

2017-18 Evaluation of Parent and Family Engagement Program

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At-a-Glance

The mission of the Office of Family and Community Engagement (OFCE) was to develop and implement programs and strategies to engage parents and the community in collaborative parent-school-community partnerships. The OFCE received \$1,062,425 in Title I and \$343,133 in Title III, Part A funding for 2017-18. Title III, Part A funded the Latino Family Literacy Project and PREP U Adult Ed Track programs.

Purpose and Methods of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to evaluate the extent to which the OFCE implemented programs with fidelity, met expected outcomes as outlined in program documents, and impacted school climate. The data for 2017-18 included documents collected from OFCE program staff, interviews, districtwide parent survey data and classroom observations.

Attempts to meet with the program director during the fall semester were unsuccessful. The OFCE experienced a change in program management at the start of January 2018. An interim program director took on the responsibilities of supervising the programs, as well as her own job duties, that proved to be an overwhelming feat.

OFCE Support

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal, available in English and Spanish, provided parents/guardians a means to become more involved with their children's education. It offered secure on-line access to their children's grades, assignments and attendance; email or text alerts of absences and grade average changes; and a two-way communication tool for parents and teachers. During the 2017-18 school year, 78.5 percent of students with at least one parent, registered for the Parent Portal. This facilitated the transition to the new Parent Portal system and the online enrollment process for the 2018-19 school year.

Parent Resource and Empowerment Program (PREP) University Workshop Series

PREP University workshops series provided free workshops to all parents to empower them with strategies and resources to support their children's academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral needs. The weekday family workshops were available to parents from September 2017 through May 2018.

In addition, the OFCE, in collaboration with schools in the high school feeder patterns, provided PREP U Super Saturdays. These informational fairs offered families:

- resource access to community organizations,
- free health screenings and educational information,
- free food and refreshments, and
- games and giveaways.

A total of 9,662 participants attended four PREP U Saturdays and one health fair held during the 2017-18 school year, a decrease from 13,375 participants and nine PREP U Saturdays in the 2016-17 school year. Also, 708 free immunizations were provided to students at the PREP U Saturdays.

Training Academy

The OFCE provided professional development and training to administrators (principals/assistant principals), community/parent liaisons, other campus staff (i.e., office managers), and parents. Some of the training opportunities offered in 2017-18 included:

- parent volunteer management,
- creating a safe and welcoming environment,
- Parent Portal and utilizing all its features to communicate with parents and improve student achievement,
- maintaining the school web site,
- parent centers,
- launching a PREP University Workshop Series at the campus level,
- site-based decision-making (SBDM), and
- Parent Teachers Association (PTA), Parent Teachers Organization (PTO), and Parent Organization (PO).

Over 30 professional development sessions were offered to campus staff, provided by the Campus Support Team (CST). In all, 216 staff members were served during the 2017-18 school year.

Communication Resources

The OFCE communicated and distributed information to parents regarding curriculum, school choice options/transfers, college and career readiness, collegiate academies, transitioning information, Parent Portal, and pre-kindergarten initiatives. Resources were also developed and provided to schools to use for parent and guardian engagement.

Campus Support Team (CST)

The Campus Support Team was comprised of six OFCE staff members who were assigned to schools to support the parent engagement activities at the campus level. They worked directly with the community liaisons, parent instructors, and other school personnel in charge of parent programs to provide information and resources. CST members also:

- ensured that campuses had what they needed to meet the district's parent engagement goals for each school;
- provided support to site-based decision-making committees, parent organizations, PREP University workshops, and any districtwide events for parents and the community;
- assisted schools in setting up parent centers;
- provided professional development opportunities for staff that enhanced parent engagement in the schools; and
- promoted districtwide initiatives like the Uniform Assistance program and Parent Portal.

During the 2017-18 school year, three CST members made 1,152 visits to all Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) campuses to provide assistance, information, resources, and other support. In addition, through direct support of the CST members, 119 campuses went up at least one level in parent engagement standards as outlined in the Parent Engagement Road Map to Success.¹

Latino Family Literacy Project

In its second year, the Latino Family Literacy project continued to support parents of students with limited English proficiency at 15 Dallas ISD campuses (12 elementary, 2 middle, and 1 high school). The objective was to promote reading and the building of stronger relationships between the parent and the student at home and to increase parental involvement in connection with the school, staff, and teachers to actively support the academics and college awareness.

The Latino Family Literacy project included a 10-week family reading program at the elementary school level and a reading and college awareness program at the secondary school level. Elementary teachers provided a list of students needing help with reading and parents were contacted to participate in the program. At the secondary level, teachers, community liaisons, and principals were involved in selecting students who could benefit from the program. Classes were limited to 25

parents at the elementary school level and 25 each, parents and students, at the secondary level.

