

Report to the Washoe K-12 Education Foundation

# Annual Evaluation 2012-13

July 2013



Developed by Social Entrepreneurs Inc. (SEI) and the Office of Family School Partnerships

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## Acknowledgements

Parent University is a project of Washoe County School District (WCSD) and is coordinated through the Department of Family-School Partnerships. On behalf of the District and the Department of Family-School Partnerships, the extensive work and commitment of community partners is gratefully acknowledged. In working together, WCSD and community partners have succeeded in reaching Northern Nevada families through classes focused on a common goal: supporting children’s academic achievement.

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### 2012-2013 Community Partners

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Boys and Girls Club of Truckee Meadows       | Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards   |
| The Children’s Cabinet                       | United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra (UWNNS)  |
| Community Services Agency – Head Start       | Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum   |
| Education Alliance of Washoe County          | Nevada Urban Indian Colony  |
| Family Resource Center                       | Guardian Quest  |
| Reno-Sparks Indian Colony                    | Nevada Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI) |
| Join Together Northern Nevada (JTNN)         | Positive Behavior Support -Nevada   |
| Nevada PEP (NV PEP)                          | Juanita Chapman, Companions Along the Way   |
| Jim Van Meter, Tahoe Financial Planning, LLC | Familias Unidas   |
| Parent Leaders For Education                 | Gifted Talented Parent Connection (GTPC)  |
| Washoe County Library System                 | Chris Melloway  |
| Northern Nevada Literacy Council             | Dr. John Wynn   |
| Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA)      |   |
| University of Nevada Reno (UNR)              |   |
| Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC)     |   |

Several Washoe County School District departments also supported this project.

- Information Technology (IT) Department
- Department of Student Services
- Community Education
- Department of Assessment
- Department of Counseling Services
- Volunteer Services
- Department of Child & Family Services
- Department of Fine Arts
- Department of English Language Learners & World Languages
- Department of Curriculum & Instruction

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# Executive Summary

In 2012-13, Washoe County School District (WCSD) completed its second year of Parent University, with the mission of connecting families to information and resources that support their students' long-term school success including college and careers. An evaluation process focused on understanding the impacts of this program and identified opportunities for continuous improvement throughout the year. Results are documented in this report.

## Key Findings

### Parent University effectively engaged families.

- ❖ District-wide participation goals were exceeded by approximately 40%, reaching over 1,600 parents of WCSD students through Parent University classes.
- ❖ Families that were considered “hard to reach” were well-represented<sup>1</sup> making up at least 65% of Parent University attendees.
- ❖ Program reach was broad; families represented schools across the District including elementary, middle and high schools.
- ❖ While the majority of Parent University families were Hispanic/Latino, families of other minority race/ethnicities (African American, American Indian, and Pacific Islander) were well represented at Parent University. This marks an improvement from Year 1 when American Indian and Pacific Islander families were underrepresented.



Many Parent University Classes had “hands-on” activities where parents and children worked together.

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<sup>1</sup> In the context of public education, a “hard to reach” population is a group that has either been traditionally underserved by the educational system, or is difficult to involve in public participation [(Doherty, Stott, & Kinder, 2004) (Brackhertz, 2007)].

**A wide range of classes was offered.**

- ❖ Parents attended classes in every learning category; however the highest attended class topics were from the knowledge and skills areas “Supporting Learning and Navigating the System” and “Parenting.” Classes with the highest attendance are shown in the following table.

| <b><i>Class Topics with Highest Overall Attendance</i></b>                                  | <b># of participants</b> | <b>Category<sup>2</sup></b> |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Transition to High School   | 239                      | 1                           |
| Series: Promoting Literacy with Your Child: Going from Learning to Read to Reading to Learn | 194                      | 1                           |
| Making a Successful Transition to Middle School   | 191                      | 1                           |
| Series: 123 Magic Parenting Class & More Magic  | 109                      | 3                           |
| Series: Strengthening Families  | 92                       | 3                           |
| Career Information Night  | 75                       | N/A                         |
| Infinite Campus Parent Portal   | 75                       | 1                           |
| College Access Night  | 61                       | N/A                         |
| How is My Child Doing? Understanding Your Child's Achievement Data                          | 60                       | 1                           |
| Series: Addressing Challenging Behavior   | 59                       | 1                           |
| Transition to Kindergarten  | 55                       | 1                           |

