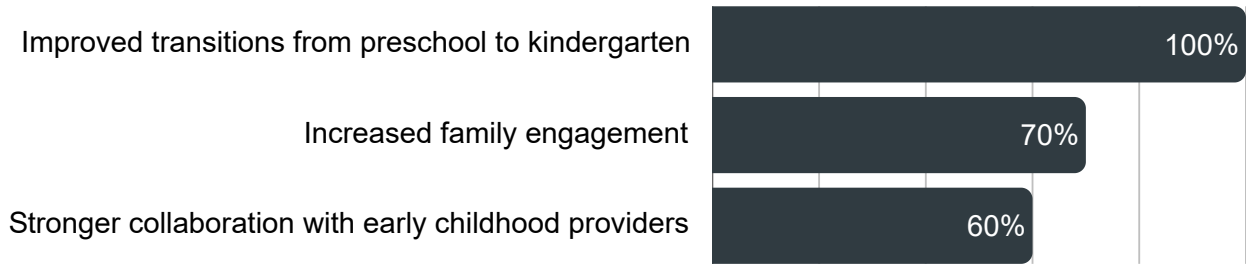
Academic Achievement Reflections

Contributions to Accountability/Achievement (n=5)



All respondents reported standardized test scores as a contribution to achievement. 80% reported improved school-level academic performance indicators.

Contributions to School and System Outcomes (n=10)



All school leaders saw improved transitions from preschool to kindergarten. The majority saw increased family engagement (70%) and stronger collaboration with early childhood providers (60%).

Identified strategies for the 2026-2027 school year

For the 2026-2027 school year, school leaders identified several focus areas to support academic achievement. Sixty percent of respondents indicated plans to strengthen cross-grade early literacy instruction for grades K-3, increase targeted reading supports or interventions, and strengthen family engagement efforts within their schools.

Respondents also identified ways the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan could support their schools' academic achievement efforts. **Ninety percent of respondents indicated that they would like support with family engagement efforts**, while 60% identified support for Pre-K students transitioning to kindergarten and opportunities to collaborate with other districts.

How the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Supports Social-Emotional Development

The Superintendents' Plan advances children's social-emotional growth through both home visitation and family-facilitation programs, organized around three core activities:

- **Individual Engagement:** Recruit and work with families of children from the prenatal stage through school entry via scheduled in-home visits. A structured curriculum guides each family in setting and achieving personalized social-emotional development goals.
- **Group Engagement:** Convene families for facilitated learning sessions, using a family-learning curriculum to plan and deliver interactive activities that build social-emotional skills among children and caregivers.
- **Transition Planning:** Develop and facilitate customized transition plans and supports that help children and families move smoothly between different early care and education settings.

Findings for ASQ-SE

- A total of 144 observations were recorded across four districts and eight schools, representing 95 unique students. Of these, 47 students were assessed twice and one student was assessed three times.
- Approximately 89% of observations were screened as No-to-Low Risk, 8% Monitor risk, and 2% Referral risk.
- Approximately 90% of female student observations and 89% of male student observations were screened at No-to-Low Risk.
- Percentage of observations at No-to-Low Risk by year of program participation:

Years of participation	1	2	3+*
Number of student observations	45	40	48
% No-to-low risk	89%	85%	94%

*Combined 3,4,5,6 years due to small sample size

Survey Information

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE) are complementary screening tools designed to help caregivers and professionals monitor young children's development.

The **ASQ provides broad developmental screening** for children aged 1–66 months using 21 questionnaires and scoring sheets. It assesses five domains, Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social, each classified by cut-off scores into Developmental Concern, Borderline, or Typical. The **ASQ-SE screens social and emotional behavior** for children aged 1–72 months using 9 questionnaires and scoring sheets. Its cut-off scores categorize children into Referral, Monitor, or No-to-Low Risk.

Findings for ASQ

- A total of 230 observations were recorded across 6 districts and 14 schools, representing 134 unique students (with 60 students assessed twice and 18 students assessed three times).

	Communication	Gross motor	Fine motor	Problem solving	Personal-social
Typical, %	82.7	91.6	82.3	81.3	86.1
Borderline, %	10.2	6.6	14.6	14.2	7.2
Development Concerns, %	7.1	1.8	3.1	4.4	6.7

- Approximately 82-93% of female student observations and 77-91% of male student observations were screened at Typical across the five ASQ domains.
- Percentage of observations at Typical by years of program participation:

Years of participation	1	2	3+*
Number of student observations	97	63	70
Communication, % Typical	82.6	85.7	80.0
Gross motor, % Typical	88.2	92.1	95.7
Fine motor, % Typical	78.5	85.7	84.3
Problem solving, % Typical	78.5	84.1	82.6
Personal-social, % Typical	85.7	82.5	89.9

*Combined 3,4,5,6 years due to small sample size

Family Engagement Survey Findings

An adaptation of the Road Map Family Engagement Survey (Ishimaru & Lott, 2015) was used to assess families' perceptions about collaboration among families, communities, and schools. Twelve items addressed six domains: Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence, Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, Parent/Family Influence and Decision-Making, Family-Educator Trust, Family-Educator Communication, and Principal Leadership for Engagement. Parents ranked items on a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Online surveys were distributed to families in the six districts with School as Hub sites. Families that had been enrolled or were currently enrolled in home visiting or family facilitation also received the surveys (n=103). The survey was available in 19 languages to accommodate the language needs of all the families at the participating schools.

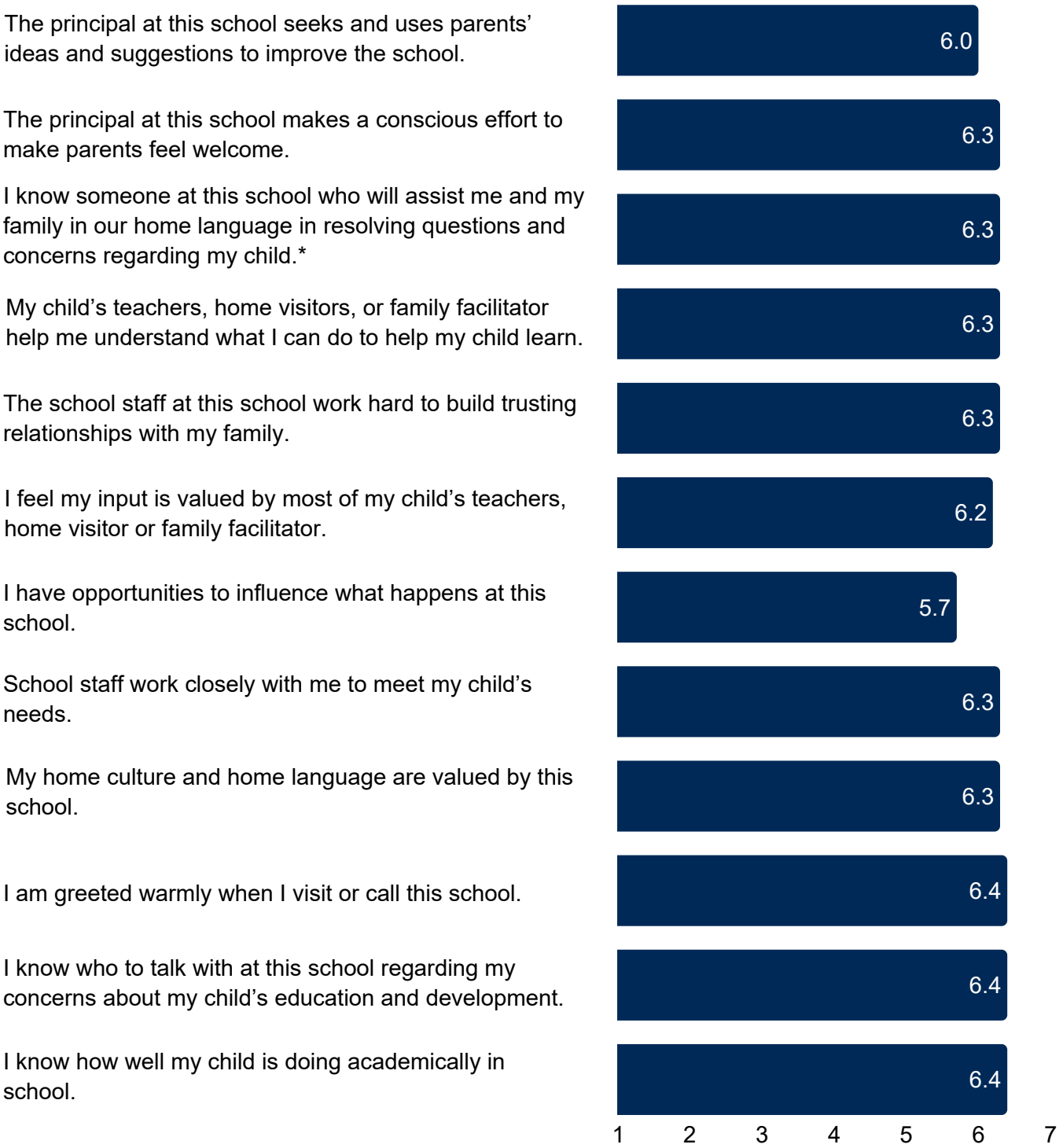
A total of 381 families with at least one child aged birth to grade 3 responded to the survey across 10 schools, with 27% of these families reporting that they speak a language other than English at home. The majority of the families reported their race as White (63%). The next largest race category reported was two or more races (12%), followed by Black (7%), Asian (5%), and American Indian or Alaska Native (2%). Approximately one-third of families (33%) reported their ethnicity as Latinx. More than half of the families (54%) reported that they qualify for the Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) program. Across the schools, the number of families responding to the survey ranged from 11 to 83 per school.

Families typically rated schools very positively, with item averages ranging from 5.7 to 6.4 out of 7. The highest-rated items across the schools were "I know how well my child is doing academically in school" (6.4), "I know who to talk with at this school regarding my concerns and questions about my child's education and development" (6.4), and "I am greeted warmly when I visit or call this school" (6.4). The lowest level of agreement item—still in the high range—was "I have opportunities to influence what happens at this school" (5.7).

Comparison of the survey scales from the last three academic years revealed high, consistent ratings. Among families engaged in home visiting/family facilitation, families that have been engaged in home visiting or family facilitation services for 0-1 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.0; those who have been engaged for 2-3 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.3; those who have been engaged for 4-5 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.5 and those engaged for greater than 5 years had a mean level of agreement of 6.3.

Ratings of Family-School Partnerships: Overall

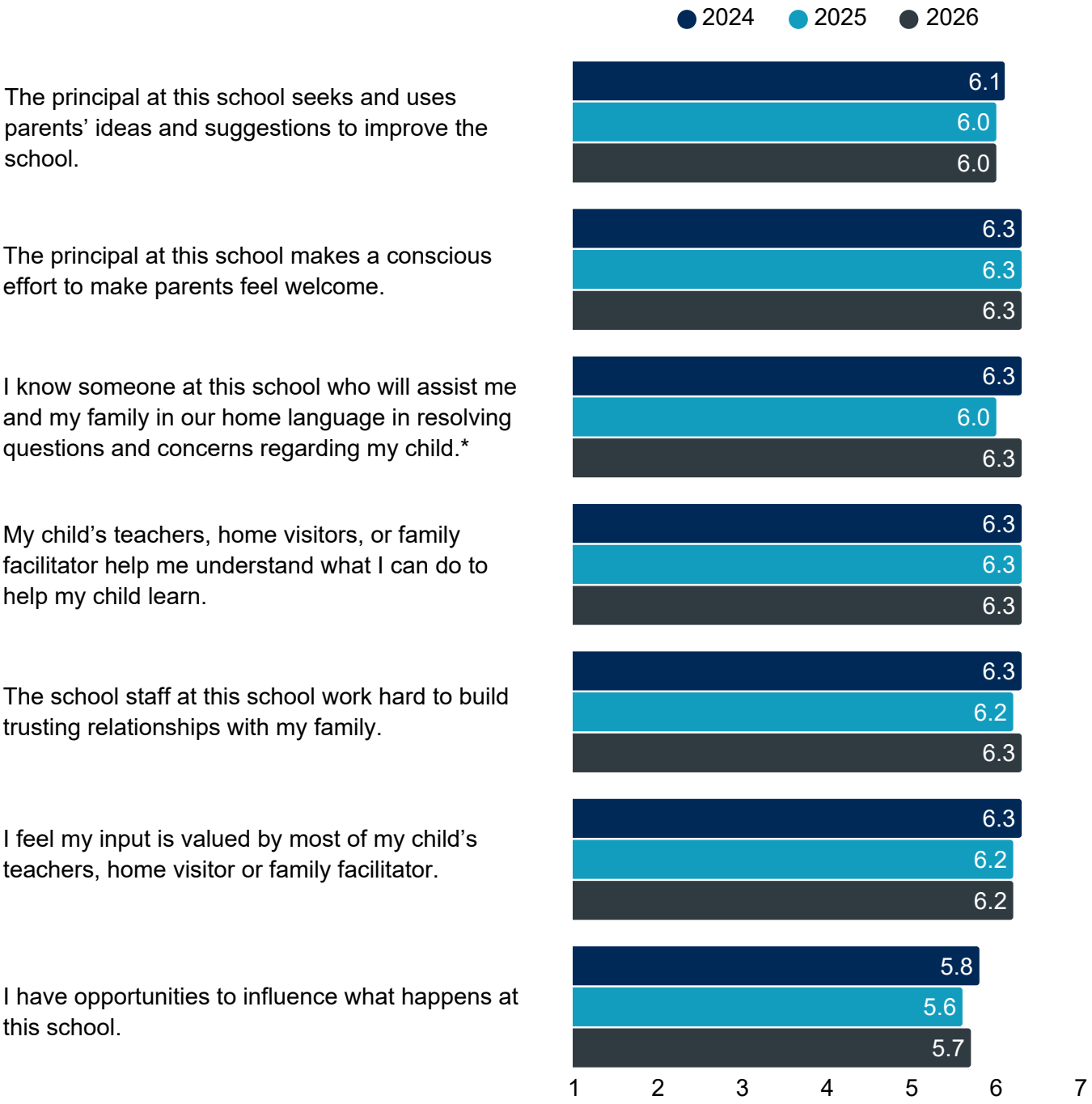
Parents ranked items on a 7-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree). The overall average rating for families' perceptions of school partnership was 6.2 out of 7, indicating that respondents generally agreed with the survey items.



*If your home language is not English

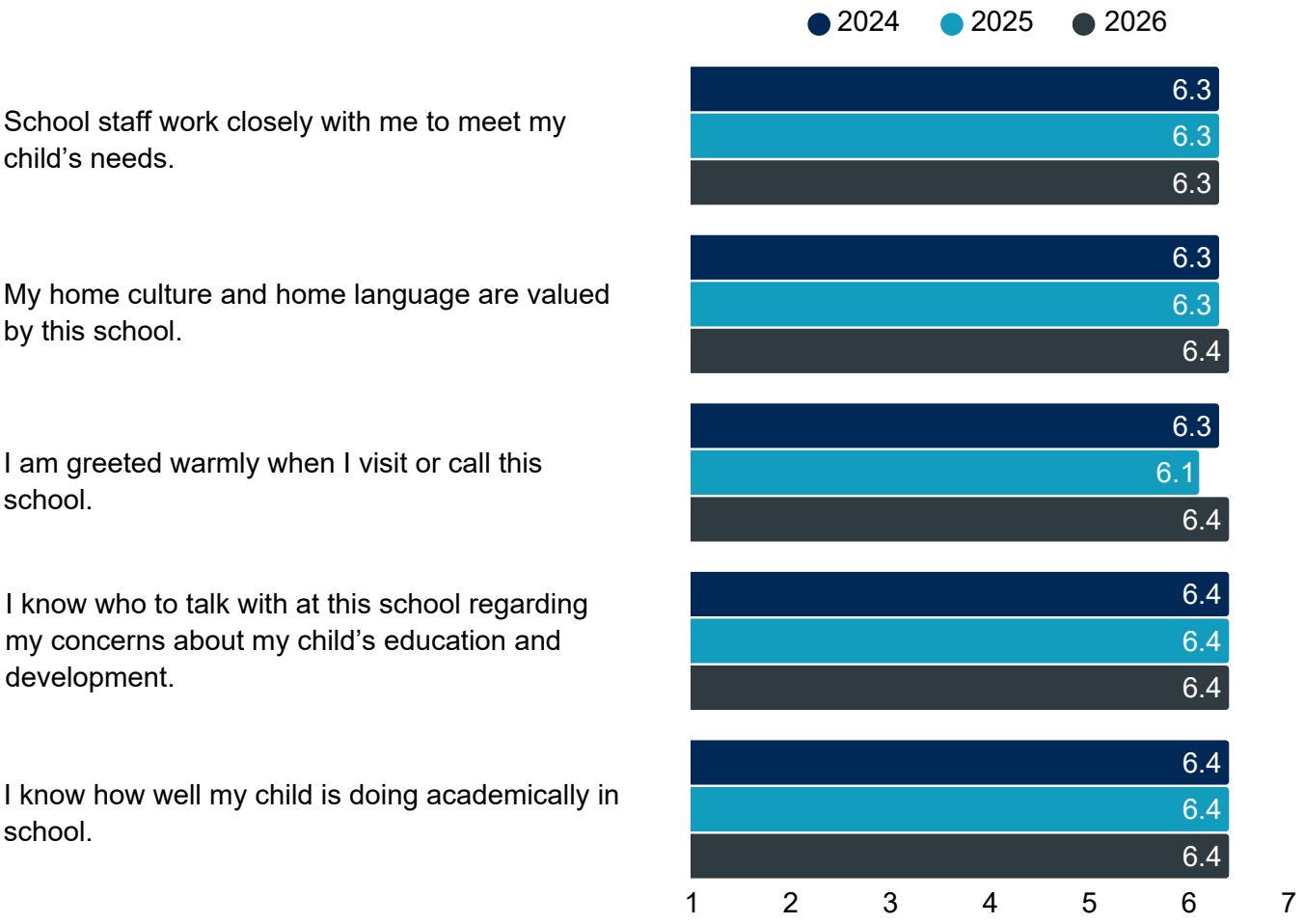
Ratings of Family-School Partnerships: Year-to-Year Comparison

Parents ranked items on a 7-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree). Comparisons across the 2024, 2025, and 2026 academic years showed consistently high ratings of families' perceptions of collaboration among families, communities, and schools. Results are depicted below and continued on the following page.



*If your home language is not English

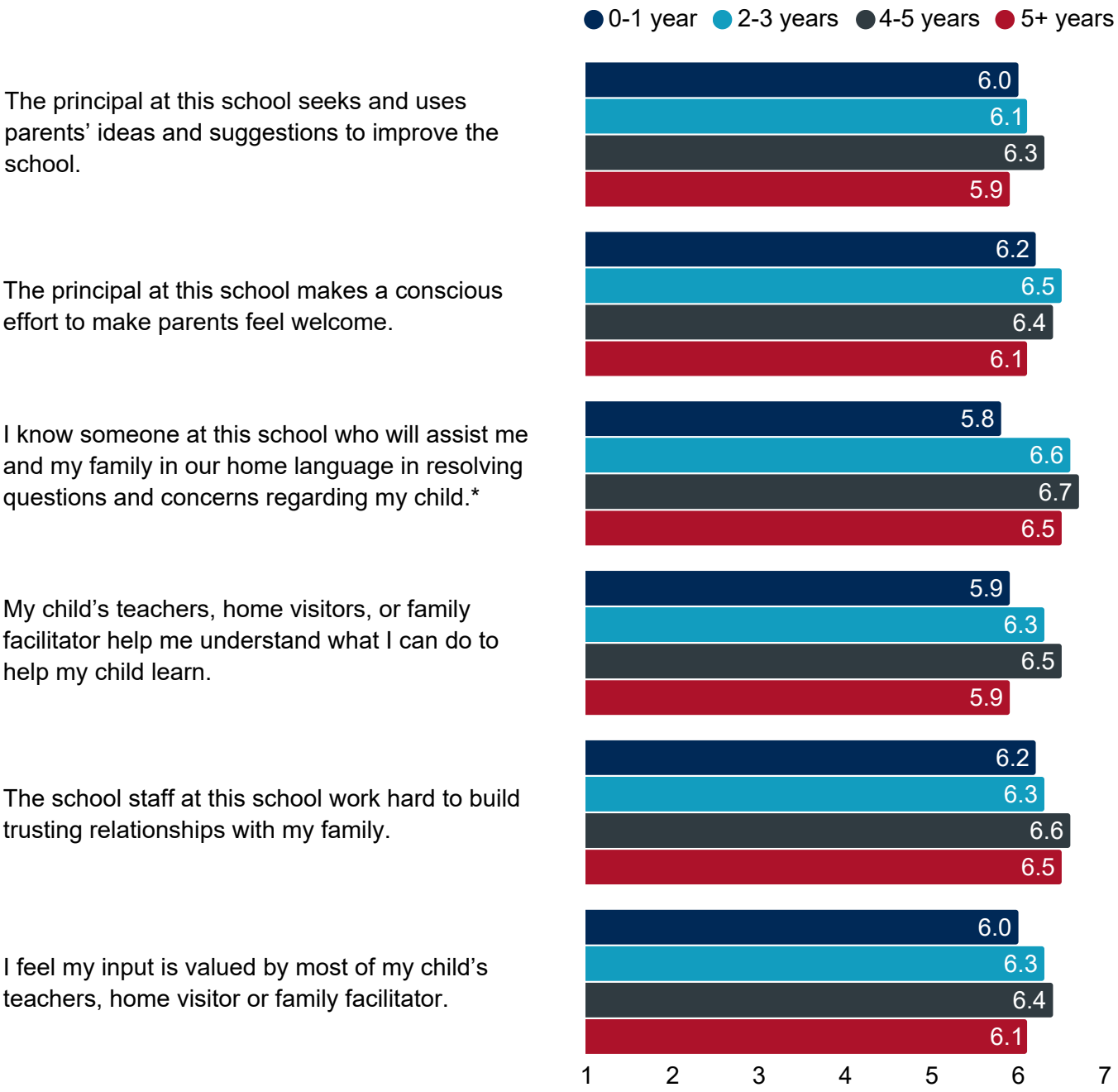
Family Engagement Survey





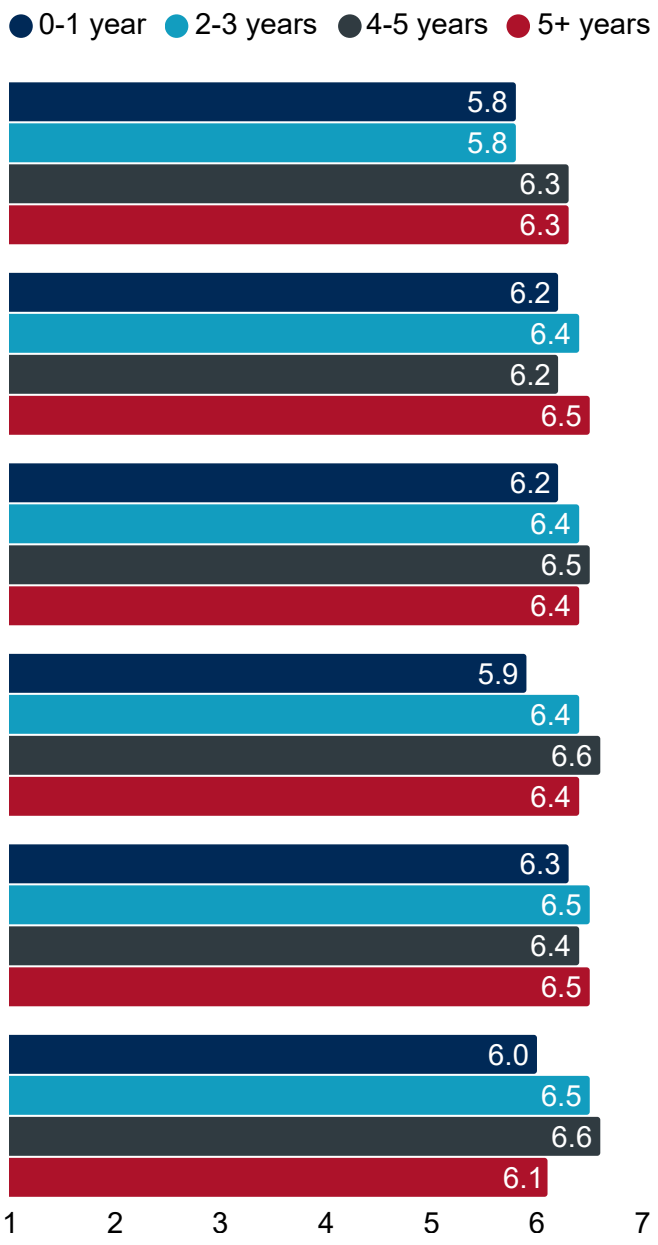
Ratings of Family-School Partnerships by Families Engaged in Home Visiting & Family Facilitation

A total of 190 individuals who completed the survey reported that their family was engaged in home visiting and/or family facilitation at their school. A majority of these individuals reported being engaged for 0-1 year (25%), followed by those with 2-3 years of participation (44%), 4-5 years of participation (17%), and those who had been engaged for more than 5 years (15%). Results are reported below and continue on the following page.



