

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Family and Community Engagement (OFCE) in the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) develops and implements programs and strategies to engage parents and the community in collaborative parent, school, and community partnerships. The OFCE received \$1,062,425 (the same amount as in 2018-19) in Title I and \$437,904 (an increase from \$412,527 in 2018-19) in Title III funds for the 2019-20 school year to support the Parent and Family Engagement (PFE) program.¹

The PFE program continued several of its long-standing programs and initiated a large project in 2019-20 as a result of the district's partnership with the Flamboyant Foundation.² The district began working with the foundation to pilot a Whole School Model framework on selected campuses during the 2019-20 school year.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation was to summarize the context, process, and outcome data of the PFE programs for the 2019-20 school year. The evaluator used program documents, interviews, attendance data, and survey data to evaluate the programs. All PFE programs were impacted when the district moved to at-home learning beginning on March 23, 2020 because of COVID-19. Impacts to programs are detailed in the relevant sections of the report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What programs did the PFE program continue from 2018-19 to 2019-20?

Several PFE programs provided in 2018-19 continued with some changes in 2019-20. The changes are outlined in this report. More detailed program descriptions are available in Garcia-Rincon (2019).

Campus Support Team (CST)

The CST continued program implementation with some changes in the 2019-20 school year. The six program staff members, referred to as coaches in 2018-19, were referred to as trainers/coaches in 2019-20. Additionally, in 2019-20, trainers were assigned to specific networks of campuses to support campus-level parent engagement activities.

Trainers also supervised their network's community liaisons.

After the transition to at-home learning, the CST trainers continued providing campus support via phone calls, email communication, and Zoom meetings. Support included one-on-one meetings with campus parent contacts and participation in school parent meetings via Zoom.

Program Support Team (PST)

PST members continued to support PFE programs in 2019-20. Their work was very similar to that of the previous school year. They continued to support the PREP U Super Saturdays (renamed Fam Jams) and the Prep U Adult Ed Track (renamed Adult ED Track). The PREP U workshop series for parents was discontinued for the 2019-20 school year.

Latino Family Literacy (LFL) Project

In 2019-20, the LFL Project continued with some changes. Three main programs were implemented in 2019-20, a family reading program, a parent engagement program, and a computer class for parents.

The LFL Project provided a 16-week family reading program at 18 elementary schools from October 2019 to December 2019 and from February 2020 to March 2020 (compared to 10 weeks in 2018-19). The LFL Project also provided a six-week reading and college awareness program at three middle and four high schools. Classes continued through virtual learning after the transition to at-home learning. A total of 1,566 parents at the elementary school level and 213 parents and 166 students at the secondary level participated in the LFL Project in the 2019-20 school year.

One program addition in the 2019-20 school year included Navigating the School System (NSS). The purpose of the program was to increase the effectiveness of parental engagement in children's academic experiences. The five-week, 90-minute program was offered at five elementary schools.³ Program sessions offered parent information and discussions on various topics. A total of 93 parents participated in the program from November 2019 to March 2020. After the transition to at-home learning, the discussions continued through virtual sessions. There was

¹ The funding amounts were provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/20.

² The Flamboyant foundation is a non-profit organization that provides family engagement support to public school systems.

³ The five schools included Nathan Adams, C. F. Carr, Maria Moreno, Leslie Stemmons, and T. G. Terry Elementary Schools.

greater participation with the online sessions ($N = 206$ participants).

A second program addition included a 10-week (from November 2019 to March 2020) basic skills computer class for English learner parents at two campuses to equip parents with tools to support their children when the children needed to use a computer/tablet for school work.⁴ Computer classes were provided weekly, on Friday mornings, for one hour and thirty minutes. A combined total of 258 parents participated in and completed the training at the two campuses during the 2019-20 school year.

Adult Education Track Program

In 2019-20, the Adult Education Track Program continued to provide two-hour English as a Second Language classes twice a week for parents of students with limited language proficiency at nine elementary, two middle, and two high school campuses. The curriculum and eight instructors were provided by an outside vendor, Excel Institute. Seven sessions were provided from October 2019 to December 2019, and nine sessions were provided from January 2020 to March 2020. Sessions were cancelled after March 23, 2020 because of the transition to at-home learning.

The average number of enrolled parents per school was 16. A total of 224 parents participated in the program and received a certificate of participation for the 2019-20 school year.

What was the context of the Fam Jam sessions in 2019-20 and what were the associated outcomes?

In 2019-20, Fam Jams replaced the PREP U Super Saturdays with redesigned events. Five Fam Jams were held between September 2019 and February 2020.⁵ The events took place on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and were provided free of charge.