- ❖ While the highest attended class topics had nearly 200 participants, many classes had very low attendance (i.e., less than 5 participants). Classes with low attendance meant that participants received customized support from the instructor. Some classes had no attendees and were cancelled; staff is working to understand contributing issues and make improvements that attract families to every class.
- ❖ Family Access Day, held in the fall of 2012, brought approximately 144 parents to the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) Campus where they received information and support to help their child on the pathway toward college. Parents indicated a very high level of appreciation for the event and reported gains in knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness as a result of their participation.

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<sup>2</sup> 1=Supportive Learning & Navigating the System; 2=Leadership & Advocacy; 3=Parenting; 4=Family Health & Wellness; 5=Parents Personal Growth & Development

### **Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive across all indicators.**

- ❖ Participating families felt that their time was well spent, the content and instructors were easy to understand, and that the classes were of high quality.
- ❖ Families that participated reported a high level of quality and usefulness of classes.
- ❖ Families reported significant gains in knowledge, skills, abilities, confidence as a parent, and awareness of community information and resources as a result of their participation. Participants and instructors reported additional positive outcomes from for both the parents and their children.

### **Information collected in Years 1 and 2 can continue to inform quality improvement.**

- ❖ The program made considerable developments in its second year of implementation, incorporating learning from Year 1 into all aspects of the program including planning, class administration, data collection, and engaging participants. Participant feedback and data from the evaluation were considered at times during Year 2 and should be incorporated into planning for Year 3.
- ❖ School leadership and participation was a key factor in engaging families in the program. Most families that connected with the program reported learning about Parent University through communication at their child's school.
- ❖ Targeted community partnerships helped to leverage success. For example classes like Transition to Kindergarten offered in partnership with Head Start had considerable participation and included parents that would not have likely attended Parent University without this connection. A partnership with GEAR UP strengthened community efforts aimed at helping more students plan and connect to college.
- ❖ Face-to-face learning and relationship development have been important Parent University strategies and will continue to remain important in future years. Instructors were able to adapt and customize the content for families that attended, and many classes offered hands-on activities and skills practice. Many families that attended Parent University classes reported through interviews that they do not have internet at home. This impacts access to student data, and, as more learning for families and children moves online, can lead to further gaps in opportunities and knowledge.
- ❖ Outreach was critical to attracting families to classes. While nearly all families that participated indicated that they would refer other families to Parent University, participants were most likely to report hearing about the opportunities through the school, mailings, and other school and District-initiated outreach.

## Parent University – Annual Report 2012-2013

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- ❖ Scores from state standardized tests including Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT, taken by students in grades 3-8) and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE, taken by students in grades 10 through 12) were compared for all participating families and for the District overall. District High school students with parents involved in Parent University were very likely to have passed high school proficiency exams. While this relationship is not directly caused by the parent’s participation in Parent University this year, it provides further evidence that involved families help children achieve educational milestones. While fewer Parent University families with younger children are passing reading and writing tests compared to the district average, classes in areas of language and literacy offered for families with young children is a promising strategy to improve educational outcomes.

*Comparison of 2011-12 State Standardized Test Scores of Children of Parent University Participants and District\**

| Assessment   |                                     | Passed     | Did not pass |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) Reading              | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=835) | <b>63%</b> | 37%          |
|  | District                            | 65%        | 35%          |
| Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) Math                 | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=835) | <b>81%</b> | 19%          |
|  | District                            | 76%        | 24%          |
| Criterion Referenced Test <sup>3</sup> (CRT) Writing | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=228) | <b>39%</b> | 61%          |
|  | District                            | 51%        | 49%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Reading          | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=189) | <b>89%</b> | 11%          |
|  | District                            | 58%        | 42%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Math             | <b>Parent University</b> (n=189)    | <b>87%</b> | 13%          |
|  | District                            | 59%        | 41%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Writing          | <b>Parent University</b> (n=150)    | <b>94%</b> | 6%           |
|  | District                            | 87%        | 13%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Science          | <b>Parent University</b> (n=188)    | <b>92%</b> | 8%           |
|  | District                            | 60%        | 40%          |

\*Test scores provided by WCSD for child listed on sign-in sheets of Parent University participants & District-wide scores; percentage based on students that completed the corresponding test during the 2011-12 school year.