*If your home language is not English

Family Engagement Survey



Family Engagement: Perceptions of Social Support

In the Spring of 2026, Evaluators within the Munroe-Meyer Institute conducted interviews and focus groups with family engagement staff (FES) and families within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. A total of 26 family interviews took place with family representatives (e.g., parents, legal guardians) who had at least one child enrolled in a Superintendent's Plan home visiting and/or family facilitation program at a School as Hub site. When possible, interviews took place in the family's primary language with the assistance of an interpreter. Interviewees identified their primary language as one of the following: English, Spanish, Karen, Karenni, or Vietnamese. The perceptions of FES (i.e., family facilitators and/or home visitors) were also captured via two focus groups (n=12).

Interview and focus group questions were guided by Social Support Theory and designed to address two primary evaluation questions:

1. How does engagement in family engagement programming influence how a family receives social support?
2. What primary support types are engaged families currently receiving?

Qualitative data were analyzed via a process of immersion/crystallization using deductive content analysis. Primary findings from families and staff are identified in this report.

Social Support Theoretical Constructs

- **Instrumental Support:** Tangible aid and service. Examples include support accessing food, diapers, activity materials, and children's books.
- **Informational Support:** Advice, suggestions, and information. Support examples include pamphlets, step-by-step instructions, and teaching about new topics.
- **Appraisal Support:** Information that is useful for self-evaluation, such as asking questions about a person's values or identifying strengths.
- **Emotional Support:** Expressions of empathy, love, trust, and care. Examples include listening without judgment, comforting words, and validating emotions.

Instrumental Support

Family Perspective

Four primary themes emerged related to the provision of instrumental supports. These themes included: (1) Family engagement staff offered and/or supplied resources to meet basic needs, (2) staff provided tangible materials and facilitated impactful activities during visits, (3) staff supported families in applying for resources, and (4) socialization events provided growth opportunities for parents and children.

FES OFFERED AND/OR SUPPLIED RESOURCES TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

Participants reported that FES frequently checked in with them about their needs and offered resources when appropriate. Examples included the diaper program, clothes, food, and materials that allowed children to participate in community events (e.g., sleeping bags). Some participants who didn't need support said that staff provided general information about available resources and programs just in case.

- *"I would say, she's always asking how we're doing, like, she gives me this paper that we fill out every few months, seeing if I know how to get in contact with, like, WIC and things like that, and then I also get the diapers and pull-ups each month, so I would say that's, like, a huge thing, that's a really good resource."*

STAFF PROVIDED TANGIBLE MATERIALS AND FACILITATED IMPACTFUL ACTIVITIES DURING VISITS

Multiple participants noted appreciation for the meaningful activities, reusable materials, and one-on-one instructional time that FES provided during home visits or drop-ins. They described how staff often tailored activities to match their children's interests and developmental stages. Examples of materials provided at visits included books, games, and art supplies.

- *"She sends home activity bags for my older child, different activities for things they can work on skills at home, and also just things to keep them occupied, and you know, preparing for pre-K. She provides things for us to take home. A lot of times, she's found ways to give them books at these events, where they can, you know, have something to read when we go home."*
- *"She, I think, really pays attention to their strengths and, like will bring different activities based on, like, stuff they're interested in...Her activities more around that, and it really keeps them both engaged, and it really shows that, like, she pays attention, and she, like, truly cares about helping these kids, like, get ready for preschool."*

Family Engagement: Perceptions of Social Support

STAFF SUPPORTED FAMILIES IN APPLYING FOR RESOURCES

Participants said that FES supported their connection to community and school-based resources by providing application materials, offering guidance on the process, and submitting applications and/or referrals on their behalf.

- *"She also helped me apply for Medicaid recently, so that was really something that she didn't need to take the time to do, and it was really kind of her to do that."*
- *"So she actually had a referral put in place for my older one for speech, and just, like, how she went through that process, and not anybody else, like, knowing about it. Just keeping that between us, you know?"*

SOCIALIZATION EVENTS PROVIDED GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Participants shared examples of how the FES-led socialization events helped them build connections with parents and the school and learn from other participants' experiences. Some looked forward to a regular social opportunity for themselves and their children outside of the home. They also reported that their children were more comfortable making new friends and playing with other children after attending the events.

- *"You know, especially for a new mom...I think there's a great opportunity to join and participate in the group. Especially for the play-along group, everybody comes together, and then you can also learn, like, if something is happening at the school."*
- *"She's got Drop and Play, and we really enjoy going to that and seeing our friends. And she will go through different routines and stuff. That really helps my kiddos, and I look forward to it every week."*

Instrumental Support

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

Two primary themes related to the provision of instrumental supports by FES emerged. These themes included: (1) FES provide books and learning materials for families, and (2) schools and FES are seen as essential hubs of support for basic needs.

FES PROVIDE BOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS FOR FAMILIES

FES provide families with resources to extend learning and engagement with their child, including books, family events, and activities. Participants highlighted the importance of providing these accessible resources to better support family engagement.

- *"We give them books a lot of the time. Yeah. Materials for activities, we never ask our families to buy anything."*
- *"I mean, like, one of the events I do is family game night, so we actually purchase about at least 100 games. And then every family that comes gets at least one game. And sometimes I'll do books. We did a lot of mindfulness and breathing balls, like in socialization."*

SCHOOLS AND FES ARE SEEN AS ESSENTIAL HUBS OF SUPPORT FOR BASIC NEEDS

FES emphasized the critical role of schools in providing tangible aid, such as food, clothing, diapers, furniture, and transportation. Staff's role was essential in connecting families to community resources that meet their basic needs.

- *"We coordinate with churches, individual companies; it's whoever's wanting and willing to provide something. Being that coordinator, the liaison, so they can get disseminated to families for Thanksgiving as well as for the winter holidays."*
- *"I have another family expecting a baby, and they didn't have a crib, so we got them a crib. But it's just reaching out, I think, to our school communities, and saying, 'Hey, I have a family that needs something, can you help?'"*

Informational Support

Family Perspective

The primary themes related to informational support provided by FES were: (1) Families received tailored information, either proactively provided by staff or in response to parents' questions, (2) FES used multiple methods to communicate with families and share information, (3) FES shared information to deepen families' involvement with the home visiting program, school, and/or community, and (4) the quality of information provided to families was a reflection of staff's expertise.

FAMILIES RECEIVED TAILORED INFORMATION, EITHER PROACTIVELY PROVIDED BY STAFF OR IN RESPONSE TO PARENTS' QUESTIONS

Many participants shared examples of information they received in response to questions or concerns they raised during one-on-one visits with FES. Examples included handouts and advice on supporting potty training, communicating with school staff, and implementing behavior interventions. Staff also provided information that they thought participants would find useful, such as developmentally aligned pamphlets and event flyers.

- *"Sometimes she has little, like, handouts printed out for us, if there's there's a lot of kids in the same age group, so, you know, like, we were all the moms, I think, were going through, a stage of defiance with the kids, and so I know she printed out, like, a sheet for us, and she's like, here's for all the moms who are in this boat, there's some tips on dealing with, independence and defiance from kids in this age group."*

FES USED MULTIPLE METHODS TO COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES AND SHARE INFORMATION

The primary communication methods discussed by participants were text messages, handouts, social media platforms, and in-person conversations. Many participants shared that their home visitors or family facilitators reached out in multiple ways, often depending on the message content and the time when they were communicating.

- *"Yeah, I, for [our home visitor], it's mostly text messages, and then I see her every morning for drop-off, too. She has pamphlets of, like, where she's gonna be in the community throughout the month type thing, and then she has some, like, walk-in dates if…you need, and she'll reach out if you want to go see her in, like, the classroom inside the school."*

Family Engagement: Perceptions of Social Support

FES SHARED INFORMATION TO DEEPEN FAMILIES' INVOLVEMENT WITH THE HOME VISITING PROGRAM, SCHOOL, AND/OR COMMUNITY

Several participants shared about times that FES shared information to increase their engagement with the school or community. School-related information included invitations to school- or FES-led events and details about what school would be like, which increased children's excitement about the future. Participants reported that FES sometimes shared information about events and opportunities at the zoo, libraries, and local museums.

- *"Sometimes there are things that she invites me to and sends me messages like, the little pictures of what's going to happen and everything kind of like so I can go."*
- *"Like, if we want to go to the zoo, or, like, a library, or children's museums, she always have like, okay, you can do this, you can do that, and they provide school flyers and stuff like that."*

THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED TO FAMILIES WAS A REFLECTION OF STAFF'S EXPERTISE

Some participants noted that they trusted the information from FES because their home visitors or family facilitators had many years of experience and extensive knowledge in areas such as child development and navigating the education system.

- *"Yeah, so she's extremely knowledgeable. I mean, you can tell that she's been in education for a number of years. Always answer any questions we have about, you know, developmental things or things to come."*
- *"Oh, I mean, I just, like, values as far as, like, education and stuff really align with what I want to teach my kids, and we just are very much on the same page about you know, just behavioral stuff, all that, so, I just, I really trust her judgment on stuff, because she's obviously a lot more experienced than me, so she can help me when I'm stuck on something."*

Informational Support

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

One primary theme emerged related to the provision of informational supports by FES: (1) FES serve as informational bridges through home visits, child development curriculum, and at school events.

FES SERVE AS INFORMATIONAL BRIDGES THROUGH HOME VISITS, CHILD DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM, AND AT SCHOOL EVENTS

FES rely on curriculum-based resources and developmental assessment tools to help families understand child development and respond to emerging developmental needs. Staff shared that they make those tools accessible, practical, and feasible within families' daily routines. They noted that family engagement is being supported through community school events.

- *"I have a book that has activities based on the ASQ [Ages and Stages Questionnaires], so, you know, it depends on where they fall. You can always say, 'You know what? Here are a few activities that you could do. They don't require anything, but you could do these things, in the car, or when you're taking a bath, or when you're cooking a meal, or whatever.'"*
- *"...lots of information is shared at those cafes [parent engagement meetings] and we do record them. So if parents are not able to attend, then they are emailed prior to the cafe an agenda. And then after the cafe is done, then they get the whole video of what was shared."*



Appraisal Support

Family Perspective

Two themes emerged related to appraisal support: (1) Developmental screenings and milestone discussions, and (2) staff facilitated parents' goal setting and problem solving. The construct of appraisal support was discussed the least by participants.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS AND MILESTONE DISCUSSIONS

Participants noted that their home visitors or family facilitators conducted developmental screenings as part of their program engagement. Some participants also shared that staff engaged them in discussion by asking about milestones they had observed.

- *"She comes to our home and does different developmental play with our, different types of developmental play with our children. She has done developmental screenings on our children. She's asked us, kind of, like, different socioeconomic screenings and questionnaires, just to make sure that we have the resources we need as parents, as well as they have the resources they need as kids."*

STAFF FACILITATED PARENTS' GOAL SETTING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Some participants discussed opportunities for goal setting and problem solving as part of their program participation. Examples included demonstrating how to set a goal, inviting participants to make a pros-and-cons list while working through a plan of action during a home visit, and asking a participant about goals for program engagement and transition as their child approached school age.

- *"I think there's a great opportunity to join and participate in the group. Especially for the play-along group, everybody comes together and then you can also learn like if something is happening at the school. Also they help you about how to set a goal for your children. How to do the best in life for your children."*

Appraisal Support

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

There were three primary themes related to the provision of appraisal supports offered by FES. These themes included: (1) FES support parents to recognize children's strengths and needs, (2) FES identify progress through child development tracking and goal setting, and (3) navigating barriers to building strong relationships with families due to time constraints.

FES SUPPORT PARENTS TO RECOGNIZE CHILDREN'S STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

FES reported encouraging parents to celebrate accomplishments across all aspects of the children's development during home visits and activities. These celebrations helped build positive relationships that foster conversations about areas of growth in a constructive, easy-to-understand manner.

- *"Showing them a tangible thing that they can look at it. Like, oh my God, this is how much they've grown."*
- *"It's helpful to be able to show, like, there's areas of growth or if there's areas that we still need to continue to work on. It helps to guide and plan groups that we do. It helps to guide and plan conversations that they may have."*
- *"There is something good in every single visit you go on, and it could be the littlest thing. But there is something good, and you need to make sure that you share that with them."*

FES OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT WITH CHILD DEVELOPMENT TRACKING AND GOAL SETTING

Staff reported supporting families by offering encouragement through recognition of children's developmental milestones and goals being met or exceeded.

- *"In the fall here's what you were scoring yourself on and now look at your score now and just providing like here's the things more like a celebration of here's the things that you said you wanted to work on this year and now look at your [progress] it's not about the score but just that they had growth and then I think you always kind of tie it back to child development as much as you can."*
- *"I think just noticing when they're doing the right thing, encouraging that, especially if it's something they've struggled with, or something they've talked to you about."*

NAVIGATING BARRIERS TO BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES DUE TO TIME RESTRAINTS

Staff shared that offering appraisal support can be difficult due to their responsibilities for other tasks and the lack of time to build relationships with families. While striving to build long-lasting relationships and connect with families, staff are not always able to achieve their desired goals for family visits due to prioritizing parents' needs at the time of the visit.

- *"I think sometimes it just revolves around time. I feel like sometimes, especially everyone doing all the different roles, there's lots of things that I would like to be doing that would be helpful for families to have that feedback. But sometimes it just kind of boils down to time."*
- *"If we didn't have to do so many things, that at the end of the day, like it just kind of help us with the community and all the other stuff. But then if I had more time to specifically plan this or specifically look at all of this, then it would be easier."*
- *"It takes time. You know, you're building a relationship, and then you build it with the parents, and you build it with the child. But it takes a lot of time."*



Emotional Support

Family Perspective

Four primary themes emerged related to the provision of emotional support. These themes included: (1) FES made participants feel valued as individuals, (2) staff offered encouragement and positivity, (3) FES were consistent and followed through on promises, and (4) confidentiality within home visiting relationships provided safe spaces where participants could be open and vulnerable.

FES MADE PARTICIPANTS FEEL VALUED AS INDIVIDUALS

Respondents shared many examples of FES showing care and concern by checking in on them, following up on family milestones or concerns, and supporting all family members, including older children no longer enrolled in the program. They sometimes described staff as friends, part of the family, or akin to having a therapist visit their homes.

- *"Oh, she's very, very sweet, is extremely interested in everything he has to say, remembers his favorite things, what we're doing the week before, and always checks in. My son loves her."*
- *"She calls or texts to check in, especially when she knows that it's a really stressful time for us. And she asks us different questions about how we're doing, but it's not just like a bypass, how are you doing? It's like, how are you doing in this aspect? Are you taking care of yourself? Do you need anything that we can help provide, et cetera?"*

STAFF OFFERED ENCOURAGEMENT AND POSITIVITY

Multiple participants reported feeling encouraged during meetings with their home visitors or family facilitators. They said that FES listen without judgment, affirm them as people and as parents, and show they care with words and actions. Some participants noted the use of positive reinforcement when working with children during personal visits.

- *"I feel like just when she interacts with my kids, she's very encouraging. She provides a lot of, like, positive reinforcement when they're working on an activity. She'll show them how to do it once or twice, but then she, like, sits back and, like, lets them explore. And whenever, like, they're moving in a positive direction, or if they find a new way to do something, she's very, encouraging about how she supports them."*
- *"No, I think sometimes she—Like, wow, I didn't realize I was that cool in somebody else's eye."*

Family Engagement: Perceptions of Social Support

FES WERE CONSISTENT AND FOLLOWED THROUGH ON PROMISES

Several respondents noted that staff's reliability, consistency, and follow-through were foundational in developing their relationship and sense of trust.

- *"I would say just being consistent. She follows through really well. She's just easy to talk to and relate to, so I always feel comfortable. She's never not done what she said she's gonna do, so I feel like that in itself just shows that I can trust that she's there to support us."*
- *"She's very consistent. Anything she says she's going to do, she always follows through on it. She checks up on us when we have issues going on or if we're struggling. She's always just a phone call away. If she sees us in the school itself, she definitely stops us to say hi. She's always a friendly face."*

CONFIDENTIALITY WITHIN HOME VISITING RELATIONSHIPS PROVIDED SAFE SPACES WHERE PARTICIPANTS COULD BE OPEN AND VULNERABLE

Several participants said they felt comfortable asking questions and sharing concerns with FES because they knew their home visitor or family facilitator would respect their privacy. Respondents noted times when staff asked their permission to share something with other participants or encouraged them to share if they felt comfortable doing so.

- *"Well, I mean, I've known her for a while, but the things that I've shared with her, I see that other people don't know about. Unless I choose to share myself, you know, because all the home visiting families kind of have a once-a-week thing that we meet together for the kids to get like, preschool readiness. But unless I share something with the other moms...She doesn't, you know go and tell everybody, unless I choose to share it myself."*

Emotional Support

Family Engagement Staff Perspective

Two themes emerged related to emotional support provided by FES: (1) Building relationships through consistent availability and responsiveness, and (2) families serving as emotional support communities.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH CONSISTENT AVAILABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

FES discussed the importance of building strong and trusting relationships through consistent communication, active listening, and creating safe spaces for parents to openly discuss challenges in their lives. They also pointed out the importance of following each of their families' lead and being available when they are needed.

- *"I think families understand in our school they are prioritized. And so it's an open-door policy. So if there is a need they have, they either can [tell us] when we see them, I see them [at] door duty at least twice in the week. So, from the start or at the end of the day, they also have access via phone call or an e-mail or a text as well. So being responsive"*
- *"…Giving them a safe space and a time where they can kind of let you know, like, what's going on in their life, and…some of the, like, trials and tribulations and, you know, all the difficult things that are happening. So, I think a lot of… and I think it's also, like you said, it's giving whatever support they need. And then some parents, some families are a little more closed off with that, and maybe they don't necessarily want emotional support, so then you support them in other ways. It's just really following the lead of the family, I feel like."*

FAMILY EVENTS BUILD EMOTIONAL SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

Family engagement staff noted that building trust and offering opportunities for socialization in schools allows families to connect with one another outside of a school setting. Examples included family nights, parent nights, and staff-facilitated community events that allowed time for families to build relationships with each other. FES felt it was an important part of their roles to facilitate those connections.

- *"I've kind of seen that with the little community that's formed in our socializations where the parents are interacting with the other parents."*
- *"They also have started to feel more comfortable with the other parents. So, like they're getting their phone numbers, they're making plans to like outside of school."*

Common Findings Between Staff and Families

This section highlights common themes identified by both FES and families, offering a comprehensive look at how families experience support and how FES navigate their roles. Both groups described family engagement as relationship-based and individualized, with staff serving as trusted partners who connect families to resources, provide practical guidance, and create welcoming opportunities for school and community engagement. Families emphasized the positive impact these relationships had on their confidence, access to services, and children's development, while staff highlighted the intentional practices used to build trust, strengthen family capacity, and foster meaningful connections. Together, these findings demonstrate strong alignment in how family engagement supports family well-being and children's successful transition to school.

Areas of Strength

- FES effectively connect families with essential resources, including food, diapers, clothing, educational materials, developmental services, and community supports.
- Families and staff both emphasized that personalized, responsive support builds trust and allows services to be tailored to each family's unique strengths and needs.
- FES strengthen parents' knowledge and confidence by providing practical information about child development, parenting strategies, and school readiness.
- Family engagement contributes to children's school readiness by supporting academic, communication skills, and social-emotional development while helping families feel more prepared for the transition to school.

Areas for Improvement

- Establish clearer, shared expectations for the family engagement staff role across school districts and partner organizations.
- Clarify staff responsibilities to balance connecting families with basic needs and mental health resources while maintaining a focus on child development and family engagement.
- Strengthen partnerships with mental health providers and other specialized community services to improve referral options for families.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Survey Findings

The Buffett Institute hosted 82 learning opportunities throughout the 2025-2026 academic year. At the end of the event, attendees were presented with a QR code and asked to complete a post-evaluation survey. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a scale of 1-5 (1, low; 5, high) regarding how the information they learned would help them in their current role and the extent to which the format of the professional development was an effective way to receive helpful information. Respondents were asked to identify specific strategies or pieces of information they found most helpful and asked what additional support they would need to apply what they had learned.

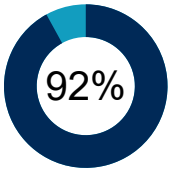
In addition, respondents were asked to report how participation in professional learning influenced their Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, Aspirations, and Behaviors, consistent with the KASAB framework (Killion, 2008). The questionnaire included 10 items assessing participants' perceived changes across the five KASAB domains.

2251

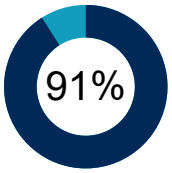
Total number of times educators participated in professional learning opportunities

414

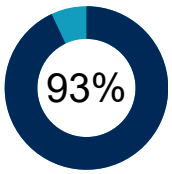
Post-program surveys completed by attendees



92% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the information learned during the professional learning opportunity could help them in their current role.



91% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the format of the professional learning opportunity was an effective way to receive helpful information.



93% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the facilitator(s) created an inclusive, engaging, and collaborative learning environment.

Qualitative Findings

What suggestions do you have for improving this workshop in the future?