All Fam Jam events included childcare for children ages three to twelve for the duration of the event. Parents could then participate in parent workshops and receive assistance from Translation Services.⁶ The workshop sessions provided information to engage and empower parents, who selected a maximum of three sessions from a list of 16 options (45 minutes each). Some of the session topics included bullying, discipline, mental health, school safety, building literacy skills, college readiness, and school choice. Additionally, families could receive books and resources, participate in fun activities, enjoy food and drinks, watch student entertainment, play games, and win door prizes.

Parent attendance data were collected for each Fam Jam event by program staff members and shared with the evaluator.⁷ The attendance data indicated that a total of 294 parents attended the Conrad Fam Jam, 369 parents attended the Adamson Fam Jam, 229 parents attended the Lincoln Fam Jam, 295 parents attended the Spruce Fam Jam, and 398 parents attended the Woodrow Wilson Fam Jam.

Surveys were administered to parents at the end of each workshop and at the conclusion of each Fam Jam to collect feedback. The data were collected by program staff members for each Fam Jam event and shared with the evaluator.⁸ A combined total of 247 surveys were completed among the five Fam Jams in the 2019-20 school year.⁹ Overall, feedback results from the five Fam Jams indicated that the vast majority of parents surveyed thought Fam Jam staff members were welcoming or very welcoming (99%; $N = 247$), found the locations convenient (95%; $N = 242$), and rated the Fam Jams as helpful or very helpful (98%; $N = 245$). All parents ($N = 242$) responded that they would recommend the Fam Jam events to other parents. When asked about the workshops, surveyed parents indicated that they were interested or very interested in the workshop content (99%; $N = 243$) and felt the presenters were engaging or very engaging (99%; $N = 246$).

Of the 239 respondents, 66 percent ($n = 157$) indicated that future Fam Jam events should include workshops about academic achievement support and 55 percent ($n = 131$) requested workshops about supporting positive behavior.

What was the context of the Flamboyant Fellowship project in the Dallas ISD in 2019-20 and what were the associated outcomes?

The Flamboyant Foundation Fellowship was a 20-month partnership between the foundation and the district to help Dallas ISD administrators learn about family engagement using a design-thinking framework.

First, district leadership staff conducted a landscape assessment to examine the historical context of the district with a racial equity lens. The district also hosted a community liaison professional development summit presented by Flamboyant. The conference-style summit was designed to inform the community liaisons about the new model and the Flamboyant Fellowship process, and to help liaisons understand that family engagement was a campus-team effort.

The end of the year data provided by the PFE staff members indicated that 175 community liaisons attended

⁴ Jack Lowe Elementary held classes for Burmese-speaking parents and Henry B. Gonzales held classes for Spanish-speaking parents.

⁵ Sessions (by network) were conducted at the following high schools: Emmett J. Conrad (09/14/19), W. H. Adamson (09/28/19), Lincoln (10/26/19), H. Grady Spruce (11/16/19), and Woodrow Wilson (02/08/20).

⁶ Health service events (i.e., free health screenings, immunizations, etc.) were not part of Fam Jam events in 2019-20.

⁷ Data provided on 02/28/20.

⁸ Data provided on 03/23/20.

⁹ Not all respondents completed all questions, resulting in varying Ns.

the PFE Summit in August 2019.¹⁰ Summit feedback survey data provided by PFE staff members indicated that of the 100 respondents, 96 percent rated the summit as very good or excellent and 89 percent felt that the sessions were very or extremely relevant to their role on their campus.

2019-20 Pilot Program: Whole School Model

In 2019-20, the district launched a pilot program in four elementary schools.¹¹ PFE staff members supported school staff members to help them implement Flamboyant's Whole School Model which includes four components, 1) the Family Engagement Leadership Team (FELT), 2) professional development (PD), 3) the Home Visit Project, and 4) listening interviews.

The FELT worked at the campus level to lead all family engagement efforts. The team at each campus included the principal, two teachers, a community liaison (if available), and the campus CST trainer. In addition to serving on the FELTs, the CST trainers supported their campuses with visits every other week.

Second, all teachers at the four targeted campuses were expected to receive Mindset PD training. The training was designed to help teachers acknowledge their implicit biases and reach out and build trusting relationships with parents, thereby fostering parental engagement. Teachers also received Ongoing Communication and Family Listening Interviews training. Flamboyant staff members initially conducted the trainings, but district staff members were trained to eventually conduct them as well.

Third, through the Home Visit Project, teachers, counselors, and/or assistant teachers visited students and families at their homes in another effort to increase family engagement.

Finally, teams from each of the four campuses planned to conduct listening interviews with families in spring 2020 to solicit feedback about family engagement, what parents wanted to see in the future, and about barriers to family engagement. However, all listening interviews were canceled after the district transitioned to at-home learning.