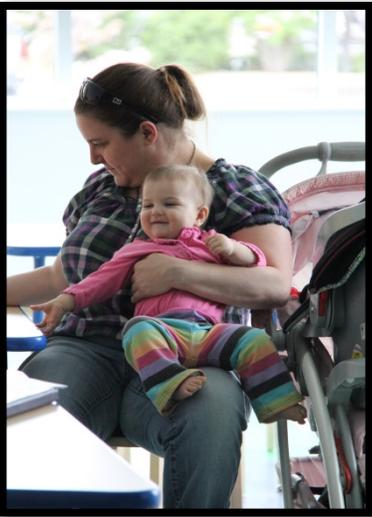
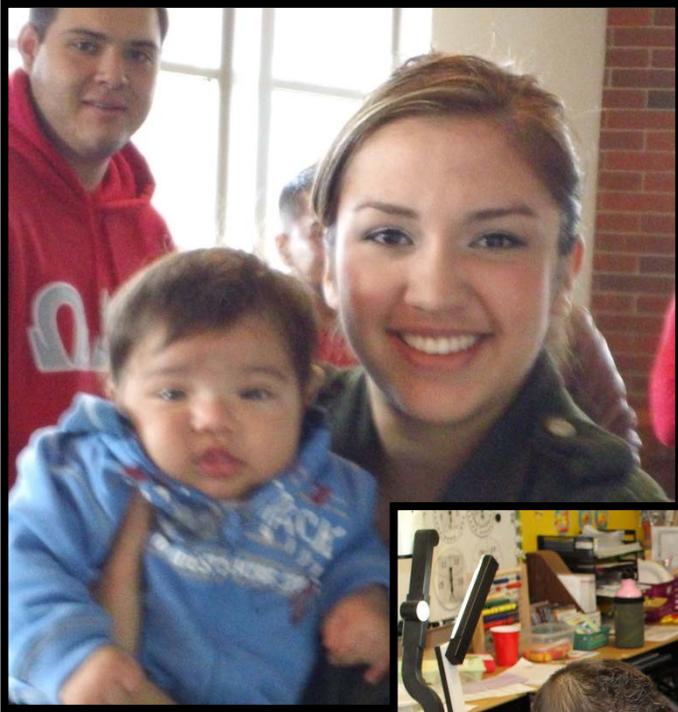
<sup>3</sup> Students take the writing portion of the CRT beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Recommendations

Recommendations to support continued improvement of the program are listed below.

1. **Strategic Planning.** In association with developing course offerings and curriculum for 2013-2014, conduct a strategic planning process to clearly define the short, intermediate, and long-term measurable goals the program aims to impact over the next several years and the data sources that provide measurement of these goals. Involve key stakeholders in this process (i.e., parents, students, community partners, school administrators, teachers, parent involvement facilitators), and use the strategic plan to align current champions and engage new ones. Plan for growth and expansion. Program capacity has been built in Years 1 and 2 that can be used to reach more families and maximize return on investment.
2. **Annual Planning.** Increase involvement of the individual schools in annual program planning. School administrators report desire to better align Parent University events and activities with other family involvement efforts conducted at their individual campuses each year. Before deciding upon annual course offerings at each school, conduct a needs assessment (which would concurrently promote program awareness) with BOTH the parents and the school staff to determine the courses that are most appropriate for their families. In addition to overall District participation goals, create (in partnership with school administrators, teachers and parent involvement facilitators) class and individual school-level participation goals.
3. **Supports.** Maintain the supports provided to parents in Year 2 including no-cost classes, childcare, interpretation, and translation. Consider partnerships to support transportation for selected events (for example, Family Access Day transported families in 2012, and this helped to make the day a possibility to families that don't have cars or live far from the college campus).
4. **Outreach and Referral.** 1) Continue to incorporate strategies and lessons learned to improve communication among Parent University staff, school administrators, teachers, and parent involvement facilitators about the program's purpose, events, and activities. 2) Create a toolkit of PIF (Parent Involvement Facilitator) "best practices" based on the PIF activities at the schools with highest family attendance from Year 2. Incorporate best practices into PIF responsibilities and increase communication of those responsibilities to school administrators and teachers as data suggests that the PIF role is still not well understood at some schools. 3) Consider new strategies to engage teachers and other school personnel in outreach and referral. Data from the first two years of the program suggest that schools are the most common and effective way that families learned about Parent University.