- **Accessibility:** More physical space, smaller group sizes, and interpreters for Spanish speakers. *"Space was tight, so just being mindful everyone feels welcome and comfortable, which will aid in their learning and sharing."*
- **Providing Examples:** Incorporating purposeful play outside, additional video clips, model strategies for older students. *"An example of what purposeful play looks like in 2nd grade [would be helpful]."*
- **Collaboration:** Sitting with teams, hearing what is working well for others, work within job specific roles. *"I learn well from people's experiences, so more time to hear testimonies from other classrooms with examples related to the topics in this training."*
- **Additional Information:** Next steps, splitting groups based upon knowledge of topics. *"More help on how to handle escalated behaviors after you have tried all the steps you have learned."*
- **Resources:** Provide slides after training, downloadable tools, note taking sheet within slides. *"Provide downloadable tools/resources (checklists, parent handouts) to use immediately."*

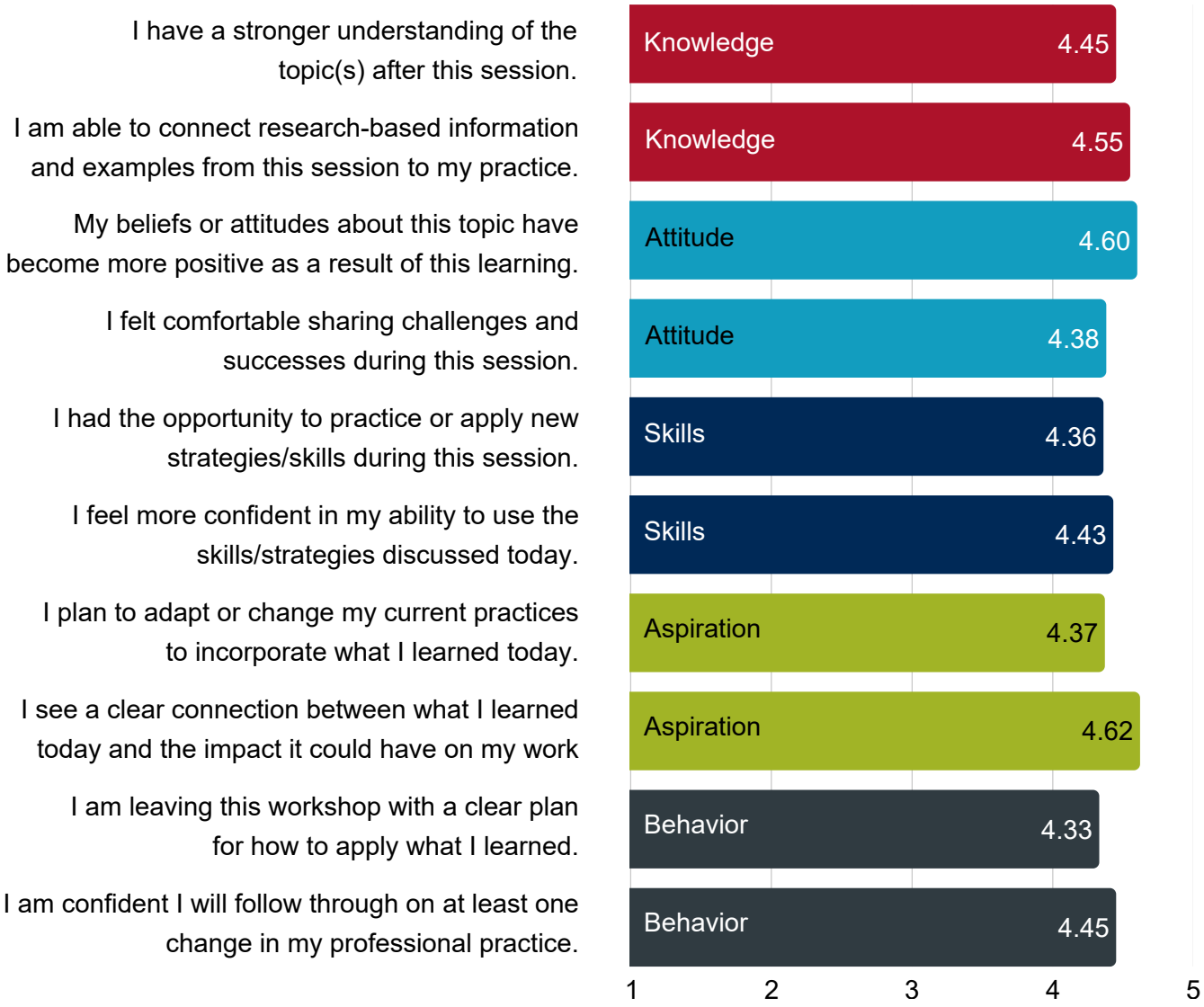
What specific strategies or pieces of information did you find most helpful from this professional learning opportunity?

- **Practical Strategies and Tools:** Reframing, transition strategies, open-ended questioning, regulation strategies, play-based practices, and other actionable ideas.
- **Collaboration and Peer Learning:** Small-group discussions, learning from colleagues, sharing practices across schools, and working with peers.
- **Interactive and Engaging Learning Experiences:** Hands-on activities, group exercises, games, timelines, and other participatory activities
- **Reflection and New Perspectives:** Viewing experiences through the child's lens, understanding root causes of behavior, reflecting on one's own practice, and gaining a deeper understanding of the "why" behind existing practices.

KASAB Survey Findings

Participants completed the post-professional learning survey around the KASAB framework during 2025-2026 academic year. Bars on the chart below are labeled with each item's corresponding domain within the framework. Mean scores on a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) are reported below. The mean score for Knowledge items was 4.50; the mean score for Attitude items was 4.49; the mean score for Skills items was 4.39; the mean score for Aspiration items was 4.49; and the mean score for Behavior items was 4.39.

Participants' levels of agreement on the five KASAB domains (n=42*)



*Results are based on a randomly selected 10% sample (n=42) of the 414 survey respondents due to technical issues that prevented complete data extraction.

Lens of the Child

In the Spring of 2026, the Buffett Institute provided professional development to early childhood educators in Douglas and Sarpy Counties through Lens of the Child, an immersive, hands-on learning series centered on the child's perspective in the classroom. Five foundational workshops were designed with a focus on the Lens Series' five foundational concepts and the six essential child experiences.

Six Essential Child Experiences

- **Personal Relevance:** Each child experiences learning built upon the foundation of what they already know and through familiar approaches to learning. They have ample opportunities to connect new ideas to their background knowledge, personal experience, and interests.
- **Language-Rich Communication:** Each child experiences learning through listening, speaking, and discussing with peers and adults. They have ample opportunities and are encouraged to share their voice by expressing thoughts and ideas.
- **Cognitive Challenge:** Each child experiences learning that engages their thinking in new, interesting, and rigorous ways. They have ample opportunities to develop knowledge and solve problems through just the right amount of challenge and support.
- **Collaboration Among Peers:** Each child experiences learning through intentional interactions with peers. They have ample opportunities and explicit support to cooperate, solve social problems, engage in shared work, and learn from one another.
- **Child Decision-Making and Planning:** Each child experiences child-directed learning. They have ample opportunities to engage in learning using their own agency, judgement, and intention.
- **Child-Initiated Exploration and Innovation:** Each child engages in imaginative thinking and creativity through exploration and play. They have ample opportunities to question, develop, and analyze their own ideas as they deepen their own understanding and develop skills.

Survey data measuring participants' confidence in implementing the six essential child experiences were collected in January 2026 prior to the series and in March 2026 at the completion of the series.

Participant Demographics

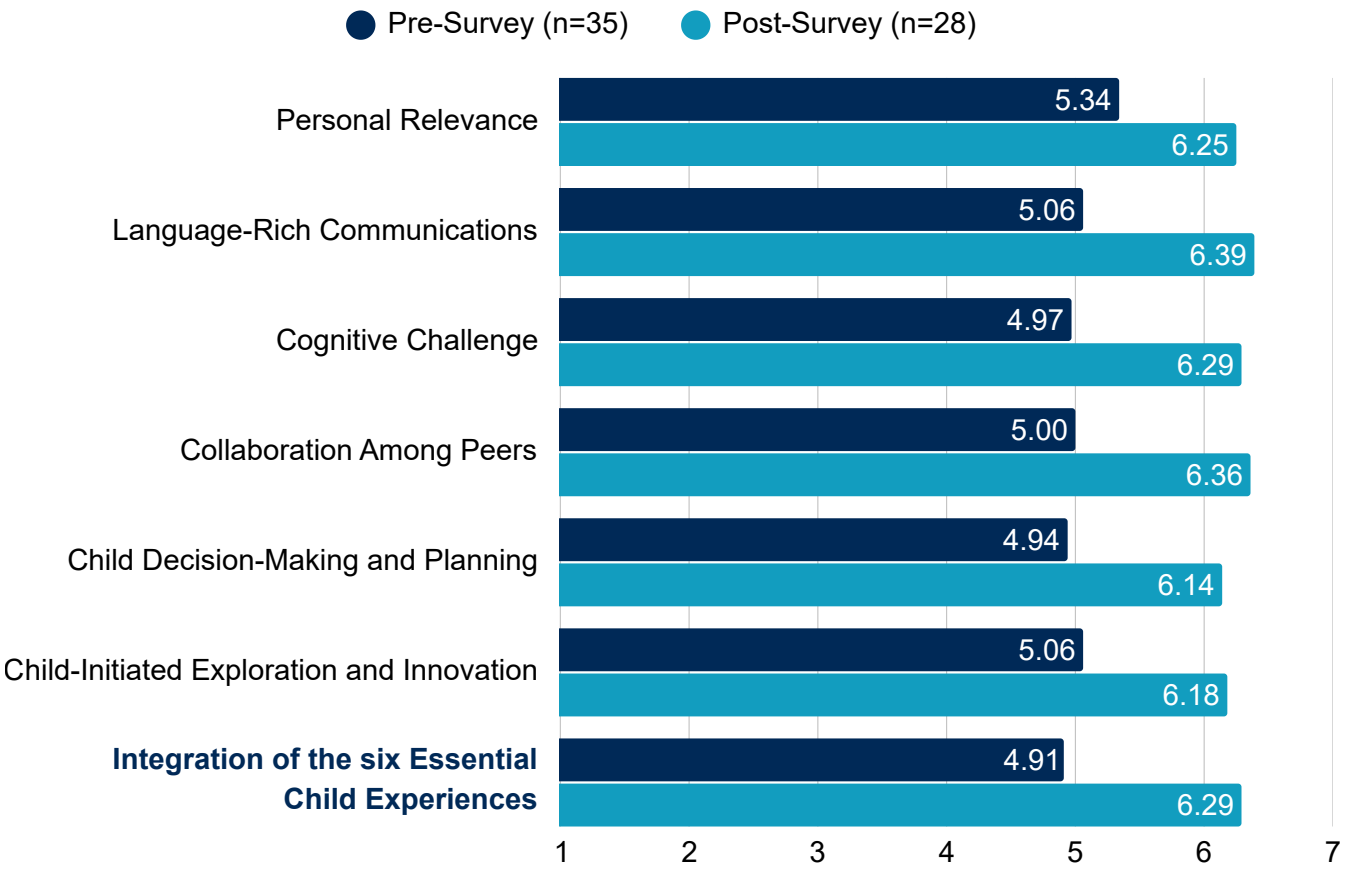
A total of 35 respondents completed the pre-survey in January 2026.

- **Gender:** 94.3% female and 5.7% male
- **Race:** 74.3% White, 11.4% African American, 2.9% Native American, and 11.4% prefer not to answer
- **Early Education Experience:** 28.6% less than 5 years, 14.3% 5-10 years, 11.4% 10-15 years, 8.6% 15-20 years, and 37.1% more than 20 years
- **Organizational Setting:** 40.0% community-based program, 37.1% family child care, and 22.9% school-based program
- **Ages of Children Supported:** 62.9% infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years), 82.9% preschoolers (3-5 years), 40.0% Kindergartners (5-6 years), and 34.3% grades 1-3 (6-9 years)

Lens of the Child

Respondents were asked to rate their level of confidence in their ability to integrate each of the six essential child experiences into their instructional environments using a seven-point scale (1=Not at All Confident, 7=Extremely Confident). In addition, respondents were asked to rate their level of confidence in their ability to simultaneously integrate all six essential experiences into their learning environments. On average, participants reported their confidence in implementing each of the six experiences and for simultaneous integration at a level of 5 (Quite Confident) prior to the series and at a level of 6 (Very Confident) after participation. The highest levels of confidence post-training were reported for Language-Rich Communications (m=6.39) and Collaboration Among Peers (m=6.36). Participants reported the lowest level of confidence in Child Decision-Making and Planning (m=6.14). **The greatest change was in participants' confidence in integrating the 6 Essential Child Experiences**, which increased by 1.38 points from pre to post.

Average Reported Levels of Confidence

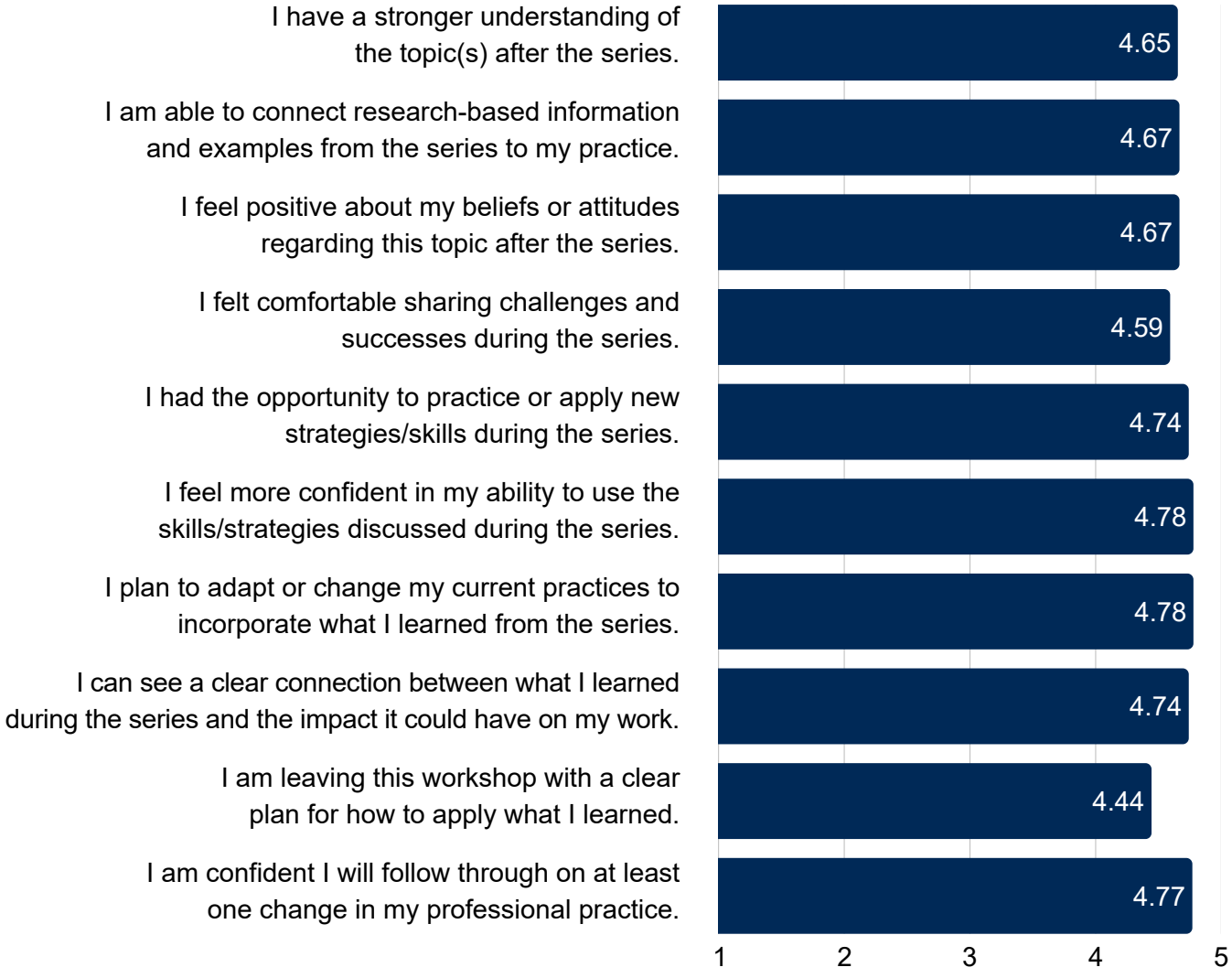


"This series has highlighted the strategies and practices we do naturally in our classroom. But…it goes a little deeper into the "why" behind our practice. It makes us cognizant of our plans and intentional in our actions. It helps us be intentional! Most of all…it helped us see learning from the perspective of the child."

Lens of the Child

At the end of the series, participants were asked to complete self-assessment items organized using the KASAB framework (Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills, Aspirations, and Behaviors). Participants reported their agreement with the statements using a 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). On average, participants strongly agreed with most statements. The highest levels of agreement were found in the statements regarding participants' confidence in using skills and strategies from the series (m=4.78) and plans to adapt their current practices to incorporate information from trainings (m=4.78).

Average Agreement with Program Experience Statements (n=28)



Participants' post-series reflections indicate a shift toward more child-centered and intentional practice. Many described a deeper understanding of children's perspectives and reported becoming more reflective about their teaching decisions. They also mentioned that the training reinforced many practices they were already using and helped them better understand the reasons behind them. Rather than introducing entirely new strategies, the training made their existing approaches more deliberate, particularly in how they interact with children and tailor learning experiences to individual needs.

Teacher Leadership Network

The Teacher Leadership Network (TLN) is a year-long professional learning initiative within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan designed to strengthen teacher leadership and advance implementation of the School as Hub approach. The overarching goal of the TLN is to build sustainable teacher leadership that supports the continuous implementation of the School as Hub approach by equipping teachers to lead collaborative efforts, share promising practices, and strengthen coordinated early learning opportunities for children and families.

The network brought together PreK-Grade 3 teachers from participating School as Hub schools, Customized Assistance districts, and Omaha Public Schools Intensive Early Childhood Intensive sites to deepen their understanding of the Birth through Grade 3 framework, strengthen collaboration with school and community partners, and support implementation of district action plans.

Evaluation question: How has participation in the TLN shaped teachers' leadership roles and their implementation of the School as Hub approach in their schools?

This evaluation is guided by a distributed perspective on leadership practice (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001), which conceptualizes leadership as a practice stretched over individuals, interactions, and situational contexts. Rather than focusing on individual leaders, this framework emphasizes leadership tasks, how those tasks are enacted, how leadership is distributed across actors, and how practice is shaped by organizational and material contexts.

Distributed Leadership Practice is operationalized as:

- **Leadership Tasks:** The specific activities and functions that constitute leadership work, including both broad organizational goals and the day-to-day tasks through which they are carried out.
- **Task Enactment**: How leadership tasks are carried out in practice, emphasizing what individuals actually do in real settings rather than prescribed roles or expectations.
- **Social Distribution:** The extent to which leadership is shared across multiple actors, where leadership tasks are co-enacted through interactions and interdependent work.
- **Situation Distribution:** How leadership practice is shaped by contextual factors such as tools, organizational structures, and routines that enable and constrain action.

Leadership Tasks

Teachers were asked about the activities and functions that constitute leadership work. Participants stated that they see themselves as an information source and resource guide for other staff members and identified that frequent staff turnover has highlighted the need to orient new staff to the School as Hub approach.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND SERVING AS A REFERENCE GUIDE

Participants described their leadership work as primarily informal, focusing on sharing information and serving as a resource for colleagues during the early stages of School as Hub implementation. They frequently answered questions from school staff about the goals of School as Hub and what participation would involve. Participants also reported becoming more visible within their schools, with colleagues seeking their ideas for classroom implementation and principals relying on them to provide input and support implementation efforts, including curriculum development.

"I do feel like my district does call on me more often to explain things or be more of a part in conversations that I was not in before."

"There's not like a leadership change, but I think she [principal] relies on us and sees us as someone that others can go to bring in the ideas and give the strategies once we get the whole system started at the beginning instead of kind of the middle of the year."

ORIENTING NEW STAFF TO THE SCHOOL AS HUB APPROACH

Participants identified staff turnover as a challenge to sustaining shared understanding of the School as Hub approach. In response, TLN participants described efforts to orient new staff to the School as Hub approach through introductory meetings and professional development opportunities. Some participants also identified continued orientation and engagement of new staff as a priority for the following year.

"I had somebody from Buffett actually come to one of our PD days to kind of go over what a school is a hub, let the other teachers know that are new, or what is this, what's that entail for our school here, and kind of get that ball going again there."

"We've talked about in our building-level Buffett Institute meetings of having a PowerPoint or something at a staff meeting in the fall so that new staff are not completely clueless when they see our family room and get to know those people as people they can get support from on different things."

Task Enactment

Participants described enacting their leadership roles primarily through planning and implementing family engagement activities and supporting instructional improvement.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Participants most frequently described enacting leadership through planning and supporting family engagement activities. These efforts included organizing school-based family events, developing in-home activities, and joining and interpreting for non-English speaking families at Parent Teacher Organization meetings. Teachers emphasized the importance of designing activities that were developmentally appropriate for children under age five, reflecting the School as Hub focus on supporting children and families before school entry.

“I helped support good engagement at our staff or our school's read and feed where families of kids K-5 had an activity and a book to follow along to. When they were doing the activities, I had just open-ended building materials for littles to interact with and engage with during that time.”

“We did a whole school math family engagement activity that kind of started last year and then bloomed this year into our families at home participating in math activities and sending in pictures and us highlighting those throughout the year ... it has really led to us being able to slide into a literacy whole school reading challenge next year so I feel like that has bloomed well into something that our whole community and our families are participating in and something that's kind of a foundation at our school now.”

SUPPORTING INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Participants also enacted leadership by improving instructional practices and creating resources to support colleagues. Teachers described implementing new instructional approaches, developing materials for staff, and collaborating with colleagues to strengthen early childhood practices within their schools.

“For me, [it would be] doing the purposeful plan in first grade. That was very nerve-wracking at first because ... we have such a tight schedule ... but I was able to finally fit it in at least for 15 minutes and then it increased to 20 minutes and then my kids went in for 30 minutes and it just, it was a huge success”

“I collaborated with our early childhood coordinator on a staff handbook for preschool. I think that's a big chunk of the bigger things that I did.”

Social Distribution

Two themes emerged regarding the social distribution of leadership practice. First, participants described collaboration and shared learning among teacher leaders across schools and districts. Second, they highlighted collaborative relationships between teachers and family engagement staff that supported program activities.

A CULTURE OF MUTUAL LEARNING AND SUPPORT

Participants described learning from teachers in other schools and districts as one of the most valuable aspects of the TLN. Peer-to-peer interactions allowed participants to exchange ideas, observe how other schools implemented School as Hub, and implement practices to meet their own schools' needs. In addition to cross-district learning, sharing experiences across schools helped build buy-in for instructional practices, such as center time (i.e., free play), while fostering a greater sense of collaboration and shared purpose.

"Being a part of Teacher Leadership Network has given great insight into the other ideas that you can bring back, but also, just I'll go back to like where my piece is in the plan that we have as a building."

"It made it a lot more meaningful and impactful to see how we can take some of their ideas [other districts' ideas] and put it into our owns and how we are going to make that work for our school."

TEACHER AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TEAM COLLABORATION

Participants described increased collaboration between teachers and family engagement professionals. Teachers reported working alongside family facilitators and home visitors to coordinate outreach, conduct home visits, and plan family engagement events. Rather than viewing family engagement as the responsibility of a single role, participants described a collaborative approach in which teachers and family engagement staff supported one another to strengthen connections with families. While some participants acknowledged that these collaborative efforts were still in the early stages, they noted the importance of establishing partnerships and expected to continue growing them in the following school year.

"I'd say with being able to collaborate with our family facilitators and our home visitors on some of the things, like if I can't reach a family, they've been willing to reach out to that family, especially if the younger ones might be at home that they're working with, and just being able to share back and forth."

"I think my role has changed as in collaboration with that family facilitator that without this position, I probably wouldn't even know what she does."

Situation Distribution

Participants identified three contextual factors that shaped how leadership was enacted in their schools. These themes demonstrate how organizational structures both enabled and constrained teachers' leadership practice.

SCHEDULING AND STAFFING CONSTRAINTS

Participants frequently described difficulties participating in leadership meetings due to scheduling conflicts and classroom responsibilities. Some teachers reported that limited staffing made it difficult to secure classroom coverage, while others explained that even when meetings occurred during planned periods, classroom needs and responsibilities prevented them from participating. These organizational constraints limited opportunities to engage fully in leadership activities despite participants' willingness to do so.

"I asked for coverage for like that short time and like dismissal, and there was nobody, so I was very late to some of the meetings because I'm just not able to get there by 4:30 most of the time."

"It's not like I can easily pop in, even though they're usually sometime, surprisingly, during my nap time, which is my luncheon plan. But if I'm short-staffed in my room, I can't necessarily step away to even get on a Zoom… It's not that we don't want to be there."

CHALLENGE OF TIME DEMANDS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Participants also discussed the time required for School as Hub activities within their schools. Respondents noted that planning and implementing activities required additional time alongside their existing teaching responsibilities. Several participants explained that these perceived time demands also created challenges in recruiting additional staff to participate in the initiative.