Pilot Program Outcomes

Program staff members reported that the Whole School Model was implemented at varying levels by the four pilot-program campuses. Martinez, for example, started late, causing a delay with conducting home visits and fewer completed visits. Program staff members reported that Martinez also had problems with campus staff members building trust and relationships. Martinez will receive additional support to address these issues in 2020-21.

¹⁰ Data provided on 12/06/20.

¹¹ The four Flamboyant pilot program campuses included: Henry B. Gonzalez Personalized Learning Academy, Eladio R. Martinez Learning Center, Ronald Edwin McNair Elementary School, and Julian T. Saldivar Elementary.

FELT

End-of-year data provided by the PFE staff members showed that a total of 219 FELT members attended FELT meetings in 2019-20.¹² In general, all but one of the four campuses (Martinez) was consistent in conducting FELT meetings during the 2019-20 school year.¹³ Zoom meetings and check-in calls were conducted beginning March 23, 2020 when at-home learning started due to COVID-19.

Professional Development

Table 1 shows PD attendance data for teachers from each of the four campuses. All teachers were required to attend the training sessions. PD attendance was highest for Gonzales teachers (except for Ongoing Communication).

Table 1: 2019-20 Teacher Professional Development Attendance

Session	Gonzales (N=35)		McNair (N=52)		Martinez (N=38)		Saldivar (N=45)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mindset/Home Visits	35	100	28	54	17	45	43	96
Ongoing Communication	24	69	10	19	28	74	-	-
Family Listening Interviews	30	86	13	25	2	5	22	49

Source: PFE department, 06/12/20.

Note: Attendance data reported in this table are approximate counts as sign-in sheets were not available because of COVID-19. The data came from the number of completed teacher PD surveys. % = the percentage of teachers at that campus that attended the training session. - indicates no data were available because teachers were not administered a survey for the PD session.

Teacher feedback regarding the PD sessions were collected through surveys created by Flamboyant staff members and administered by the presenters after each PD session (August 2019, October 2019, and February 2020). These data were provided to the evaluator on June 2, 2020. Teacher perceptions regarding the Mindset/ Home Visit and Ongoing Communication PD sessions were very positive. Most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they were well-prepared to implement the strategies and content provided by the two PD sessions (Mindset/Home Visit, 98%, N = 123 and Ongoing Communication, 97%, N = 62).¹⁴

Campus staff members responded to open-ended questions relating to each PD session. After the Mindset/Home Visit PD, teachers indicated the most common barriers to implementing home visits included time (constraints, for follow-up, and inconvenient visit times; n = 6), parent buy-in (acceptance of and participation in home visits; n = 5), and safety (n = 4).

¹² Data provided on 06/23/20.

¹³ In 2019-20, Gonzales and McNair each held 14 FELT meetings, Saldivar held 13, and Martinez held six.

¹⁴ These data were not collected for the Family Listening Interviews PD session.

After the Ongoing Communication PD, teachers indicated that in order to build relationships with families, they needed additional supports around communication (how to communicate with parents, engaging in positive communication, and more opportunities for communication; $n = 5$) and more time with families ($n = 4$).

Last, after the Family Listening Interviews PD, teachers indicated that in order to build relationships with families, they needed more time (for activities and events and to communicate with parents; $n = 9$) and communication assistance (conversation prompts and activities for families, and Spanish translations; $n = 7$).

Home Visits

Home visit data provided by program staff members on June 2, 2020, indicated that a total of 666 home visits were conducted by teachers (between 54 and 326 visits per campus) during the fall semester in 2019-20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to support school personnel, parents, and the community through Parent and Family Engagement programs in 2020-21. A total of 1,566 parents at the elementary school level and 213 parents and 166 students

at the secondary level participated in the LFL Project in 2019-20. A total of 224 parents participated in the Adult Ed Track program and the majority of the Fam Jam participants (98%) rated the events as very helpful or helpful and all would recommend the Fam Jam events to other parents. The OFCE should continue these programs to provide families the opportunities they need to become engaged, educated, and empowered.

Collaborate and train campus staff to ensure that the Flamboyant Whole School Model is implemented in a timely manner and with fidelity in 2020-21. Martinez implemented the model late, causing a delay in conducting home visits, and inconsistently conducted FELT meetings ($n = 6$) in 2019-20. There were also reported problems with campus staff members building trust and relationships. Efforts should be made in 2020-21 to correct these issues to allow for a successful program implementation. This will be important as the model expands to additional schools.

REFERENCE

Garcia-Rincón, R. (2019). 2018-19 Evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

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