5. **Content Delivery.** 1) Expand series of classes so that families build on new knowledge, as both participants and partnering agencies indicated that families are interested in continuing their growth in topic areas. 2) Pilot at least one online course, to expand reach of Parent University (and collect data to measure its reach, audience, and effectiveness). Parents with at-home computer access report interest in webinars. Some parents stressed that the online courses still needed to be interactive while others requested that they be archived so they could complete them when convenient. 3) Consider the importance of individual schools in attracting families to Parent University classes and target content delivery that matches family needs by school. 4) Increase the number of Family Access Days to provide this opportunity to more families.
6. **Evaluation.** 1) Align evaluation with annual assessment of “family involvement” into program activities to track change over time after cumulative years of program implementation. For example, the Washoe County School District’s Climate Survey may provide opportunities to track longer term impacts of this program at a school and district level. 2) Map annual evaluation efforts to planning to ensure that information is available to report on goals, objectives, and, toward overall impact of Parent University. Improvement of data collection tools is recommended to provide more meaningful process evaluation of activities and to inform programming for the following year.



" [Parent University] gives me a sense of hope that there is an opportunity-- which I did not have or did not know about--here for the future of my children."

-Parent Survey, Family Access Day

### Introduction to Parent University Year 2

In 2012-13, WCSD's Parent University completed its second year. This year's Parent University was focused on connecting families with the information they need to support their student's educational success. Courses were created and offered that fell within five areas of knowledge and skills identified as being critical to achieving this goal:

- ❖ Supporting Learning and Navigating the System
- ❖ Leadership and Advocacy
- ❖ Parenting
- ❖ Family Health and Wellness
- ❖ Parent's Personal Growth and Development

Schools were provided a list of titles in the Spring of 2012 to choose classes for the 2012-2013 school year. Some classes were scheduled at schools in order to meet the goals of initiatives like Striving Readers. Schools with a Parent University Parent Involvement Facilitator (PIF) also received at least six classes requested by schools and scheduled by the Department of Family-School Partnerships.

With very few exceptions, classes were held with an interpreter so that both English and Spanish speakers could attend the same class. In a few cases, classes were held with Spanish speakers and English speakers separately. Care for children was offered alongside every class, with providers on-site delivering care as needed. For some classes, children and youth participated alongside their parent or family member.

The WCSD Office of Family-School Partnerships led planning and implementation of Parent University. Attendance goals were set as part of program planning. The 2012-2013 participation goals were:

1. 1,200 parents from the Washoe County School District Schools would participate in at least one Parent University class.
2. Of the 1,200 parents participating, 60% (n=720) will be considered "hard to reach" families.
3. At least 1,700 total would participate in Parent University (including family members that attend more than one class, and participants that do not have a child in a WCSD school).

"Hard to reach" families were defined as families with students who fell into **one or more of the following demographic categories:**

- Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)
- Racial or Ethnic Minority
- English Language Learners (ELL)

### **Washoe County School District**

WCSD is one of the largest districts in the nation, serving more than 62,000 students each year (Nevada Department of Education, 2012). There are 62 elementary schools, a special education school, 14 middle schools, and 14 comprehensive high schools. Most of the District's population is within the Reno/Sparks metropolitan area; schools also serve the communities of Incline Village, Gerlach, Empire and Wadsworth.

A large percentage of the students that WCSD serves are members of "hard to reach" populations. In the context of public education, a "hard to reach" population is a group that has either been traditionally underserved by the educational system, or is difficult to involve in public participation [(Doherty, Stott, & Kinder, 2004) (Brackhertz, 2007)].

WCSD has a diverse population. During the 2011-12 school year 44% of WCSD students qualified for the free or reduced lunch (FRL) program, 52% of students identified themselves as belonging to a minority racial or ethnic group, and 17% had limited English proficiency. More than one in every ten children (13%) had an individualized education plan for a special need or disability. Data suggests that graduation may be less likely for individuals in these groups (Washoe County School District, 2012) and as such, targeted interventions for these families is needed to reduce this disparity.