"Like I'm the only one in my district who does it [participates in TLN and the Buffett Institute]. And I think that because of the time commitment, it is like I want more people from my district, but I also understand that it is a time commitment. So that has been challenging."

"And I think that we get a lot of pushback sometimes just simply because they think there's not time, but there really is time. It has more to do with the planning part of it. They think that there's going to be too much planning."

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND THE INSTITUE SUPPORT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SCHOOL AS HUB IMPLEMENTATION

While participants described several contextual barriers, they also identified the building administrative team and Buffett staff as an important source of support for leadership implementation. Participants reported that school administrators were receptive to the School as Hub approach and worked collaboratively with teachers and community partners to plan activities. This administrative support helped create organizational conditions that facilitated leadership practice.

"Like there's myself, there's my building administrative team, and then there's like our Buffett staff that help support. We're constantly all three of us in communication of what do we want to do next, what things do we need to put in place, what goal haven't we reached yet, how do we get there, right?"

"They're [school administrative staff] excited about what this [the Buffett Institute] could bring. So, they're very welcoming of it and kind of ready to go with whatever we decide."

"My principal is very supportive in this [Purposeful Play implementation] process and is allowing us to decide and figure out like what works best for the students, what we need to do to implement it, how to get resources, and if we want to plan during the summer what that will look like and how she can help."



Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Findings

In the Fall of 2025 (n=20) and Spring of 2026 (n=18), teachers who were engaged in coaching and/or consultation within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan completed the short form of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). The survey items used are shown below. Items related to each domain are highlighted as follows:

How much can you do?

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

Student Engagement

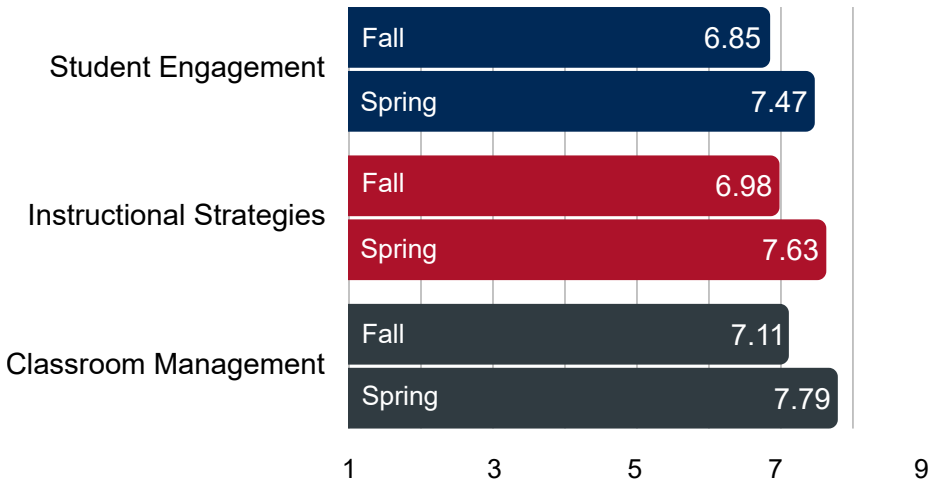
- How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?
- How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?
- How much can you do to help your students value learning?
- How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?

Instructional Strategies

- To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?
- How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?
- To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?
- How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?

Classroom Management

- How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?
- How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?
- How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?
- How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?



There were increases in self-efficacy in all domains from Fall to Spring. The largest areas of growth occurred in controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom (6.95; 7.78) and implementing alternative strategies in the classroom (6.95; 7.78).

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. Teaching and Teacher Education, 17, 783-805

Principal Self-Efficacy

Principals (n=11) engaged in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan community of practice were asked to rate their leadership self-efficacy across 5 domains. Enhanced feelings of self-efficacy were seen across each domain from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026.

DEVELOP GOALS

1. Develop clear goals and expectations for teaching utilizing the School as Hub approach
2. Develop a strategic plan for achieving goals within the School as Hub approach
3. Develop clear and achievable goals using the School as Hub approach

GUIDE TEACHERS

1. Guide teachers about educational matters using the School as Hub approach
2. Observe teaching and provide helpful feedback using the School as Hub approach
3. Using school-based self-assessment to improve teaching and learning using the School as Hub approach

CREATE A POSITIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Promote a safe school environment for students which is free from bullying using a School as Hub approach
2. Ensure a learning environment in which students feel safe using the School as Hub approach
3. Promote a good teacher-student relationship using the School as Hub approach

MOTIVATE TEACHERS

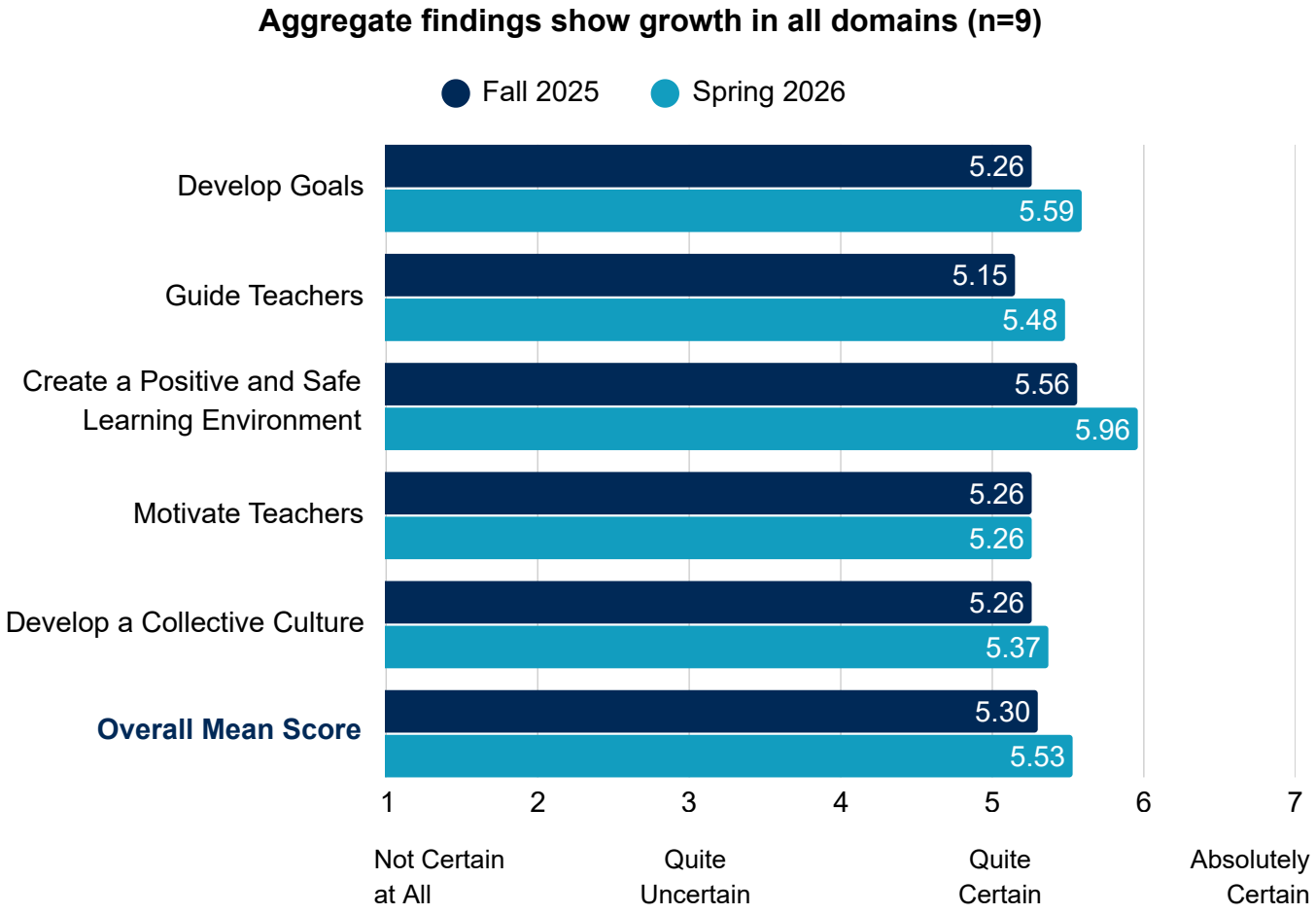
1. Create enthusiasm and engagement among teachers using the School as Hub approach
2. Motivate teachers for teaching and instruction using the School as Hub approach
3. Motivate teachers to commit to goals using the School as Hub approach

DEVELOP A COLLECTIVE CULTURE

1. Develop a collective culture in which everyone works to achieve shared goals using the School as Hub approach
2. Develop a culture in which teachers support one another using the School as Hub approach
3. Promote a shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching using the School as Hub approach

Leadership Effectiveness

Domain scores were measured on a 7-point scale (1=Not Certain at All, 7=Absolutely Certain). Mean scores from respondents (n=9) are reported below.



Greatest Growth Areas

- Developing a strategic plan for achieving goals within the School as Hub approach (Fall: 5.22; Spring: 5.67)
- Using school based self-assessment to improve teaching and learning using the School as Hub approach (Fall: 4.89; Spring: 5.56)
- Promoting a safe school environment for students which is free from bullying using the School as Hub approach (Fall: 5.44; Spring: 6.11)

Skaalvik, C. School principal self-efficacy for instructional leadership: relations with engagement, emotional exhaustion and motivation to quit. Soc Psychol Educ 23, 479–498 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09544-4

Action Planning Progress

During the annual School as Hub Collaboration Summit within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan, focus groups were held with members of each District team. District team members from Bellevue Public Schools, DC West Community Schools, Elkhorn Public Schools, Gretna Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Millard Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools and Westside Public Schools were asked to reflect on their engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan over the past year. A 5-question semi-structured interview guide was utilized to evaluate progress, challenges, and future directions within the three primary program domains of **Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence, and Family & Community Partnerships Engagement**. Scores represent the average level of progress districts reported making toward their goals across domains, on a scale of 1 to 100.

Leadership Effectiveness



Average rating: 80/100

AREAS OF PROGRESS

- Increased collaboration among administrators, teacher leaders, and early childhood staff supported alignment of the School as Hub approach into school and district-level initiatives.
- Student outcomes, implementation data and survey data were used more intentionally to guide planning and monitor progress.
- Participants consistently characterized the past year as one of building leadership infrastructure and shared vision that is necessary to sustain long-term systems change.

CHALLENGES

- Competing initiatives and limited time were the most frequently cited barriers. Participants described difficulty balancing School as Hub work alongside literacy initiatives, curriculum adoption, state requirements, and other district priorities.
- Limited staff capacity and implementation resources were reported to constrain progress.
- Leadership transitions and organizational growth created implementation challenges, with new administrators and evolving leadership roles requiring additional time to establish shared understanding.

FUTURE PLANS

- Continue to use data to guide strategic planning and continuous improvement initiatives.
- Strengthen collaborative leadership structures and Birth-to-Grade 3 alignment by continuing structured leadership meetings and expanding stakeholder participation.

"We now have a team, a direction, data to follow and people who are very willing to get on board and help with it. So I think we've made huge progress this year compared to where we started."

Action Planning Progress

Instructional Excellence



Average rating: 76/100

AREAS OF PROGRESS

- Expanded evidence-based instructional practices and professional learning opportunities.
- Greater use of instructional data and targeted supports to improve student outcomes.

CHALLENGES

- Supporting the needs of all learners requires continued refinement. Participants highlighted the need to better integrate literacy and behavioral supports into the classroom.
- Limited time, competing priorities, and staff capacity hindered goal implementation. Participants reported difficulty balancing multiple initiatives at one time.

FUTURE PLANS

- Expand and sustain evidence-based instructional practices through ongoing professional learning.
- Increase cross-grade collaboration, using educator and student data to refine implementation.
- Tailor instructional supports to meet district and school-specific needs.

“It's just... access to the coach. It's just more frequent check-ins... I think we did a feedback survey this year for coaching and it was all very positive feedback.”

Family & Community Partnerships Engagement



Average rating: 82/100

AREAS OF PROGRESS

- Expanded family engagement through intentional, relationship-centered opportunities.
- Strengthened community partnerships to increase access to resources and supports.
- Greater emphasis on family voice and responsive programming.

CHALLENGES

- Building authentic family engagement requires trust which takes time.
- Limited time, staff capacity, and competing priorities constrained family engagement efforts.

FUTURE PLANS

- Expand family engagement through literacy-focused and relationship-centered opportunities.
- Continue to find ways to use family feedback to guide programming.

“We all use that rhetoric of, 'You are your child's first teacher,' and we are putting you all in that... allowing the families to be in that, like I said, the driver's seat versus the passenger seat.”

Districts & Institute Collaboration

In the Spring of 2026, evaluators at the Munroe Meyer Institute and the University of Nebraska at Omaha conducted an external evaluation of the collaboration between the Buffett Early Childhood Institute and its key partners within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan. The two primary objectives of the evaluation were

1. To determine the **level of collaboration** between the Institute and plan stakeholders within school districts.
2. To determine the **barriers and facilitators for collaboration** between the Institute and plan stakeholders.

A total of 50 surveys were completed by plan stakeholders across 10 school districts (6 full-implementation districts, 4 customized-assistance districts) and the Buffett Early Childhood Institute. Survey respondents included 3- to 5-year-old classroom educators/paraprofessionals (n=9), home visitors/family facilitators (n=8), school-based leaders (n=10), district-based administrators (n=14), and Institute staff (n=7).

The district survey comprised of closed- and open-ended questions and included an adapted version of a previously validated "Level of Collaboration" scale.* Respondents were asked to identify the level of collaboration they believe they had with Institute Staff and with other Districts within the Superintendents' Plan in **six action plan domain constructs**:

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

Institute staff were given a similar survey and asked to identify the level of collaboration with districts as a whole.

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

Level of Collaboration

1-NETWORKING

- Loosely defined roles
- Little communication
- All decisions are made independently

2-COOPERATION

- Provide information to each other
- Somewhat defined roles
- Formal communication
- All decisions are made independently

3-COORDINATION

- Share information and resources
- Defined roles
- Regular communication
- Some shared decision-making

4-COALITION

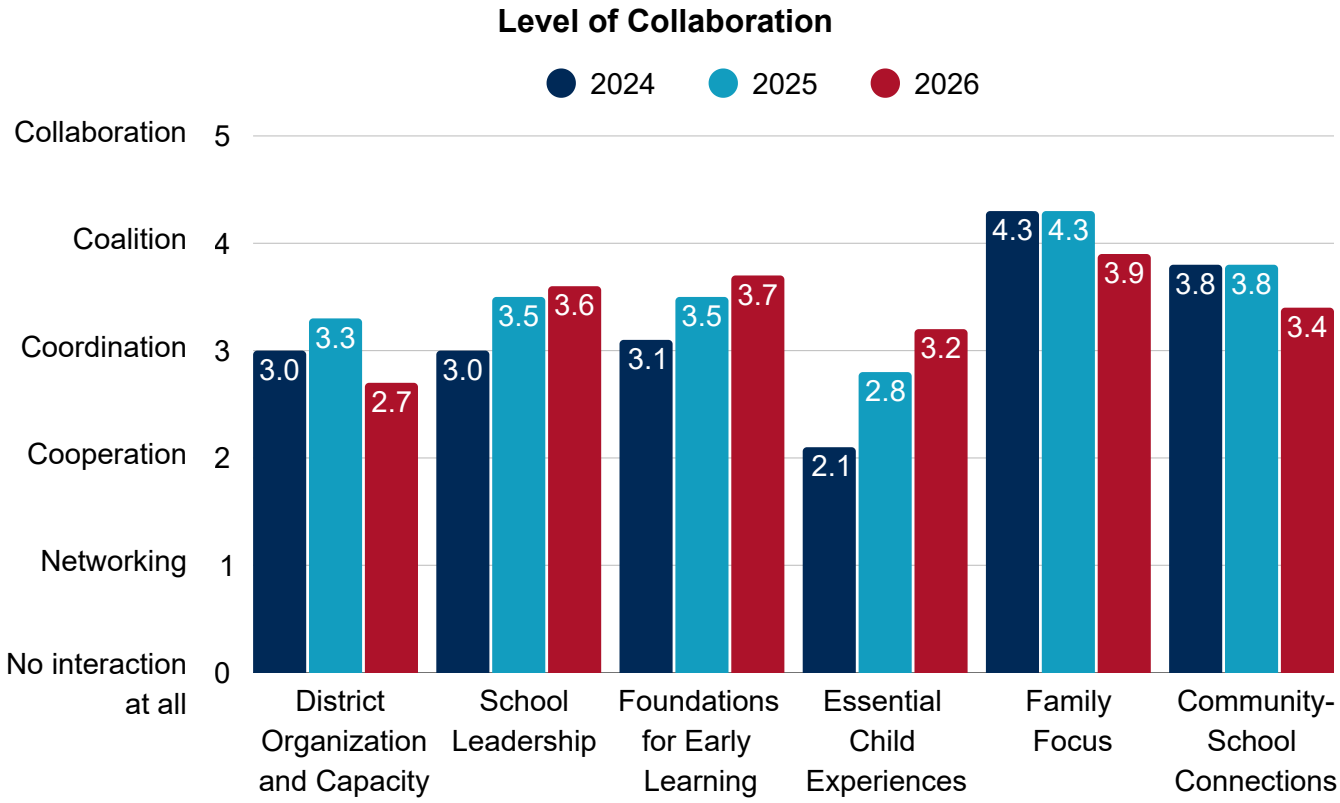
- Share ideas, information, and resources
- Regular and focused communication
- Frequent shared decision-making

5-COLLABORATION

- Frequent and strategic communication
- Mutual trust
- Shared decision-making in all decisions
- Consensus reached in all decisions

Institute Staff Survey Findings

Institute Staff members (n=7) were asked to identify the level of collaboration they have with all district/school stakeholders on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Institute collaboration perceptions had a mean of 3.4 in 2026, compared to a mean of 3.5 in 2025, indicating a level of coordination (i.e., share information and resources; defined roles; regular communication; and some shared decision-making).



Institute staff (n=7) were asked to rate the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. Agreement was based on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

School and district staff are able to speak openly and freely as members of the Superintendents' Plan



Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree

2025: 4.7

School and district staff ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration



Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree

2025: 4.7

Power is shared between the Buffett Institute and school and district staff



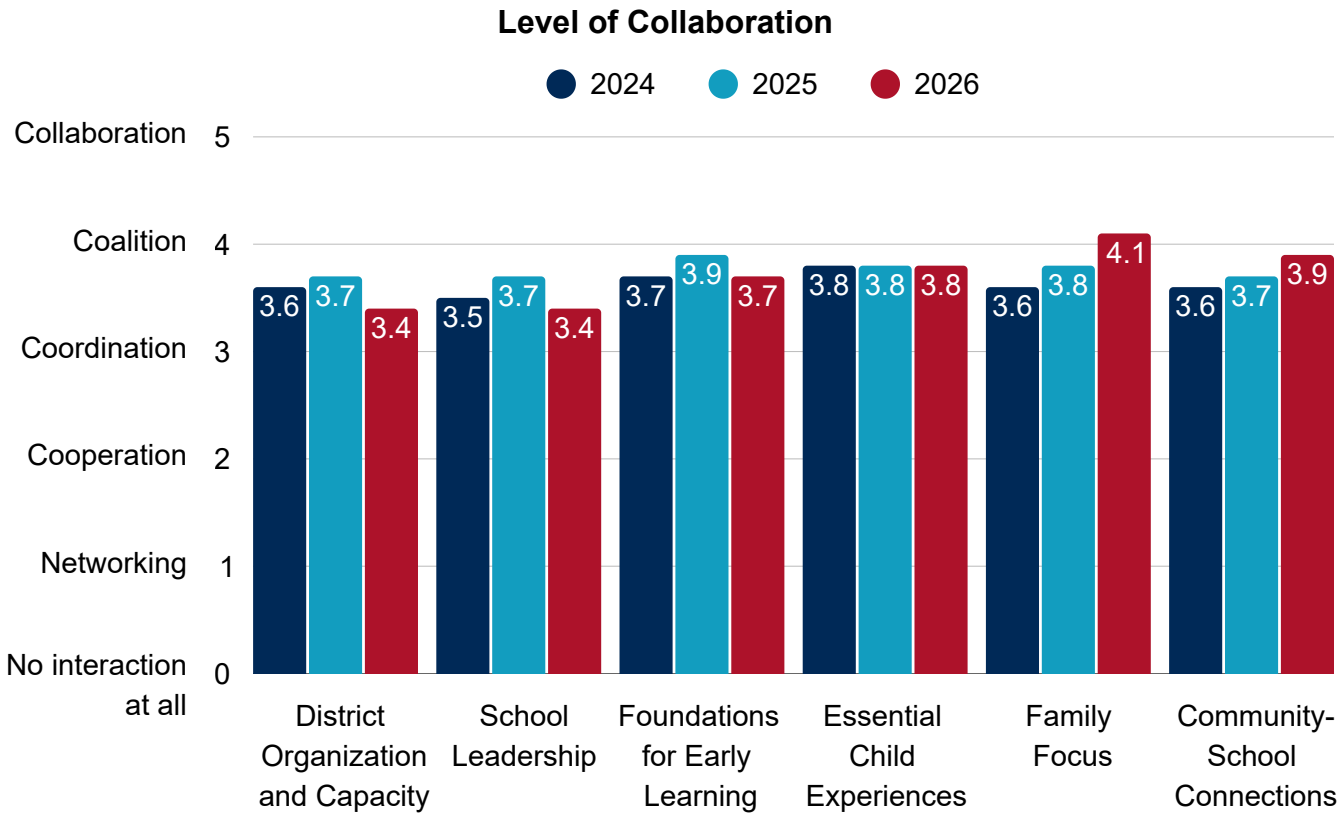
Strongly Disagree — Strongly Agree

2025: 4.3

Full-Implementation District Survey Findings

Collaboration with the Institute

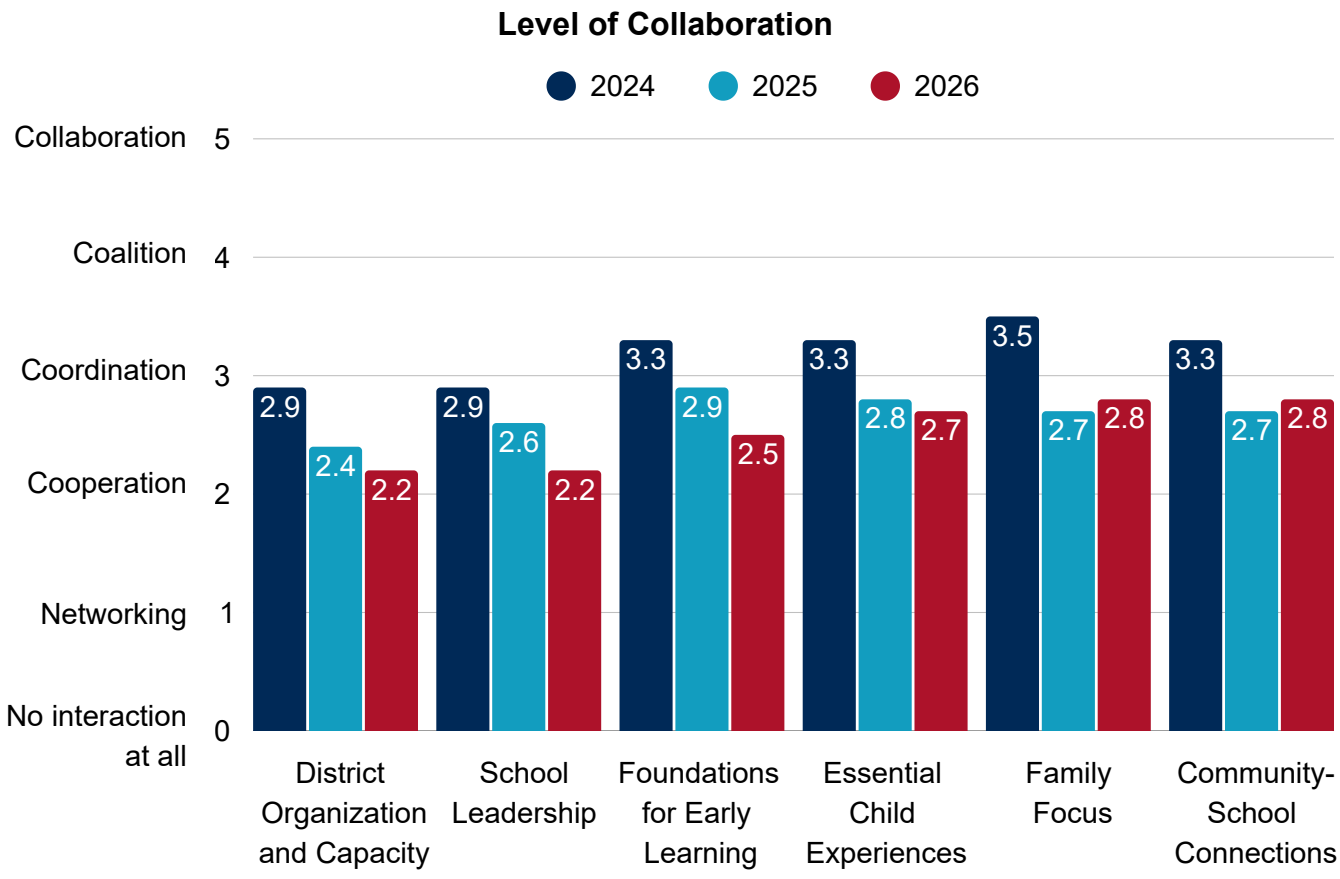
School/district program stakeholders from full-implementation districts were asked to reflect on their level of collaboration with the Institute using a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all; 5=collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Findings for district stakeholders (n=33) are shown below, compared with findings from the 2024-2025 and 2023-2024 school years. Respondents came from the following districts: Bellevue Public Schools, DC West Community Schools, Millard Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools. District stakeholders identified a mean of 3.7 for 2026, which decreased slightly from 2025 (M=3.8). Responses for 2026 indicated a level of coalition (i.e., share ideas, information, and resources; regular and focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making).