Elementary Level

Through the OFCE, community liaisons were certified to teach the parent participants at their campuses and to provide each campus with materials, kits and a lending library. Parents and students used the library books to practice reading at home. The program also offered participants the opportunity to:

- learn English-as-a Second language;
- improve Spanish vocabulary;
- improve literacy skills;
- learn guiding questions to ask their child during reading time at home;
- create a family album;
- build a pictiary; and
- create a cultural project (parents only).

Secondary School Level

At the secondary school level, the Latino Family Literacy project provided an interactive parent-child program designed to build early college awareness through the story-telling of a family's journey from middle school to college. The purpose of the program was to learn about resources and tools necessary for successful graduation from high school and for college awareness. Families read from the book, Graciela's Dream and listened to weekly speakers, learned about the different academic opportunities offered by the district (Magnet/Choice/Collegiate), and toured a college campus.

Overall, a total of 1,616 Dallas ISD parents and students attended a series of literacy classes at 15 elementary and secondary campuses during the 2017-18 school year. This was a slight increase from the 2016-17 school year of 1,581 participants and 14 campuses. Participants received a certificate of program completion in a recognition ceremony at Southern Methodist University and then provided a college tour.

PREP U Adult Ed Track

The PREP U Adult Ed Track program offered non-traditional English-as-a Second Language classes to parents of students with limited language proficiency at 24 campuses located within all trustee districts. The program provided participants with basic literacy skills and interactive, life skills, in a non-threatening environment. The curriculum took students from a basic

¹ Rubric used to measure parent involvement and engagement at the school level. It measures each school's performance in six areas of family and community engagement.

literacy level to a high beginning level. The curriculum and nine teachers were provided through a contracted vendor, Excel institute. All teachers received training, instructional materials and followed the curriculum.

The program provided 12 weeks of instruction. Participants met for two hours, bi-weekly (Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday) during school hours (mornings or afternoons). The campus community liaisons were instrumental in coordinating the program on their campuses by recruiting parents, providing a meeting room, and ensuring that parents attended regularly. Many campuses will no longer have a community liaison during the 2018-19 school year which could affect this program. Campus principals will determine who will replace them in 2018-19. In May 2017-18, 413 participants received a certificate of completion.

Classroom Observations

Five classroom observations were conducted at five campuses with four teachers (one teacher observed at two schools) by the evaluator during the months of April 2018 and May 2018. Class attendance on the observation days ranged from two to seventeen participants.

The following observations regarding instruction were made:

- instruction included reading (individual and choral), writing, listening, and repetition activities using book and workbook;
- teachers gave explanations, examples and demonstrations;
- activities included whole group, individual seatwork and working in pairs,
- participants were at different English language proficiency levels (from none to intermediate);
- many opportunities for collaboration among the students allowed the more English proficient students to assist the non-English speakers with class assignments and interpreting instructional material; and
- all participants were engaged in all classroom activities.

Differences in the presentation of class instruction were noted. All teachers (N=4) used the book and workbook in the classroom. Two teachers also used a cassette player and three used a dry-erase board as a visual aid. One teacher was very fluent in the Spanish language and incorporated Spanish in the vocabulary lesson (called out an English or Spanish word and students gave the translated word and then wrote it on a large sheet of paper at the front of the class). The participants from this class appeared to be the most enthusiastic about learning among all other classrooms observed.

They continuously asked the teacher questions about the lesson and other things they were curious about.

Other observations worth noting, concerned the classroom environment. Not all were conducive for instruction (i.e., class of kindergarten students met in the auditorium using the stage to practice folkloric dance routines for a Cinco de Mayo activity while the literacy group was in session); the use of cell phones in the classroom; and bringing infants and toddlers to a two-hour class (distracting at times).