WCSD provides many tools that can help parents engage with their child's education, but these tools are underutilized. Family literacy and numeracy, internet access at home, family knowledge of the educational system, and a family's understanding of their educational rights are some of the barriers that stand in the way of families helping their students to be academically successful.

WCSD has seen recent increases in the graduation rate, but, there are also considerable disparities in achievement among groups. Students who have a disability, are limited in their English proficiency, or who come from households of lower socio-economic resources are less likely to graduate than their peers who don't have these attributes (Washoe County School District, 2012). Family engagement, including meaningful communication with families that are typically hard to reach, is an important strategy toward improving student achievement.

### **Family Engagement**

WCSD's investment in parent engagement is supported by extensive research that documents the connection between parent and family involvement and improved educational outcomes for all students, regardless of background. While it may seem counter-intuitive to begin new projects and programs when districts across Nevada and the nation have faced considerable cuts, research suggests that family engagement can be a powerful intervention that is considerably less costly than other programs or incentives. For example, schools would have to spend "\$1,000 more per pupil to reap

the same gains in student achievement that an involved parent brings” (Westmorland, et al., 2009 p. 1).

In fact, there are more than four decades of research that demonstrate a strong link between family involvement and student achievement. Studies show that when caring adults are involved in their children’s educations, there is higher student achievement, better attitudes toward learning, lower dropout rates, and increased community support for education, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic or racial background, or parents’ education level [e.g.(Antunez, 2001) (Epstein, 2001) ( (Jeynes, 2013)]. Additionally, trust between home and school creates a context that supports student achievement, even in the face of poverty (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). In other words, students perform better when their families are involved in their learning.

The activities and characteristics of family engagement programs vary among and within school districts across the country. A recent meta-analysis of 51 parental involvement programs found four types of programs to be associated with positive student academic achievement outcomes. Specifically, programs that 1) encourage parents and children to read together, 2) promote parent-teacher partnerships that treat parents and teachers as equal partners in improving student academic and behavior outcomes, 3) encourage parents to check their child’s homework daily, and 4) employ school-based efforts to increase communication between parents and teachers were all associated with positive student outcomes (Jeynes, 2013).

While many families readily engage in their children’s education, others face barriers. School districts and communities can help to address barriers to engagement by reaching out to families, making purposeful connections to learning, and investing in high quality programming and staff. In addition, communication systems and evaluation for accountability and continuous learning are examples of important large-scale improvements that can be made by districts and schools (Westmorland, et al., 2009).

### Evaluation Questions

The purpose of the Parent University evaluation is to answer questions about the initiative during the 2012-13 school year, its second year of operation. Key evaluation questions and data sources to answer the questions are summarized in the chart below.

## Evaluation Questions

## Data Sources/Evaluation Activities

1. What were the overall goals and objectives of Parent University in 2012-13? How did the structure and content of Parent University enable these goals?

**Formal and Informal Staff Interviews.** Through formal and informal interviews with Parent University personnel, department staff relayed the goals and objectives of the program.

**Parent University Catalog.** The catalog provided information about the courses offered.

**Class Observation.** By observing a selection of core offerings, aspects of the content and structure were documented for the purposes of evaluation. Photos helped to document participation and demonstrate the settings and tools used for Parent University. Photo releases were collected prior to their utilization.

2. How did families learn about Parent University? What were the most successful ways of notifying and involving families with Parent University?

**Sign-in Sheets.** Sign-in sheets collected data on how the participant heard about the class and what classes had highest attendance.

**Parent Interviews.** Parents were interviewed immediately following a Parent University class. They were asked how they heard about the class and how they initially heard about Parent University.

**PIF Outreach/Referral Strategies Summary.** Staff summarized outreach and referral strategies employed.

3. How many families attended Parent University classes? Were attendance goals met? Did families that are typically “hard to reach” attend Parent University Classes?

**Sign-in Sheets.** At each class, the instructor provided a sign-in sheet and asked that all participants sign in. Department staff kept an electronic record of attendance of Parent University activities. WCSD provided supplemental student data to determine demographics of participating families and the percentage of participating families in “hard to reach” populations.