Full-Implementation District Survey Findings

Collaboration with Other Districts

Respondents from full-implementation districts (n=33) described their level of collaboration with other districts in the Superintendents' Plan (0=no interaction at all, 5=collaboration). Only individuals who self-identified as a workgroup member or a participant in an Institute-led Community of Practice (COP) answered this set of questions. Overall, the mean response was 2.5, indicating that staff from full-implementation districts typically reported coordination with other districts.



Full-Implementation District Survey Findings

Agreement Ratings

Plan stakeholders from full-implementation districts (n=33) were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements, using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the Buffett Institute serving as a key support for achieving action plan goals (M=4.7), ideas being listened to and given appropriate consideration (M=4.6), and power being shared between the teams and the Buffett Institute (M=4.6). The lowest level of agreement was noted in the following statement: Colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan help resolve challenges related to action plan goals. (M=4.5), although responses were still at the level of "somewhat agree." Additional mean findings are reported below.

The Buffett Institute is a key support for achieving my action plan goals



My colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan are a key support for achieving my action plan goals



The Institute helps me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals



My colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan help me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals



The Institute helps me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals



My colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan help me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals



The Institute is responsive to my questions and helps me to obtain answers as needed



Power is shared between my team and the Buffett Institute



I am able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Plan



My ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration



Customized-Assistance District Survey Findings

Agreement Ratings

Plan stakeholders from customized-assistance districts (n=4) were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements, using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The strongest levels of agreement were related to the Institute being responsive to questions and helping obtain the answers as needed (M=5.0), and power being shared between teams and the Buffett Institute. The lowest levels of agreement were related to colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan helping resolve challenges related to action plan goals (M=4.0), and colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan acting as a key support for achieving action plan goals (M=4.3). Additional mean findings are reported below.

The Buffett Institute is a key support for achieving my action plan goals



My colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan are a key support for achieving my action plan goals



The Institute helps me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals



My colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan help me gain new knowledge that will support my action plan goals



The Institute helps me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals



My colleagues within the Superintendents' Plan help me resolve challenges related to my action plan goals



The Institute is responsive to my questions and helps me to obtain answers as needed



Power is shared between my team and the Buffett Institute



I am able to speak openly and freely as a member of the Superintendents' Plan



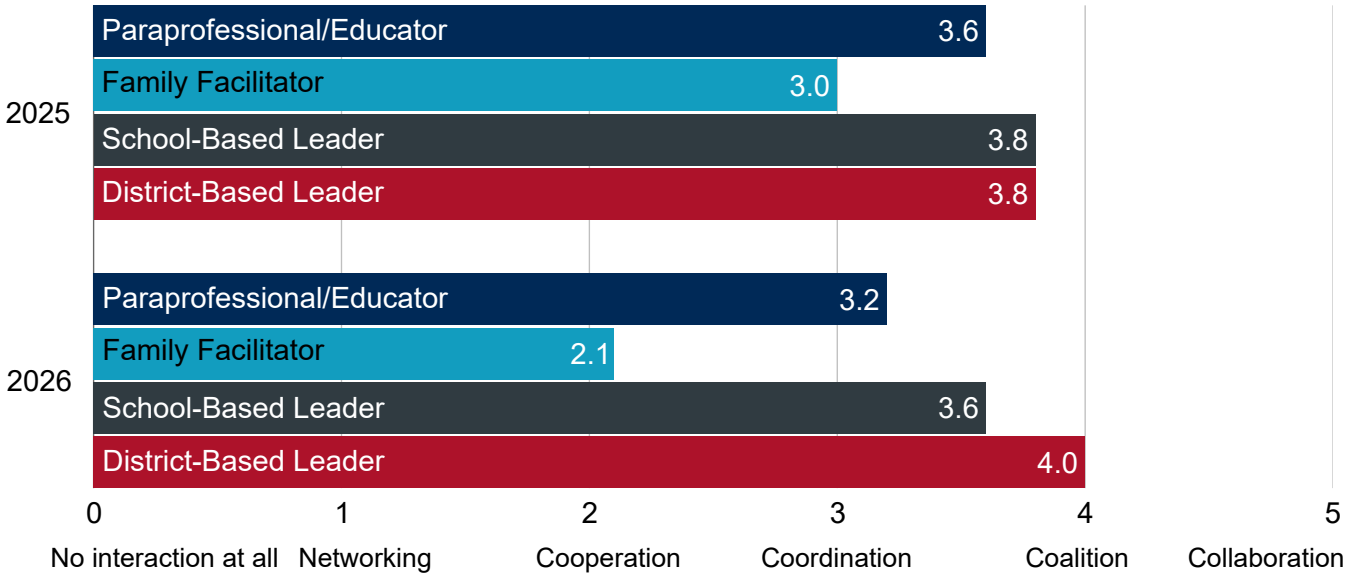
My ideas are listened to and given appropriate consideration



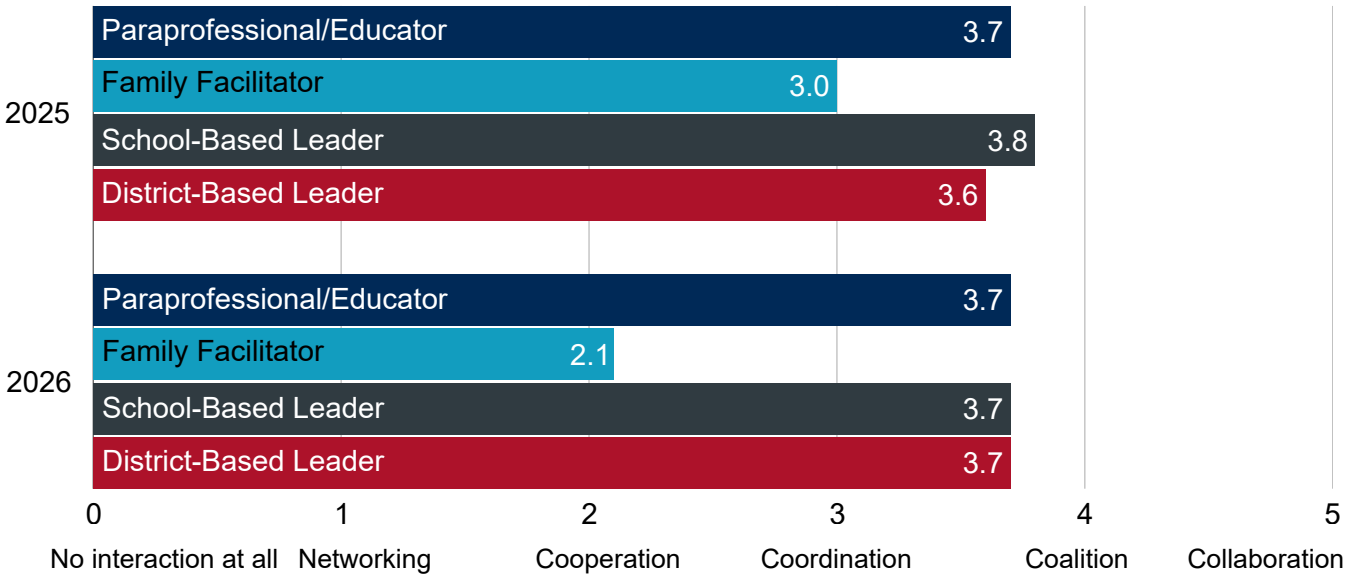
Comparison of Collaboration Findings by Stakeholder Type

A comparison analysis for the level of collaboration between the Institute and all districts (full-implementation and customized-assistance) for the action plan domains was completed across district stakeholder types. Responses were split into 4 groups: (1) paraprofessional/educator (n=6), (2) family facilitator/home visitor (n=7), (3) school-based leader (n=9), and (4) district-based leader (n=14). Only individuals who self-identified as engaged in the action planning process answered the collaboration scale questions. Mean findings were based on a scale of 0-5 (0=no interaction at all, 5=collaboration).

District Organization and Capacity

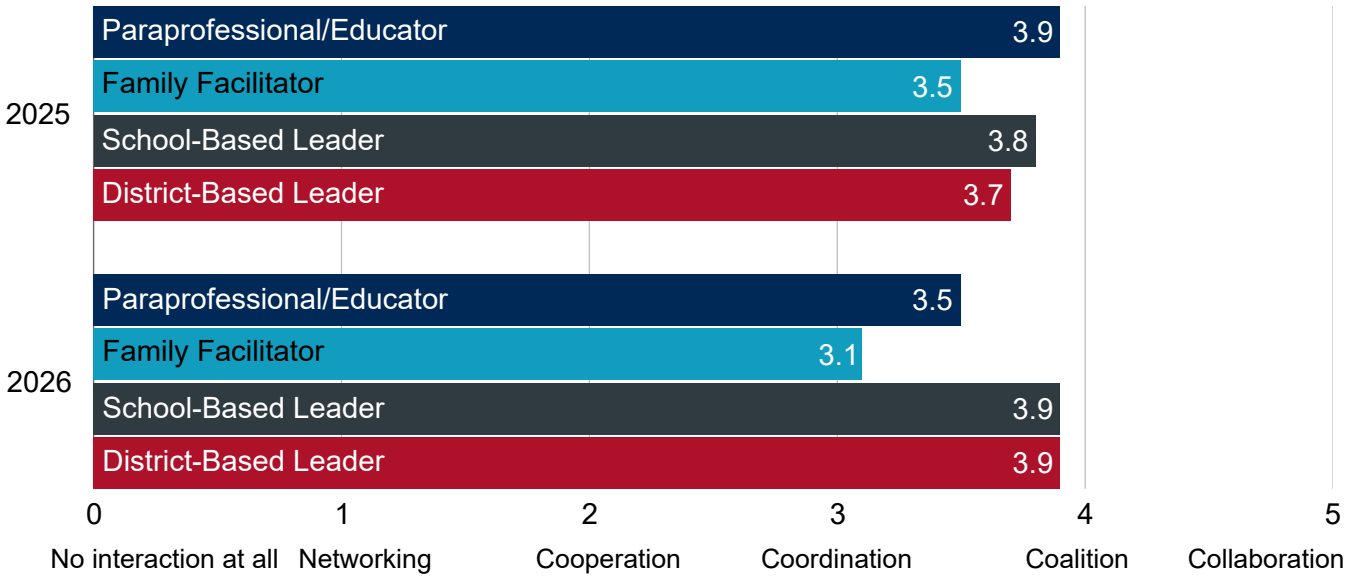


School Leadership

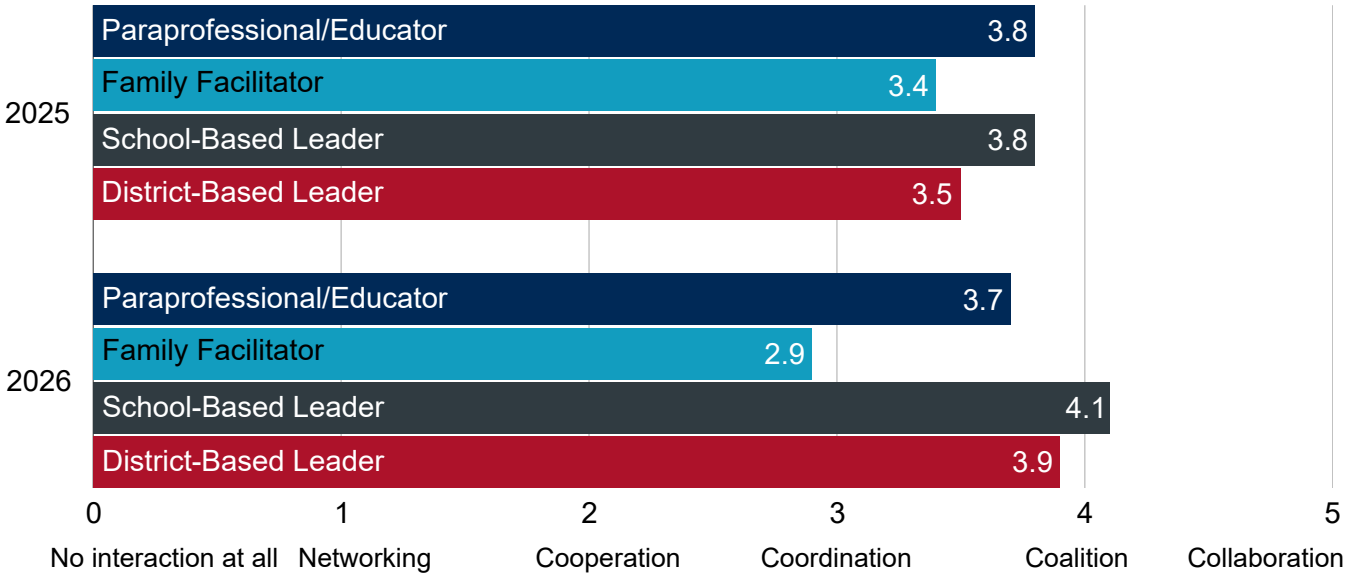


Districts & Institute Collaboration

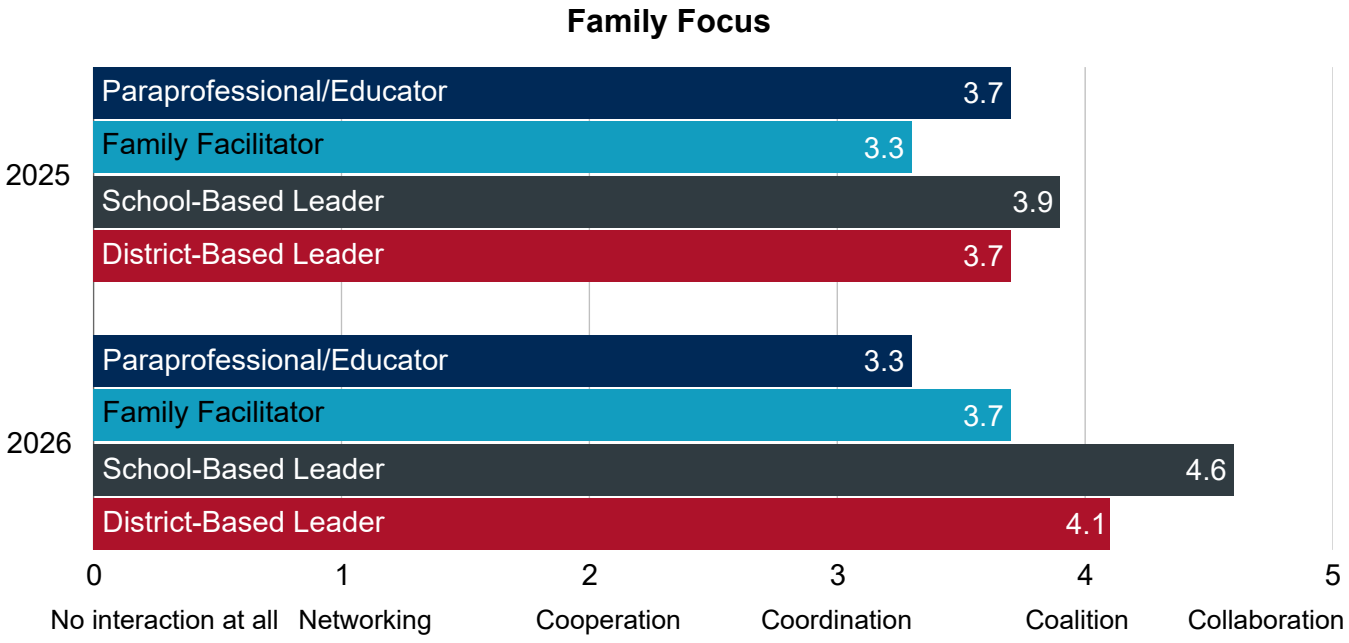
Foundations for Early Learning

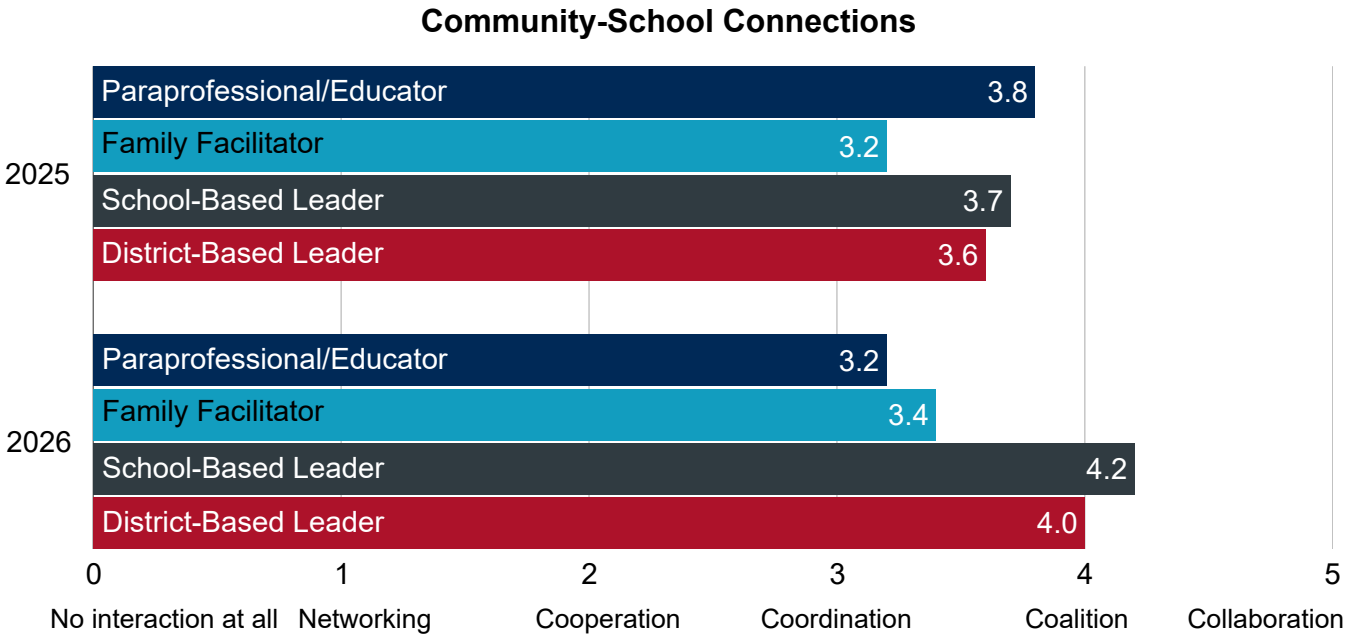


Essential Child Experiences



Districts & Institute Collaboration

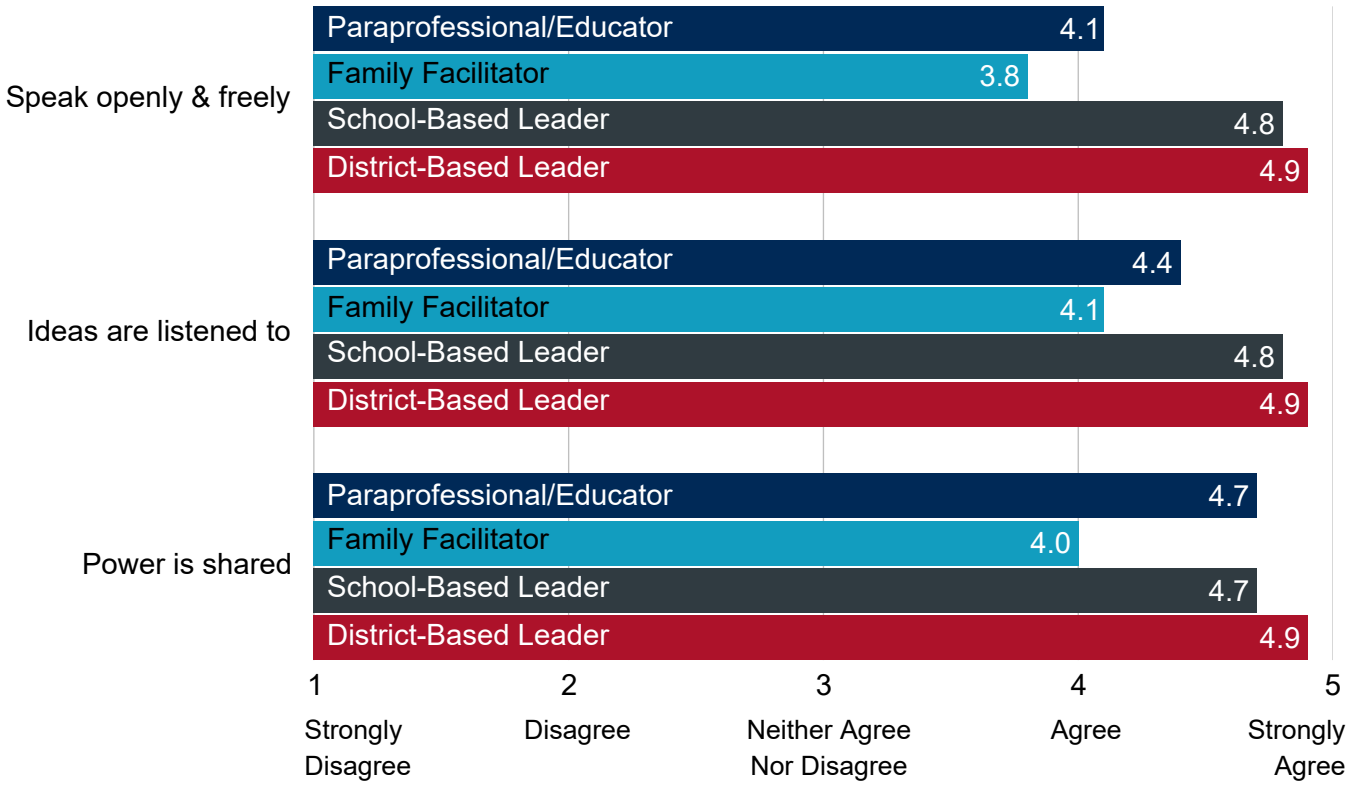




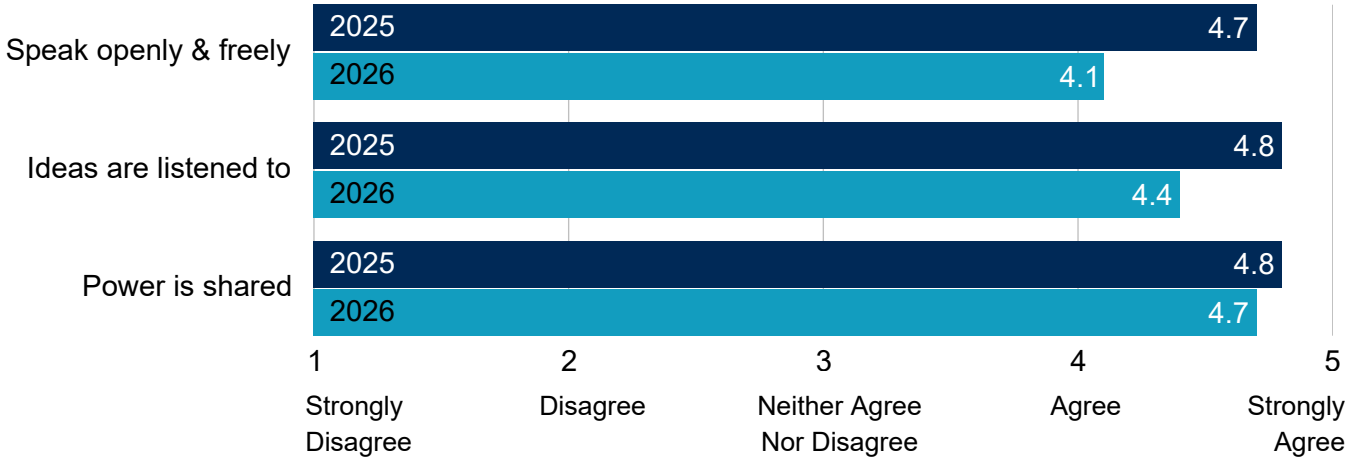
Comparison of Stakeholders' Agreement Ratings