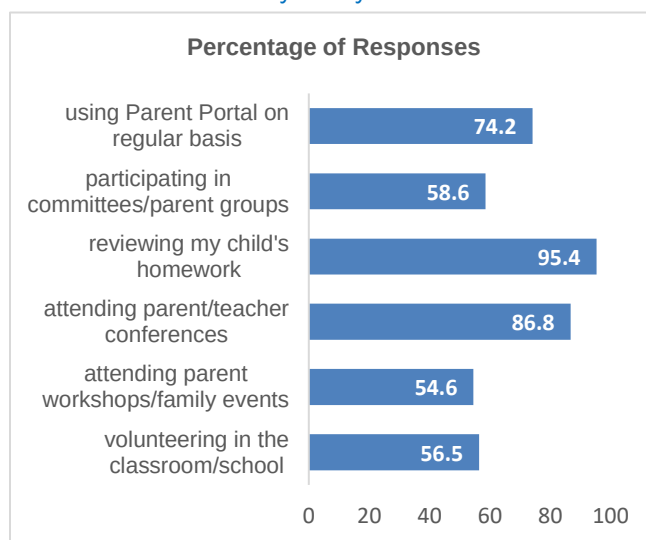
District Parent Surveys

The OFCE coordinated the development of the districtwide Spring 2017-18 Parent Survey. The survey was administered to parents districtwide by an outside group during the month of April 2018. The survey data were used to evaluate all initiatives and programs.

A total of 17,185 parents responded to the parent survey. Results showed that 84 percent of parents surveyed "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that they were satisfied with the direction of the district in 2017-18. This was an increase from 80.4 percent in 2016-17. The data also indicated that 92.5 percent of parents "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that their child's school welcomed parent involvement and engagement.

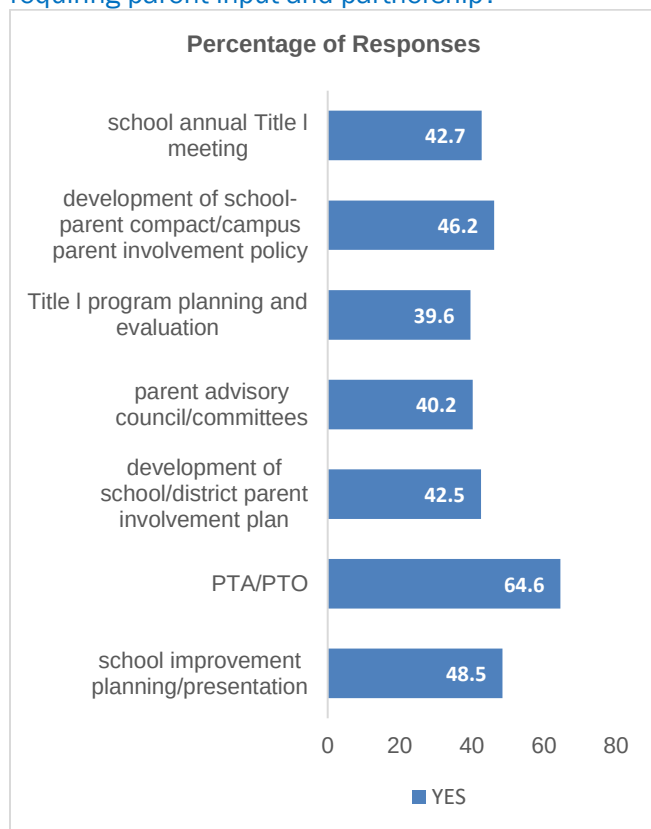
Figure 1 indicated that most parents were involved in reviewing their child's homework (95.4%) and that they participated in decision-making opportunities through the PTA/PTO (64.6%) [Figure 2].

Figure 1: Responses to: "I have been involved in my child's education this year by...":



Source: Spring 2017-18 Parent Survey data.

Figure 2: Responses to: “Did you participate in any of the following decision-making opportunities requiring parent input and partnership?”



Source: Spring 2017-18 Parent Survey data.

When parents were asked how they would like to see parental involvement funds used, the majority of parents responded:

- to fund technology resources at the school to support parental involvement (89.2%);
- to provide resources for parents to support learning at home (88.2%);
- to fund a parent involvement coordinator, community liaison, or parent instructor to plan and execute parental involvement (87%); and
- to fund a district Parent Resource Center (82%).

Summary

The OFCE experienced a change of program management at the beginning of the second semester (January 2018). Continuing programs were implemented; however, new programs were not executed as planned. There were problems collecting the outcome data required to determine if all program goals were met. Data were used to show program implementation and outcomes.

Recommendations

- **Continue supporting school personnel, parents, and community through a variety of programs.** All district programs offered by the OFPE are important regarding parent involvement and engagement (92.5% of parents agreed that “their child’s school welcomed parent involvement and engagement.”).
- **Assist campuses with the selection of a campus contact to coordinate the PREP U Adult Ed Track program and a teacher for the Latino Family Literacy program.** It is crucial to find a staff member to replace the campus liaisons who played a significant role in the success of these programs at their campuses.
- **Communicate with campus staff to emphasize the provision of an adequate room for PREP U Adult Ed Track program sessions.** Data showed that not all classes met in an appropriate setting conducive to teaching.

An electronic version of this report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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