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

2026 Findings for all Stakeholder Groups

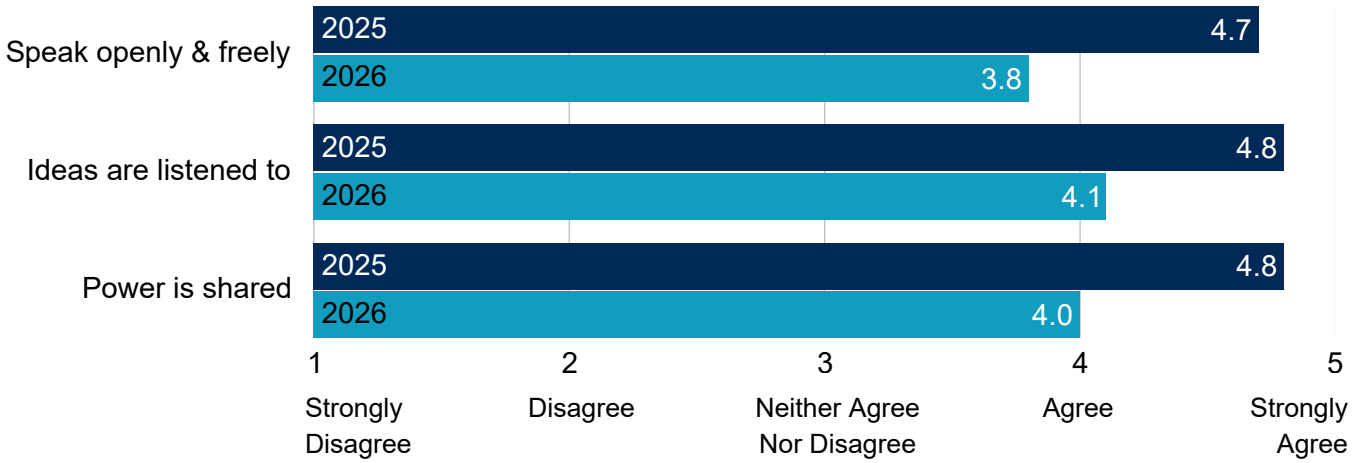


Paraprofessional/Educator Findings: 2025 and 2026

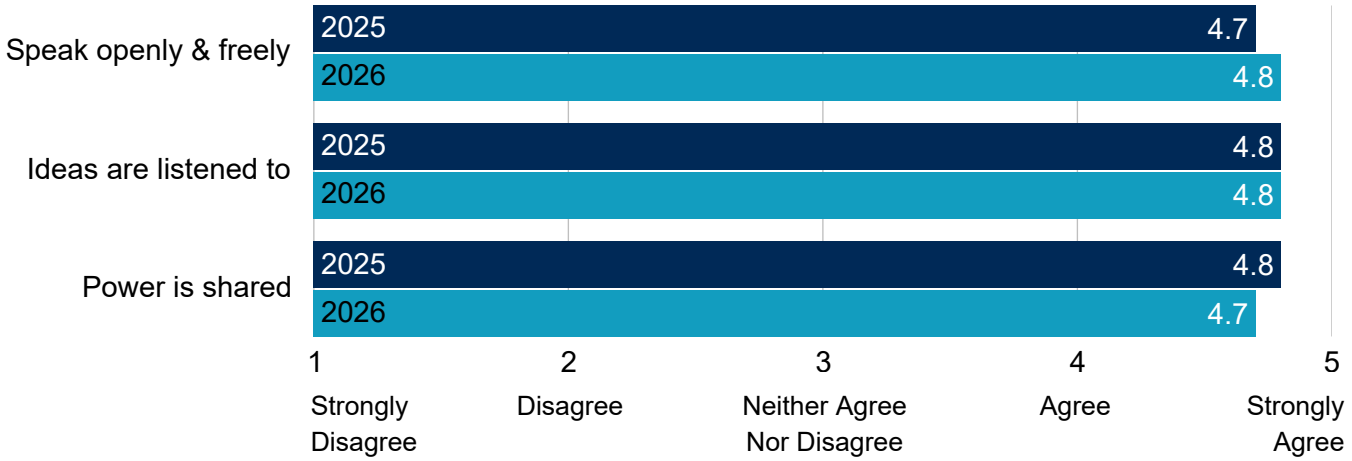


Districts & Institute Collaboration

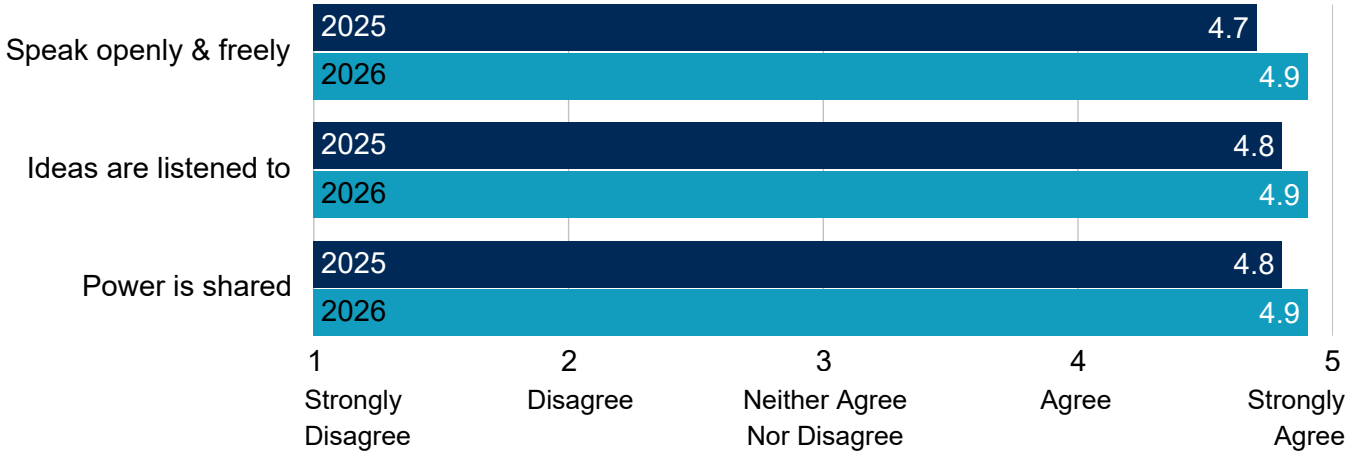
Family facilitator/Home Visitor Findings: 2025 and 2026



School-Based Leader Findings: 2025 and 2026

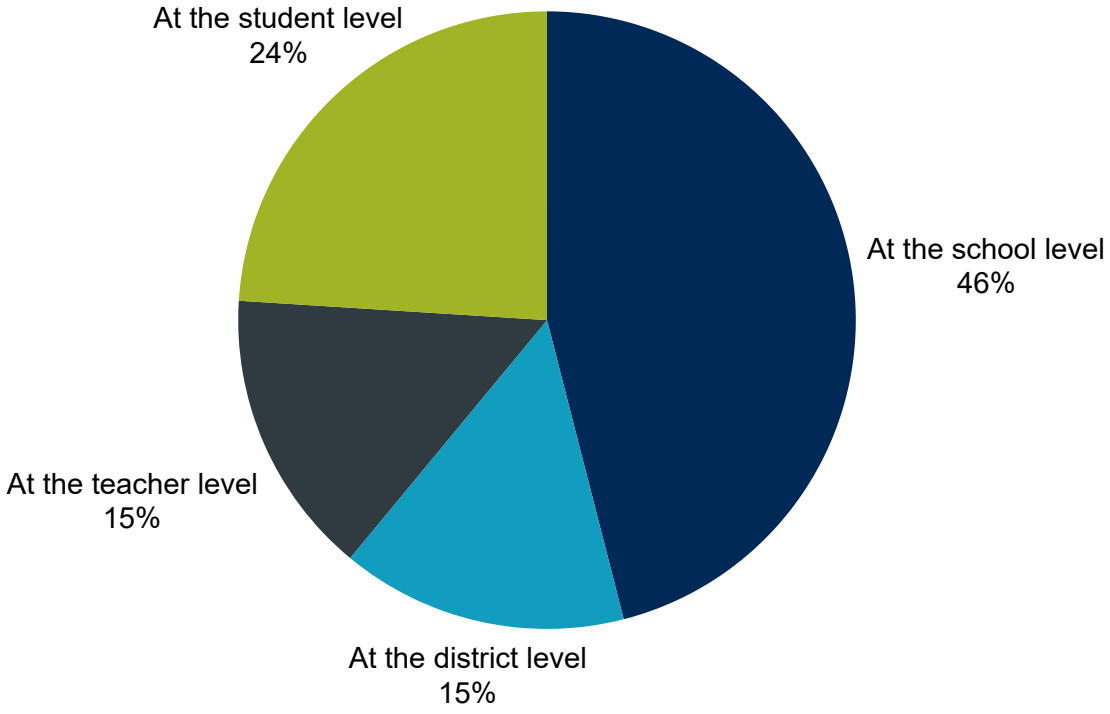


District-Based Leader Findings: 2025 and 2026



Where is the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Making the Biggest Difference?

The chart below illustrates district stakeholders' (n=41) perspectives on where the greatest changes have occurred as a result of participating in the plan. It was most common for respondents to report that the greatest changes took place at the school level (46%), followed by the student level (24%), the district level (15%), and the teacher level (15%).

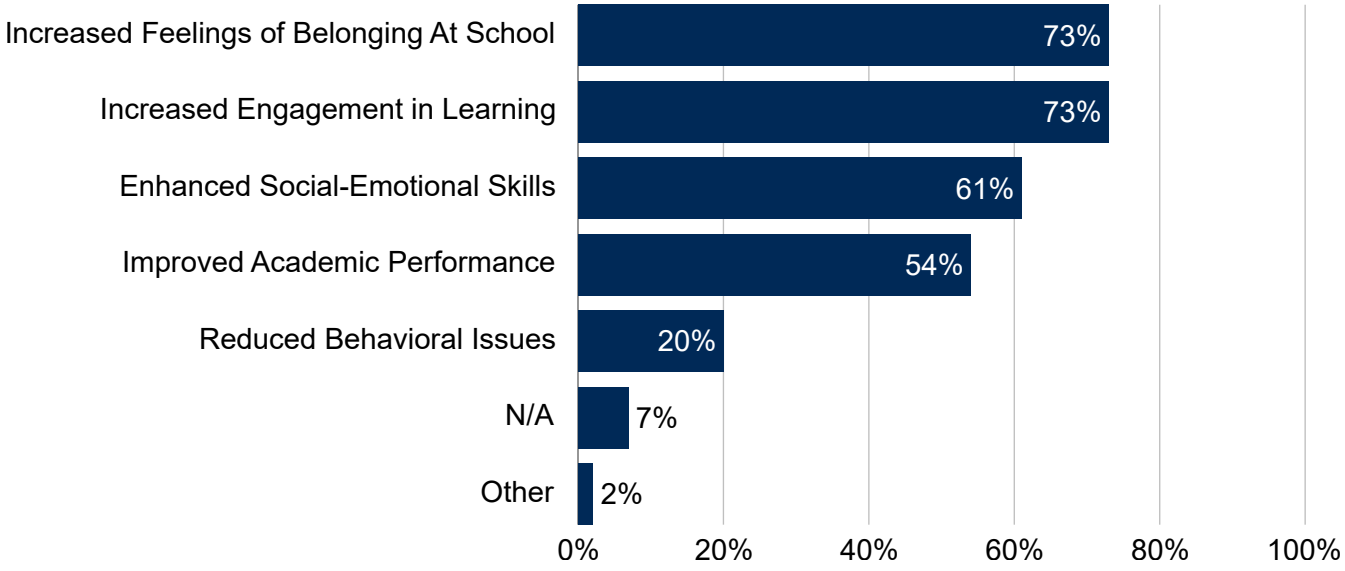




District Perspectives of Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Impact

Student Outcomes

Stakeholders (n=41) were asked to share how engagement in the Superintendents' Plan has influenced student outcomes. The most common impacts noted by respondents were increased feelings of belonging at school (73%) and increased engagement in learning (73%), followed by enhanced social-emotional skills (61%), improved academic performance (54%), and reduced behavioral issues (20%). A few participants responded that there was no impact on student outcomes (7%). Participants who reported other impacts (2%) highlighted improved school readiness skills, stronger collaboration with families (which supports student outcomes), and more structured processes across the district.



Respondents were asked to share specific examples of changes in student performance or behavior since engaging in the Superintendents' Plan, and three primary themes emerged. First, respondents described improvements in students' behavior, including increased emotional regulation, engagement, and reductions in behavior referrals. Second, they noted gains in academic engagement and performance, particularly in early literacy. Third, respondents highlighted stronger family partnerships and increased parent involvement, which they reported contributed to smoother transitions and a greater sense of belonging for students within the school environment.

"Students are more engaged in content and literacy activities when I facilitate their learning through play. Students are more interested in books and writing in the classroom."

Teacher Impact

Participants (n=41) were asked how the Superintendents' Plan has impacted teachers. Enhanced collaboration among staff was the most common response (78%), followed by improved teaching strategies (56%), increased confidence in addressing diverse student needs (44%), and greater satisfaction in their roles (15%). Five percent of respondents felt there had been no impact on teachers.

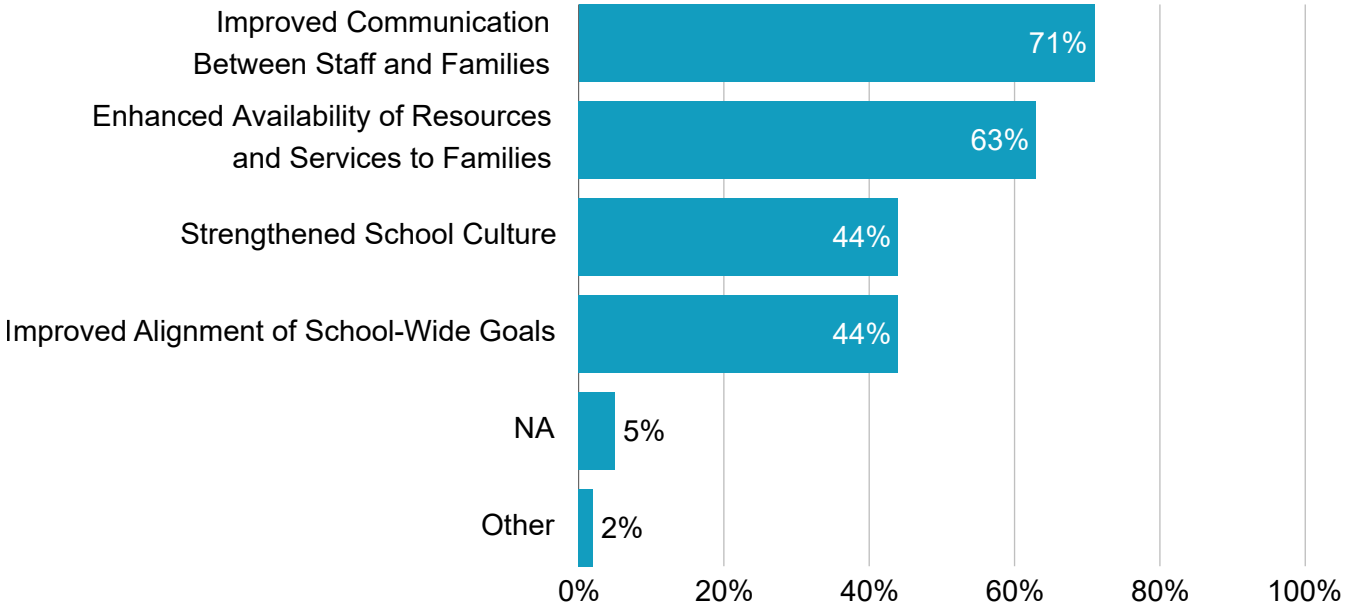


Respondents were asked to identify how engagement in the Superintendents' Plan contributed to changes among teachers. The most frequently reported impact was the Buffett Institute-provided professional development that led to improved staff collaboration and increased educator enthusiasm. Some respondents also appreciated opportunities to observe other classrooms and learn from colleagues through Professional Learning Community groups. Respondents also discussed the new materials and curriculum they received.

"The early childhood team really enjoyed the 'Essential Social Skills' training this year. During the 24/25 school year, the paraprofessionals gave rave reviews for the Pyramid training."

School Impact

District survey participants (n=41) were asked about school-level impacts related to participation in the Superintendents' Plan. Seventy-one percent of respondents reported improved communication between staff and families, followed by enhanced availability of resources and services to families (63%), strengthened school culture (44%), and improved alignment of school-wide goals (44%). Five percent of respondents felt there had been no impact at the school level. Other responses included improved systems.



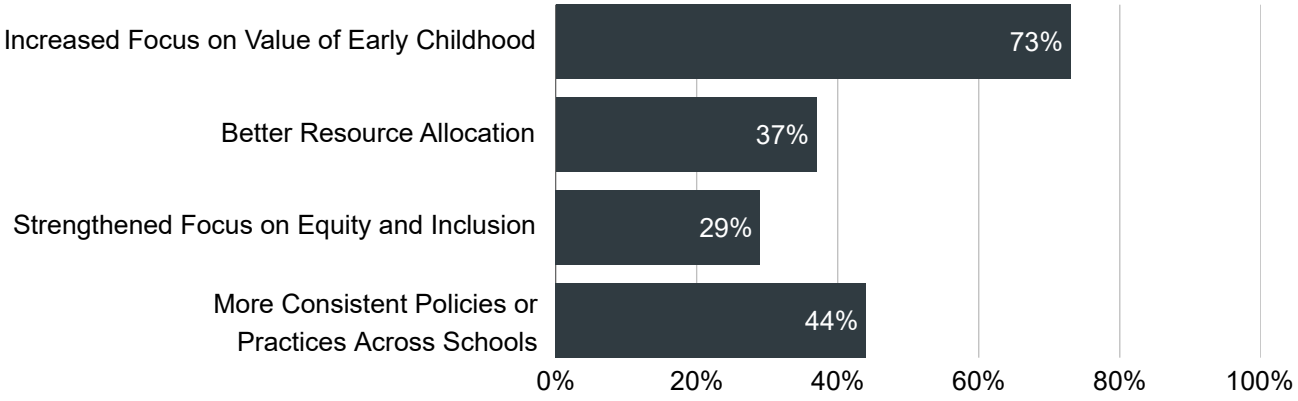
Respondents were asked to identify how engagement in the Superintendents' Plan contributed to changes at the school level, and three primary themes emerged. First, respondents most frequently reported improved communication between staff and families. Second, many noted enhanced availability of resources and services to families, suggesting increased capacity to support varying family needs. Third, respondents described strengthened school culture and improved alignment of school-wide goals.

"Thinking specifically to the Teacher Network, a specific example is our building noticing an increase in parent engagement in other grades outside of our TLN group! There's a definite 'buzz' to the efforts and others are taking notice."

Districts & Institute Collaboration

District Impact

Participants (n=41) were asked to select impacts they had observed at the district level as a result of Superintendents' Plan participation. Increased focus on the value of early childhood was the most commonly reported impact (73%), followed by better resource allocation (37%), more consistent policies or practices across schools (44%), and strengthened focus on equity and inclusion (29%).



Respondents were asked to describe any noticeable changes in their district environment or operations due to engagement in the Superintendents' Plan, and three primary themes emerged. First, respondents emphasized increased alignment across the district related to policies and practices. Second, many noted a stronger district focus on early childhood. Third, respondents highlighted enhanced collaboration and family engagement support at the district level.

"Our district has put Early Childhood front and center for trainings and district collaborations. There is a role and a focus each month at the Principal's meeting to keep focusing on how Quality Early Childhood engagement has long lasting benefits for students, families, and schools."

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Analysis of the quantitative data presented indicates moderate to strong levels of collaboration between the Buffett Institute and Superintendents' Plan stakeholders, with variation by stakeholder group and type of collaboration. Institute staff reported overall collaboration with districts to fall at the coordination level (M=3.4), reflecting regular communication, defined roles, and some shared decision-making. In contrast, stakeholders from full-implementation districts perceived their collaboration with the Institute at a slightly higher coalition level (M=3.7), suggesting more frequent shared decision-making and more focused communication. However, collaboration across districts was lower, with full-implementation stakeholders reporting an average at the coordination level (M=2.5), indicating that while information and resources are shared, deeper collaboration across districts remains more limited.

Survey results also demonstrate consistently high levels of perceived support from the Institute. Stakeholders from full-implementation districts reported strong agreement that the Institute supports action plan goals (M=4.7), values stakeholder input (M=4.6), and shares decision-making power (M=4.6). Similarly, stakeholders from customized-assistance districts (n=4) reported uniformly high agreement across key items, particularly regarding Institute responsiveness (M=5.0), shared power with the Institute (M=5.0), and support for building knowledge (M=5.0). While both groups expressed strong positive perceptions, customized-assistance districts reported slightly higher agreement overall, with the largest differences related to the role of Superintendents' Plan colleagues in helping resolve challenges.

Findings related to impact further suggest that the Superintendents' Plan is most strongly influencing practice at the school level (46%), followed by the student level (24%), district level (15%), and teacher level (15%). At the student level, the most commonly reported outcomes included increased feelings of belonging (73%), increased engagement in learning (73%), enhanced social and emotional skills (61%), and improved academic performance (54%).

Teacher impacts were most evident in enhanced collaboration among staff (78%) and improved instructional strategies (56%), while school-level changes were most frequently reflected in improved communication with families (71%) and increased access to resources (63%). At the district level, the most prominent reported impact was an increased focus on the value of early childhood education (73%), along with more consistent practices and improved resource allocation.

Greatest Accomplishments of the Superintendents' Plan

District Perspective

Six primary themes emerged when participants identified the Superintendents' Plan's greatest accomplishments: value of early childhood education, effective alignment with district goals, improved student outcomes, intentional engagement with families, increased opportunities for networking and collaboration, and sustained utilization of the "School as a Hub" approach.

VALUE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

An achievement identified by several respondents was the sustained recognition of the value of early childhood education. Participants described increased understanding and heightened awareness of how to effectively support early childhood initiatives.

- *"An increased understanding of the importance of Early Childhood Education."*
- *"The greatest accomplishments to date include increased awareness of Early Intervention across the district."*

EFFECTIVE ALIGNMENT WITH DISTRICT GOALS

Alignment between the Superintendents' Plan and district strategic goals was identified as a key facilitator of progress. Participants described this shift toward integration with district strategic planning and continuous improvement processes as a substantial advancement in implementation. The development and use of the School as Hub framework to inform improvement plans aligned with district goals enabled more strategic action and supported a smoother transition from planning to implementation

- *"Creation and use of the domains to develop an improvement plan aligned to district goals."*
- *"The recent shift of alignment to district strategic plans and continuous improvement has been one of the best shifts to occur throughout the entire implementation of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan."*

IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES

Respondents underlined the positive outcomes experienced by students in a variety of ways. Emphasis was placed on improvements in academic performance and behavior, as well as strengthened family partnerships that support student success.

- *"Increase student outcomes both academically and behaviorally."*
- *"We have seen improvements in our child outcomes as well as improved partnerships with families."*

Districts & Institute Collaboration

INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES

Participants reported intentional engagement with families as a benefit of engagement in the Superintendents' Plan. Creating opportunities for family engagement through activities and school events was identified as a key strategy for achieving future accomplishments.

- *"Increasing our family engagement."*
- *"Adding more family engagement activities."*
- *"For me, it's been the focus on family engagement and how this piece is critical to our families' success both inside and outside of school."*

INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

Participants reported that structured communication and idea exchange within and across districts strengthened collaboration and enhanced collective problem-solving. These joint efforts were reported to facilitate alignment of activities across School as Hub sites.

- *"Getting the districts to work together and share ideas."*
- *"Improvement in collaboration."*
- *"Increased engagement within my instructional leadership team."*

SUSTAINED UTILIZATION OF THE SCHOOL AS HUB APPROACH

Stakeholders expressed sustained commitment to the School as Hub framework, demonstrating continued ownership and utilization of the approach. The model remains central to strengthening family engagement, building trusting relationships, and coordinating access to supports and services for students and families.

- *"Developing schools as a hub [for] the community."*
- *"Adding more family engagement activities, and creating a stronger School as Hub."*

Greatest Accomplishments of the Superintendents' Plan

Institute Perspective

Institute staff identified three primary accomplishments of the Superintendents' Plan: stronger engagement with families, enhanced utilization of the School as Hub approach, and intentional engagement with colleagues.

STRONGER ENGAGEMENT WITH FAMILIES

Respondents identified the creation of intentional spaces and opportunities that support more active and meaningful family participation in children's learning and school experiences.

- *"Recognizing the importance and implementing programming for children and families from birth to five into the school space."*

ENHANCED UTILIZATION OF THE SCHOOL AS HUB APPROACH

Institute staff reported sustained utilization and visibility of the School as Hub framework as a guiding structure for advancing early childhood priorities. Staff described the model as instrumental in positioning schools as centers of connection and coordinated support.

- *"The School as Hub Framework is transforming schools into centers of connection and support, fostering stronger partnerships among educators, families, and communities to improve outcomes for children."*
- *"Leading the School as Hub Book Series and the creation of picture books that authentically represent the work of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan stands out as a significant achievement."*

INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH COLLEAGUES

Respondents highlighted intentional engagement and relationship-building as a core accomplishment of the Superintendents' Plan. Participants emphasized the development of strong, trusting relationships among program stakeholders and Buffett Institute staff as foundational to the initiative's progress.

- *"The greatest accomplishment to date within the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan has been the development of strong, trusting relationships with coaches, teachers, families, and school staff."*
- *"Schools/principals/staff are excited to share the stories of their work and want to continue hitting goals."*

Greatest Strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

District Perspective

Participants reported the greatest strengths of the Superintendents' Plan to be strengthening family and school connections, ongoing partnership and communication, networking, collective brainstorming, and opportunities for professional growth.

STRENGTHENING FAMILY AND SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

A key strength identified was the strengthening of relationships between families and schools, with respondents highlighting increased family engagement, stronger support for early childhood teachers, and deeper connections that enhance support for students and the broader school community.

- *"Family Engagement and support of Early Childhood teachers."*
- *"The connections I have been able to make to grow myself and to support my students, families and school community better."*

ONGOING PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

A key strength identified was the strong, ongoing partnership between districts and the Buffett Institute staff. This partnership was characterized by collaborative planning and consistent two-way communication that integrates expertise and shared efforts to improve the Superintendents' Plan outcomes.

- *"Collaboration and productive planning conversations. I highly value the staff of Buffett. Everyone is very supportive, collaborative, and positive."*
- *"Greatest strengths of my relationship with Buffett Institute staff is collaboration and partnership."*
- *"There is incredible two way communication and partnering. The Buffett staff bring research and experience as collaborative partners and we work to improve outcomes for our children."*

NETWORKING

Another key strength identified was the opportunity to network with colleagues across districts, fostering shared learning and the development of supportive professional relationships.

- *"Being able to collaborate with like-minded colleagues throughout the varied school districts."*
- *"Being able to meet and interact with other staff members."*

Districts & Institute Collaboration

COLLECTIVE BRAINSTORMING

A key strength identified was the opportunity for collective brainstorming with the Buffett Institute staff, with respondents emphasizing access to expertise, resources, and collaborative problem-solving that supports continuous improvement.

- *"They are a great resource when I have questions or need to brainstorm ideas with an expert in the field."*
- *"Depth of knowledge and depth of resources to help ideate, problem solve, and continuously improve."*
- *"Being able to brainstorm and think outside of the box."*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Opportunities for professional growth were identified as a major strength. Respondents noted that these opportunities encouraged continued learning and development, with resources providing valuable support for ongoing progress.

- *"Getting to attend a professional NAEYC conference with the Buffett Institute staff. Really helped me understand the work and value of the Buffett Institute."*
- *"The Buffett Institute staff has been supportive of our work and providing resources and support where we need to learn and grow. They ask reflective questions and help us to push forward even when there are competing priorities that could slow our progress."*

Greatest Strengths of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

Institute Perspective

Institute staff reported the greatest strengths of the Superintendents' Plan to be strengthened family and school connections, ongoing partnership and communication between district and Institute staff and opportunities for Superintendents' Plan program partners to engage in professional development.

STRENGTHENED FAMILY AND SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

Institute staff described strengthened connections between families and schools as one of the most important strengths of the Superintendents' Plan. Staff reported that districts have been able to build stronger partnerships with families, increase communication, and connect families to supportive resources.

- *"One of the greatest strengths of our school districts is their willingness to continue growing and evolving what School as Hub can look like in their schools and communities."*

ONGOING PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTITUTE STAFF

Participants frequently highlighted the ongoing partnership and communication between district stakeholders and Buffett Institute staff as a key strength of the Superintendents' Plan. Respondents felt district stakeholders saw them as trusted collaborators who provide consistent guidance and access to information that helps advance early childhood efforts.

- *"Collaboration between the Buffett Institute and districts is strong."*
- *"I believe schools trust Buffett Institute staff as a reliable source of support and information."*
- *"The staff at the Institute is strong and effective at building and sustaining relationships with school and district staff."*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Another strength identified by Institute staff was the opportunities available to Superintendents' Plan staff for professional development.

- *"The Professional Learning Series that includes monthly contact and learning with the Buffett Institute team and Family Engagement Staff and Community Facilitators."*

Greatest Challenges of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

District Perspective

Respondents were asked to identify challenges in working with Institute staff, as well as broader challenges related to the Superintendents' Plan. Their responses highlighted several key obstacles, including clarity of expectations, time and scheduling difficulties, staff transition and retention, alignment with current district priorities, and materials and resources.

CLARITY OF EXPECTATIONS

A frequently cited challenge was limited clarity around expectations and overall program direction from the Buffett Institute, with some participants noting difficulty understanding the requirements and how their role fits within the broader initiative.

- *"Lack of clarity of expectations."*
- *"Understanding the expectations from Buffett Institute."*
- *"Not fully understanding the scope and direction since I am only involved at an ancillary level."*

TIME AND SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES

Participants identified limited time as a challenge, often noting many responsibilities related to work tasks and collaboration but not enough time to manage them effectively.

- *"Being able to devote enough time to the collaboration."*
- *"I never feel like I have enough time to do all the things I want to do for my families, my school, my district and the Buffett Institute."*
- *"A lot of the things we need [and] want take time."*

STAFF TRANSITION AND RETENTION

Staff transition and retention were identified as ongoing challenges. Changes in staffing and the replacement of staff members was identified as a barrier.

- *"The retention and the changing of staff has been challenging."*
- *"The retention of the staff."*
- *"The turnover of [Buffett] staff."*

ALIGNMENT WITH CURRENT DISTRICT PRIORITIES

Alignment with current district priorities, particularly ensuring intentional alignment, was identified as a concern. Participants noted that integrating district focus areas with program goals presented ongoing challenges.

- *"For me, it has been ensuring there is intentional alignment in the work, to our district priorities and being prepared for the incredibly smart and high level discussions we have at the meetings!"*
- *"How to fit in it with other district focus areas."*

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Material and resource barriers were identified as a persistent challenge. Participants reported limited access to information and noted that some materials, such as curricula, were not always easy to navigate or use effectively.

- *"Finding time and resources to accomplish all of the ideas we have for the future."*
- *"The most challenging part has been figuring out the curriculum. I feel like it is not user friendly and poses several challenges."*
- *"I don't always have the information I need to be a productive contributor in these conversations."*



Greatest Challenges of the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

Institute Perspective

Respondents were asked to identify challenges in working with schools within the Superintendents' Plan. Their responses indicated that the biggest obstacles include material and resource challenges, general time constraints and general staffing constraints.

MATERIAL AND RESOURCE CHALLENGES

Material and resource challenges were identified as a barrier from Institute staff's perspective. Participants described logistical obstacles such as difficulty accessing resources for staff and families and coordinating meeting times for collaboration.

- "Logistical barriers arise that prevents the work from moving forward to full School as Hub implementation (e.g., timely responses, easier access to resources for front-line staff and families, scheduling professional learning where teachers actually attend, scheduling time to meet with teachers during limited plan time)."

GENERAL TIME CONSTRAINTS

Respondents also identified time as a continuing issue. Participants noted that limited time and numerous responsibilities made it difficult to accomplish all required within the available timeframe.

- "Time is always the limiting factor—especially when there are so many great ideas and so much meaningful work still to be done."

GENERAL STAFFING CONSTRAINTS

General staffing constraints were identified as a challenge. Respondents noted that the lack of a designated point of contact made it difficult to coordinate and provide support for programming.

- "Identifying and maintaining a reliable point of contact within [School] to support Buffett Institute programming has presented challenges."
- "Uninformed leadership at different districts."

Suggested Program Improvements

District Perspective

- **Enhance Opportunities for Collaboration:** *"More peer support. More opportunities for professional advancement and learning opportunities."*
- **Expand School As Hub:** *"I would like to see The School As Hub plan in Ralston expand to other schools."*
- ***Clarity of Expectations:*** *"Better communication of plans/expectations from Buffett and OPS district leadership."*
- **Expand Family Support:** *"Have families basic needs more in the forefront, because if they aren't being met, is harder to improve."*
- **Communication:** *"Communicate with school and district leaders more effectively."*
- **More Resources:** *"I really like the idea of developing district resources and building level resources that districts can access when they need them."*

Institute Perspective

- **Meetings:** *"Regular meetings/collaboration between district staff/principals and Buffett Institute Program Administrators."*
- **Clarity of Expectations:** *"Increased principal engagement and a clearer shared understanding of expectations across roles."*
- **Communication and Collaboration:** *"Strengthening communication and consistency, with greater buy-in from district staff, would help support more cohesive implementation."*
- **Expand Family Support Services:** *"A more intentional and supportive onboarding process for new family engagement staff would be beneficial."*
- **Resources and Materials:** *"Easier access to resources/budget for front-line family engagement staff (e.g., not jumping through hoops for basic needs)."*
- **Time:** *"Timely responses from district staff on emails about School as Hub."*
- **Additional Implementation Support:** *"Expanding the focus on teacher coaching would further strengthen practice and deepen the impact of the work."*

Summary of Qualtitative Findings

Across district and Institute stakeholders, findings from the qualitative data highlight the Superintendents' Plan as an initiative that provides effective support to early childhood systems at the school and district level. From the district perspective, participants emphasized the growing recognition of the value of early childhood. In addition, respondents reported increased alignment between Superintendents' Plan efforts and districts' strategic goals. Participants felt that this alignment, along with existing program strategies, has resulted in improvements in student outcomes, particularly academic and behavioral domains. Additionally, participants consistently underscored the importance of the School as Hub approach in supporting children and families. District participants also reported increased opportunities for networking and collaboration over the past year.

From the Institute perspective, findings similarly emphasize relational and structural strengths of the Superintendents' Plan, particularly in fostering strong partnerships and advancing the School as Hub framework. Institute staff identified strengthened family engagement as a key accomplishment, noting the creation of meaningful opportunities for families to participate in school communities. The continued visibility and utilization of the School as Hub model were also highlighted as instrumental in positioning schools as centers of connection and coordinated support. Additionally, intentional engagement with colleagues emerged as a critical strength, with Institute staff describing the development of relationships between district staff and Buffett Institute as foundational to the initiative's success.

Despite these strengths, respondents identified several challenges that may impact implementation and sustainability. Common barriers included limited clarity of expectations and program direction, particularly related to roles and requirements within the Superintendents' Plan. Time constraints and competing demands were also frequently cited, with participants noting difficulty balancing Superintendents' Plan activities with existing responsibilities. Additional challenges included staff turnover, alignment with competing district priorities, and limited access to user-friendly materials and resources. From the Institute perspective, logistical barriers, staffing limitations, and coordination across districts further complicated implementation efforts. Collectively, these findings suggest that, while the Superintendents' Plan has made meaningful progress in strengthening early childhood systems and relationships, continued attention to communication and structural supports will be critical to sustaining and scaling its impact.

Definitions

ASQ: The Ages & Stages Questionnaires are screening tools designed to help caregivers and professionals monitor young children's development across areas such as communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, personal–social skills, and social-emotional behaviors.

ChildPlus: The database used by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute to track participant engagement across programmatic activities.

FastBridge: An assessment tool designed to identify students' academic and social-emotional behavior needs

MAP Assessment: A child assessment tool utilized by districts to measure achievement and growth in K-12 math, reading, language usage, and science.

PD: Professional Development

School as Hub: A school identified by its district due to unique risk factors. The school serves as a "hub" for complex learning systems, connecting children and families to resources within and beyond school walls.

References

Frey, B. B., Lohmeier, J. H., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring Collaboration Among Grant Partners. American Journal of Evaluation, 27(3), 383-392. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214006290356

Killion, J. (2008). Assessing impact: Evaluating professional development. Corwin Press.

Skaalvik, C. (2020). School principal self-efficacy for instructional leadership: relations with engagement, emotional exhaustion and motivation to quit. Social Psychology of Education, 23(2), 479-498. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09544-4

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. Educational Researcher, 30(3), 23-28. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X030003023

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. Teaching Teacher Education, 17, 783-805

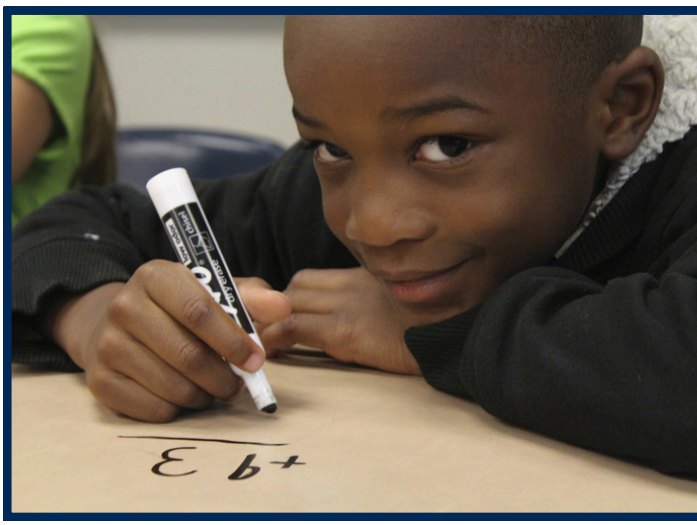
The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

learning community DOUGLAS SARPY

2025-2026 Reach & Evaluation Executive Summary

Buffett Early Childhood Institute







UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER℠
MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE

Table of Contents

School as Hub Programmatic Highlights: 2025-2026 ---- 3

Evaluation Overview ---- 4

Academic Achievement ---- 5

Ages and Stages Questionnaires ---- 6

Family-Level Outcomes ---- 7

Systems-Level Outcomes: Instructional Excellence ---- 8

Educator Self-Efficacy ---- 9

Districts & Institute Collaboration ---- 10

Action Planning Progress ---- 11

Definitions & References ---- 12

University of Nebraska Medical Center
MUNROE-MEYER INSTITUTE

Report prepared by
Allison Jadoobirsingh, MS, and Sangyoo Lee, PhD
Primary Investigator: Jolene Johnson, Ed.D., Director
Education and Child Development, Munroe-Meyer Institute,
University of Nebraska Medical Center
sanlee@unmc.edu

learning community DOUGLAS SARPY

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan is funded by the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties.
https://learningcommunityds.org/

School as Hub Programmatic Highlights: 2025-2026*

Bellevue Public Schools

- Strengthened literacy through real-world learning experiences and community field trips for 328 students.
- Expanded Family Engagement with the tradition of Get to Know You Conferences, Family Literacy Night, home visits, and literacy backpacks.
- Provided bi-monthly professional learning, preschool coaching, and a Birth–Preschool Professional Learning Plan, strengthening instructional practices and collaboration across schools

DC West Community Schools

- Established a representative Continuous Improvement Team with staff from every grade level and specialists, strengthening collaborative planning and decision-making for School as Hub.
- Developed a pilot family engagement mystery reader program to support more engagement with families in the school building.
- Family Falcon Café sessions were accessible, recorded, and offered at varied times to increase family participation, with over 160 views on YouTube.

Millard Public Schools

- Facilitated play-based learning sessions for children and families.
- Built children's foundational academic and social skills before preschool.
- Supported families with successful transitions into preschool programs.

Omaha Public Schools

- Expanded the capacity of 52 childcare professionals to implement relationship-based and self-regulation strategies through targeted Conscious Discipline training facilitated by Community Facilitators.
- Explored and implemented purposeful play in PreK–2 classrooms to enhance student learning, engagement, and developmentally appropriate instruction.
- School leadership teams coordinated PreK–5 Professional Learning Communities and instructional rounds, creating opportunities for teachers to collaboratively analyze student data and refine instructional practices across grade levels.

Ralston Public Schools

- Launched a new School as Hub site at Meadows Elementary with 330 students
- Expanded birth-to-age-3 programming through stay-and-play sessions, socializations, and home visits that support family engagement events for all ages.
- Supported 13 families and 24 children during the first year, strengthening early family engagement.

Westside Community Schools

- Supported continuous improvement efforts focused on student achievement.
- Demonstrated year-over-year growth in MAP math and English language arts scores.
- Increased student proficiency on state assessments through aligned early learning initiatives.

*School as Hub partners were asked to identify programmatic achievements directly tied to their Superintendents' Plan action plans. Importantly, some of these achievements are not directly tied to overall evaluation metrics. These findings reflect the individuality of district action plans and the different areas of improvement districts are focused on.

Evaluation Overview

Child-Level Outcomes

- How does engagement in the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan influence students' academic growth within School as Hub sites?
  - **Measure:** Academic Achievement Reflections
- How does engagement in the Superintendents' Plan influence students' social-emotional development within School as Hub sites?
  - **Measure:** Ages and Stages Questionnaires

Family-Level Outcomes

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

Systems-Level Outcomes

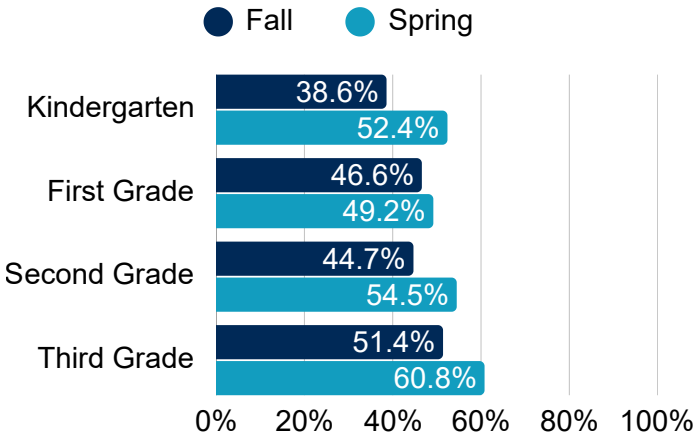
- What was the depth of learning from participants engaged in professional learning opportunities?
  - **Measure**: Professional Learning Survey
- How has participation in the Lens of the Child series shaped educators' knowledge and confidence in implementing the six essential child experiences?
  - **Measure**: Lens of the Child Survey
- How has participation in the Teacher Leadership Network shaped teachers' leadership roles and their implementation of the School as Hub approach in their schools?
  - **Measure**: Teacher Leadership Network Focus Groups
- How did engagement in the Superintendents' Plan communities of practice influence teacher and principal perceptions of self-efficacy for teaching and leadership?
  - **Measure**: Self-Efficacy Surveys
- How much progress was made towards district-level action plan goals?
  - **Measure**: Action Plan Focus Groups
- What are the barriers and facilitators to collaboration between district stakeholders and Institute staff members?
  - **Measure:** Collaboration Survey

Academic Achievement

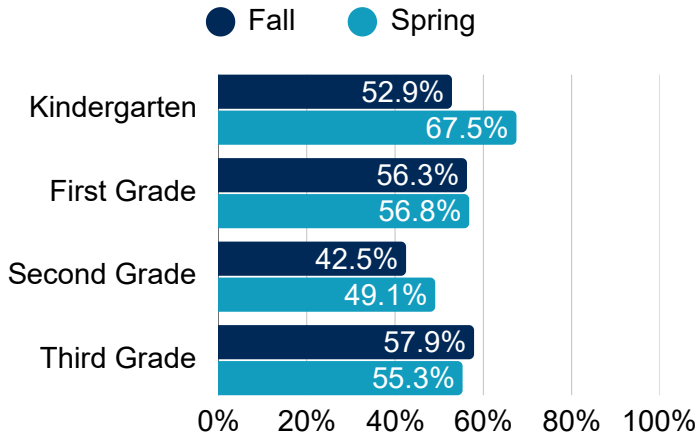
Principals at each School as Hub site and one district leader were asked to report the percentage of students who scored at or above the 50th percentile, as well as the average national percentile rank in reading and math for each grade level, using the district's chosen assessment tool. The percentage of students scoring at or above the national median in reading increased across all grade levels. In math, kindergarten and second grade showed increases. Kindergarten demonstrated the largest gains in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the national median in both reading and math.

2710 children enrolled in School as Hub Pre-K-Grade 3 Classrooms

At or above 50th percentile in reading



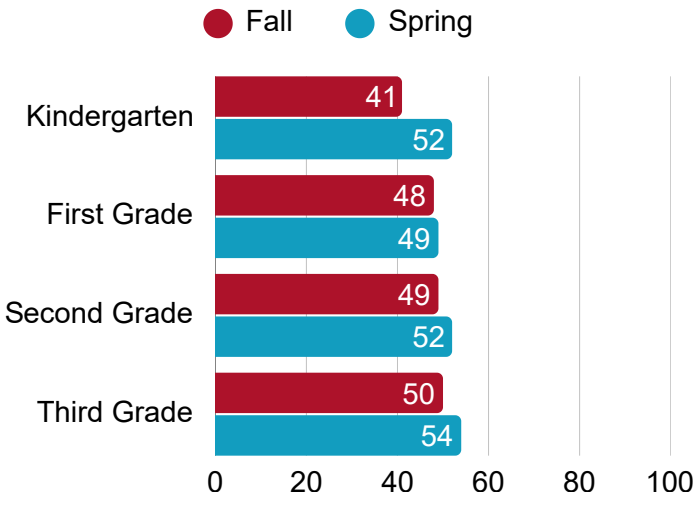
At or above 50th percentile in math



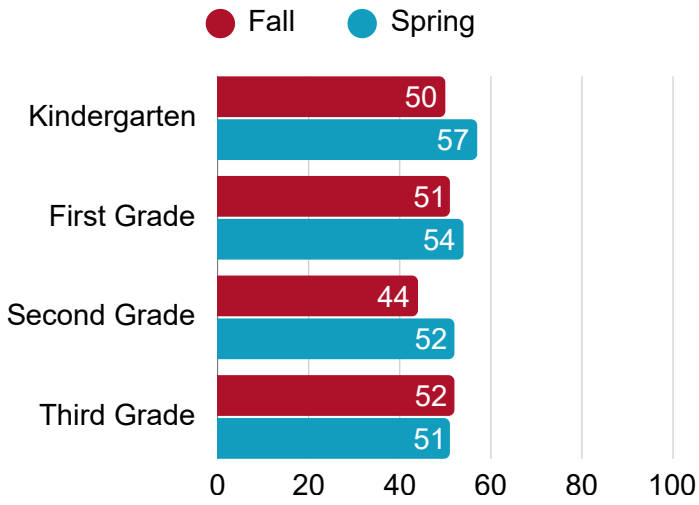
NATIONAL AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANKING

The average national percentile ranks in reading and math were reported for fall and spring by grade level. Overall, average national percentile ranks for reading increased from fall to spring across all grade levels. For math, the overall average national percentile ranks increased from fall to spring for students in kindergarten through second grade.

National percentile rank in reading



National percentile rank in math



How the Superintendents' Plan Supports Social-Emotional Development

The Superintendents' Plan advances children's social-emotional growth through both home visitation and family-facilitation programs, organized around three core activities:

- **Individual Engagement:** Recruit and work with families of children from the prenatal stage through school entry via scheduled in-home visits. A structured curriculum guides each family in setting and achieving personalized social-emotional development goals.
- **Group Engagement:** Convene families for facilitated learning sessions, using a family-learning curriculum to plan and deliver interactive activities that build social-emotional skills among children and caregivers.
- **Transition Planning:** Develop and facilitate customized transition plans and supports that help children and families move smoothly between different early care and education settings.

Findings for ASQ

- A total of 230 observations were recorded across 6 districts and 14 schools, representing 134 unique students (with 60 students assessed twice and 18 students assessed three times).
- Approximately 82-93% of female student observations and 77-91% of male student observations were screened at Typical across the five ASQ domains.

Table 1. Percentage of ASQ observations at No-to-Low Risk in each domain by year of program participation

Years of participation	1	2	3+*
Number of student observations	97	63	70
Communication, % Typical	82.6	85.7	80.0
Gross motor, % Typical	88.2	92.1	95.7
Fine motor, % Typical	78.5	85.7	84.3
Problem solving, % Typical	78.5	84.1	82.6
Personal-social, % Typical	85.7	82.5	89.9

Findings for ASQ-SE

- A total of 144 observations were recorded across four districts and eight schools, representing 95 unique students. Of these, 47 students were assessed twice and one student was assessed three times.
- Approximately 89% of observations were screened as No-to-Low Risk, 8% Monitor risk, and 2% Referral risk.
- Approximately 90% of female student observations and 89% of male student observations were screened at No-to-Low Risk.

Table 2. Percentage of ASQ-SE observations at No-to-Low Risk by year of program participation

Years of participation	1	2	3+*
Number of student observations	45	40	48
% No-to-low risk	89%	85%	94%

*Combined 3,4,5,6 years due to small sample size

Family-Level Outcomes

Family Engagement Survey

An adaptation of the Road Map Family Engagement Survey (Ishimaru & Lott, 2015) was used to assess families' perceptions about collaboration among families, communities, and schools. The survey was available in 19 languages to accommodate the language needs of all families at the participating schools. Parents ranked items on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). A total of 381 families completed the survey across 10 schools.

191 children enrolled in home visitation or family facilitation

4780 family members in engagement and support opportunities

HIGHEST SCORES

6.4

- I know how well my child is doing academically in school.
- I know who to talk with at this school regarding my concerns and questions about my child's education and development
- I am greeted warmly when I visit or call this school

LOWEST SCORES

5.7 I have opportunities to influence what happens at this school.

6.0 The principal at this school seeks and uses parents' ideas and suggestions to improve the school.

Family and Family Engagement Staff Perceptions

In the spring of 2026, families (n=26) and BECI family engagement staff [FES] (n=9) engaged in interviews and focus groups to assess their perceptions of social support. Interview and focus group questions were designed to answer two primary evaluation questions: (1) How does engagement in family engagement programming influence how a family receives social support? (2) What are the primary support types that engaged families are currently receiving? Triangulated thematic findings from both groups on how support is most effectively provided to families are presented below.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

- FES effectively connect families with essential resources, including food, diapers, clothing, educational materials, developmental services, and community supports.
- Families and staff both emphasized that personalized, responsive support builds trust and allows services to be tailored to each family's unique strengths and needs.
- FES strengthen parents' knowledge and confidence by providing practical information about child development, parenting strategies, and school readiness.
- Family engagement contributes to children's school readiness by supporting academic, communication skills, and social-emotional development while helping families feel more prepared for the transition to school.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Establish clearer, shared expectations for the family engagement staff role across school districts and partner organizations.
- Clarify staff responsibilities to balance connecting families with basic needs and mental health resources while maintaining a focus on child development and family engagement.
- Strengthen partnerships with mental health providers and other specialized community services to improve referral options for families.

Systems-Level Outcomes: Instructional Excellence

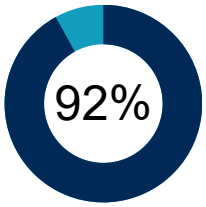
82 professional learning opportunities offered in 2025-2026

2251 total number of times educators participated in professional learning

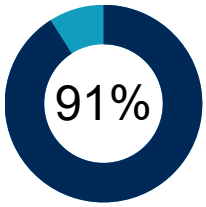
414 post-program surveys completed by professional learning attendees

Professional Learning Opportunities

92% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the information learned during the professional learning opportunity could help them in their current role.



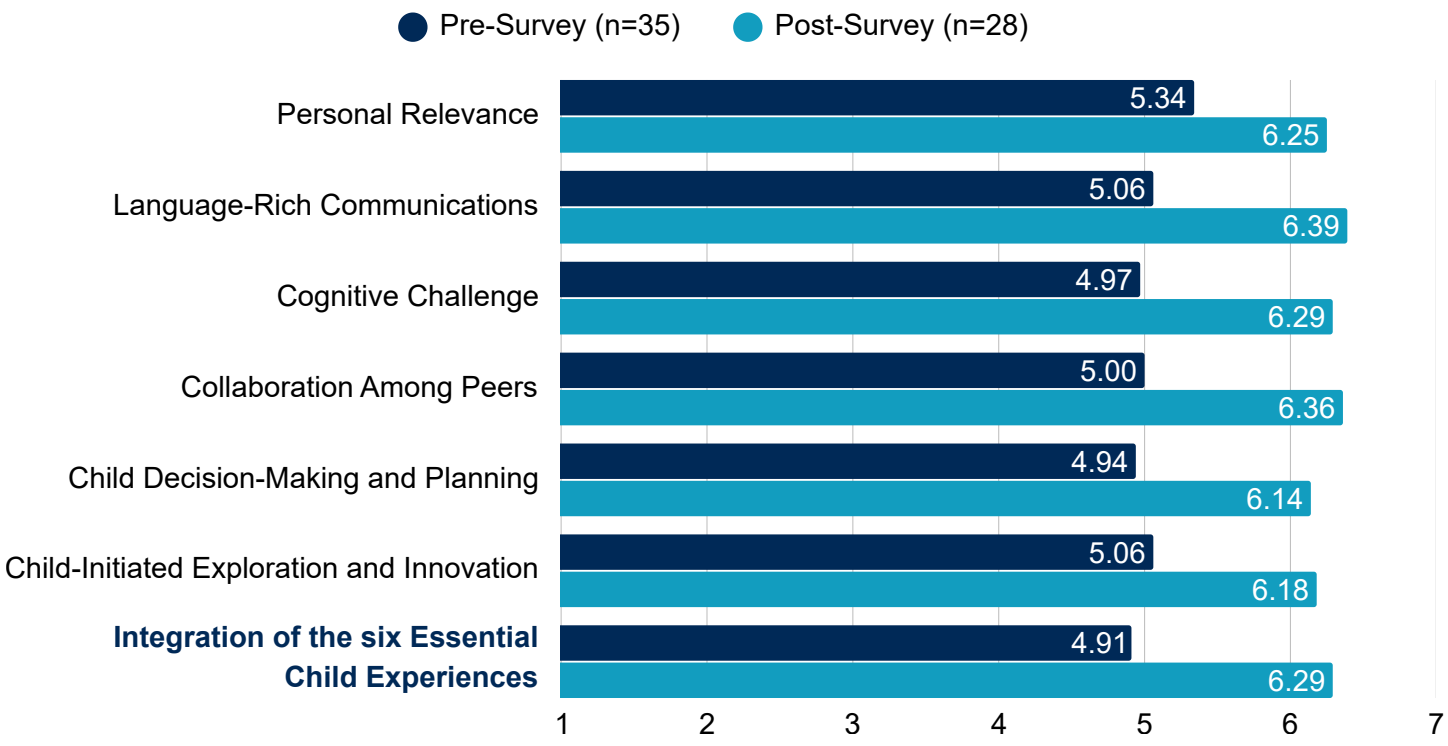
91% of participants somewhat or strongly agreed that the format of the professional learning opportunity was an effective way to receive helpful information.



Lens of the Child

Participants in the Lens of the Child learning series rated their level of confidence in integrating each of the six essential child experiences into their instructional environments on a 7-point scale (1=Not at All Confident, 7=Extremely Confident) before and after the series. On average, participants reported their confidence in implementing each of the six experiences and in simultaneous integration at a level of 5 (Quite Confident) prior to the series and at a level of 6 (Very Confident) after participation.

Average reported levels of confidence

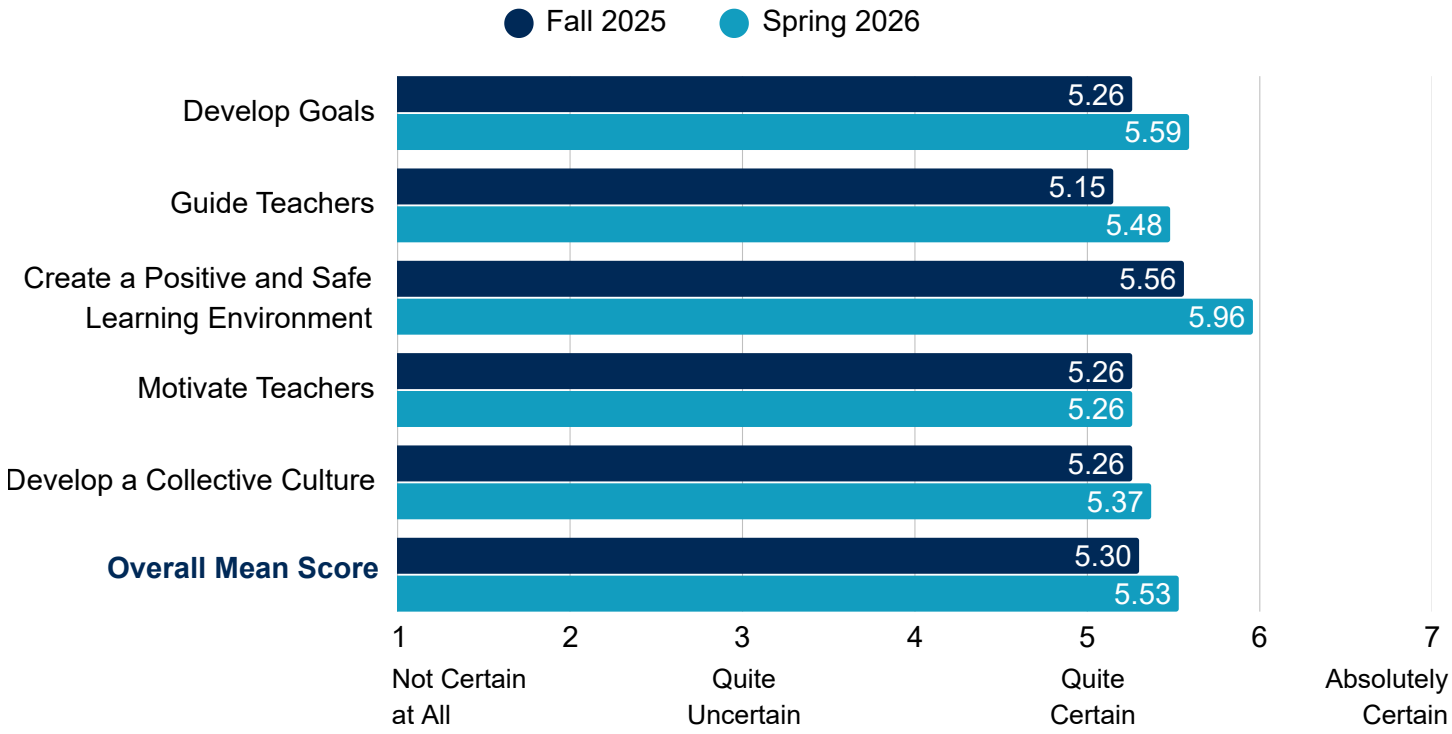


Educator Self-Efficacy

Principal Self-Efficacy

Principals (n=11) engaged in the Superintendents' Plan community of practice rated their leadership self-efficacy across 5 domains. Enhanced feelings of self-efficacy were seen across each domain from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026.

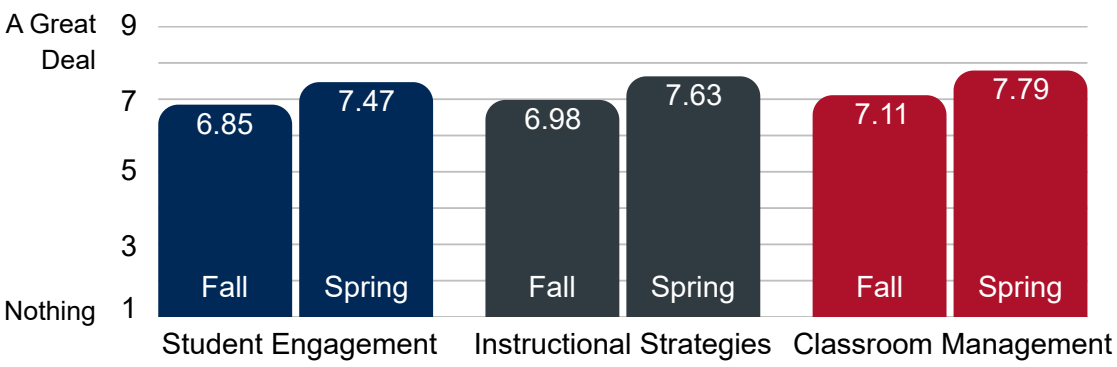
Aggregate findings show growth in all domains (n=9)



Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy

Teachers who were engaged in coaching and/or consultation within the Superintendents' Plan completed the short form of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale in the fall and spring. The largest areas of growth occurred in controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom (6.95; 7.78) and implementing alternative strategies in the classroom (6.95; 7.78).

How much can you do? (Fall n=20, Spring n=18)



36 teachers engaged in coaching in 2025-2026

128 PreK-Grade 3 classroom teachers at School as Hub sites

Districts & Institute Collaboration

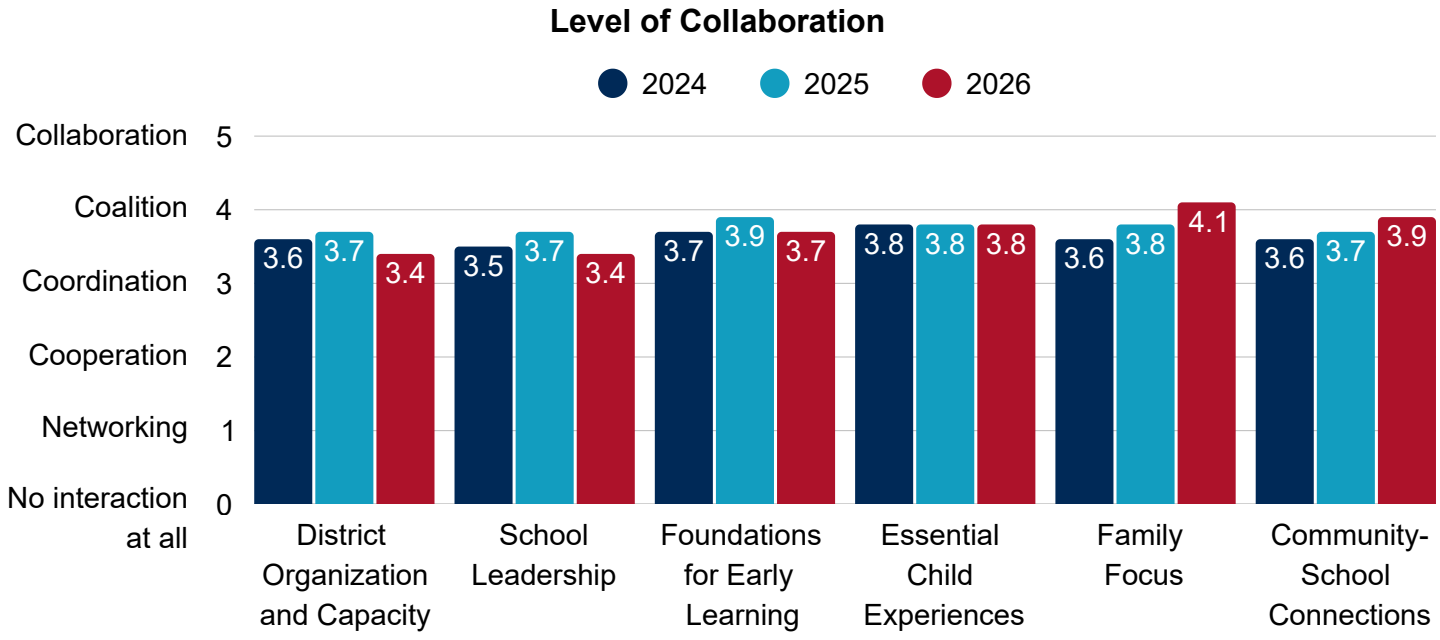
40 district leaders engaged in the plan across school districts

122 school leaders and staff engaged in the plan across school districts

31 Institute staff members engaged in the plan

Collaboration with the Institute

Stakeholders from full-implementation districts (n=33) were asked to reflect on their level of collaboration with the Institute using a scale of 0-5 (0=No Interaction at All; 5=Collaboration) across the action plan domain constructs. Findings are shown below and compared with those from the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. District stakeholders identified a mean of 3.7 for 2026, which decreased slightly from 2025 (M=3.8). Responses for 2026 indicated a level of Coalition (i.e., sharing ideas, information, and resources; regular, focused communication; and frequent shared decision-making).



GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PLAN

- **Recognition of the value of early childhood education**
- **Effective alignment with district goals:** *"Creation and use of the domains to develop an improvement plan aligned to district goals."*
- **Improved student outcomes**
- **Intentional engagement with families:** *"For me, it's been the focus on family engagement and how this piece is critical to our families' success both inside and outside of school."*

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- **Enhance opportunities for collaboration:** *"More peer support. More opportunities for professional advancement and learning opportunities."*
- **Expand School As Hub**
- **Clarity of expectations:** *"Better communication of plans/expectations from Buffett and OPS district leadership."*
- **Expand family support**

Action Planning Progress

During the annual School As Hub Collaboration Summit, district team members from Bellevue Public Schools, DC West Community Schools, Elkhorn Public Schools, Gretna Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Millard Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Westside Public Schools were asked to reflect on their engagement in the Superintendents' Plan over the past year. A 5-question semi-structured focus group guide was utilized to evaluate progress, challenges, and future directions within the three primary program domains of **Leadership Effectiveness, Instructional Excellence, and Family & Community Partnerships Engagement**. Scores represent the average level of progress districts reported making toward their goals across domains.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: AVERAGE RATING=80/100

- **Areas of Progress:** Participants discussed increased collaboration among administrators, teacher leaders, and early childhood staff; the intentional use of student outcomes, implementation data, and survey data; and focused efforts to build leadership infrastructure and a shared vision necessary to sustain long-term systems change.
- **Challenges:** Competing initiatives and limited time were the most frequently cited barriers. Additional challenges were attributed to limited staff capacity and resources, as well as leadership changes.
- **Future Plans:** Participants said they will continue to use data to guide strategic planning and continuous improvement initiatives and will continue implementing structured leadership meetings and expanding stakeholder participation to strengthen collaborative leadership structures and Birth-to-Grade 3 alignment.

INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE: AVERAGE RATING=76/100

- **Areas of Progress:** Staff shared about expanded evidence-based instructional practices and professional learning opportunities, as well as greater use of instructional data and targeted supports to improve outcomes.
- **Challenges:** Supporting the needs of all learners requires continued refinement. Staff highlighted the need to better integrate literacy and behavioral supports into the classroom. Limited time, competing priorities, and staff capacity hindered goal implementation. Participants reported difficulty balancing multiple initiatives.
- **Future Plans:** Participants discussed expanding and sustaining evidence-based instructional practices through ongoing professional learning. They also planned to tailor instructional supports to meet district and school-specific needs and to increase cross-grade collaboration, using data to refine implementation.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ENGAGEMENT: AVERAGE RATING=82/100

- **Areas of Progress:** Themes included expanded family engagement through intentional, relationship-centered opportunities, strengthening community partnerships to increase access to resources and supports, and a greater emphasis on family voice and responsive programming.
- **Challenges:** Staff discussed how building authentic family engagement requires trust, which takes time. They also noted that limited time, staff capacity, and competing priorities constrained engagement efforts.
- **Future Plans:** Participants shared plans to expand engagement through literacy-focused and relationship-centered opportunities and to continue finding ways to use family feedback to guide programming.

Definitions & References

Definitions

ASQ: The Ages & Stages Questionnaires are screening tools designed to help caregivers and professionals monitor young children's development across areas such as communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, personal–social skills, and social-emotional behaviors.

ChildPlus: The database used by the Buffett Early Childhood Institute to track participant engagement across programmatic activities.

FastBridge: An assessment tool designed to identify students' academic and social-emotional behavior needs

MAP Assessment: A child assessment tool utilized by districts to measure achievement and growth in K-12 math, reading, language usage, and science.

PD: Professional Development

School as Hub: A school identified by its district due to unique risk factors. The school serves as a "hub" for complex learning systems, connecting children and families to resources within and beyond school walls.

References

Frey, B. B., Lohmeier, J. H., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring Collaboration Among Grant Partners. American Journal of Evaluation, 27(3), 383-392. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214006290356

Killion, J. (2008). Assessing impact: Evaluating professional development. Corwin Press.

Skaalvik, C. (2020). School principal self-efficacy for instructional leadership: relations with engagement, emotional exhaustion and motivation to quit. Social Psychology of Education, 23(2), 479-498. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09544-4

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. Educational Researcher, 30(3), 23-28. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X030003023

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. Teaching Teacher Education, 17, 783-805