4. What are lessons learned in Year 2? What aspects of Parent University worked best?

**Staff Formal and Informal Interviews.** Through formal and informal interviews with Parent University personnel, department staff relayed the successes and challenges of administering the program.

**Focus Group with School Administrators.** A focus group was conducted with principals from three participating schools, which provided information on what was working and areas for improvement.

**Survey of Instructors.** Parent University instructors were asked to provide input about what they felt “went right”, including success stories. Information for ongoing improvements was also captured through this survey.

**Parent Interviews.** Participants were interviewed immediately following a Parent University class they attended.

### Evaluation Questions

5. What did participants (families) gain as a result of their participation? What were the short-term outcomes of Parent University?

### Data Sources/Evaluation Activities

**Parent Surveys.** Participants completed a short questionnaire after each class to note changes in knowledge, skills, confidence, and access to resources as a result of the class.

**Parent Interviews.** Participants were interviewed immediately following a Parent University class they attended about what they learned and what changes they've made or plan to make based on learning from a class.

**Class Observation.** Observation and photos helped to document attendance and engagement at a Parent University event. Photo releases were obtained by participants in the event. Observations included notes about content, delivery, and engagement.

**Survey of Instructors.** Parent University instructors were asked to provide input about what they felt "went right", including success stories. Information for ongoing improvements was also captured through this survey.

The evaluation utilized multiple sources of information to answer the key evaluation questions. See Appendix A for detailed descriptions of each data source.

### Evaluation Notes and Limitations

Evaluation should be considered with the following limitations of data:

- ❖ Over time, it is expected that Parent University will impact outcomes such as student achievement in standardized tests and graduation rates. Longitudinal data on the program is collected and may allow this level of analysis in the future, but is not available for this report.
- ❖ In some cases there may be missing data (e.g., a person left a question blank). Percentages utilize the number completing the question (valid percent) unless otherwise noted.
- ❖ Parent surveys may include duplications or omissions. The evaluation utilized multiple sources to help reduce error and strengthen the reliability of findings.
- ❖ A conservative method was used to count unduplicated families in WCSD, meaning that if there were errors related to total unduplicated families, there were likely to be more than are reported here.
- ❖ Information from focus groups and individual interviews should be considered one source of information and not representative of all stakeholders.

## Results

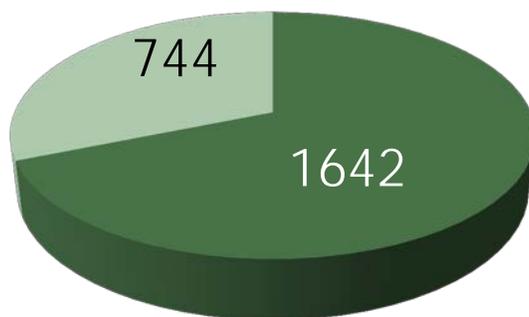
### Participation Goals

Data from sign-in sheets revealed that Parent University exceeded its participation goals in its second year by approximately 40%. A total of 2,386 participants attended Parent University offerings, 1,642 of which were unduplicated parents. The remaining 744 that make up the total participation (2,386) for the year were WCSD parents attending multiple classes, parents with children that had yet to start school in WCSD, and parents with children attending school outside of WCSD.

| <u>Measure</u>                            | <u>Total Count</u> | <u>Goal</u> | <u>Definition and Method</u>                                   |
|---|--------------------|-------------|--|
| % of Total Attendance Goal<br><b>140%</b> | 2,386              | 1,700       | Total Parent Attendance<br><br>Based on Count of All Signed In |

| <u>Measure</u>                               | <u>Total Count</u> | <u>Goal</u> | <u>Definition and Method</u>  |
|--|--------------------|-------------|---|
| % of Unduplicated Parent Goal<br><b>137%</b> | 1,642              | 1,200       | Total Unduplicated Parent Attendance<br><br>Unique Parents, Corrected with Duplications Removed for Multiple Classes Attended, Using Student ID |

Total 2012-13 Parent U Participation = 2,386



■ Unduplicated WCSD parents attending at least one class

■ Parents attending additional classes, parents with children not yet in school, parents with children from outside the school district

### Participating Families’ Demographics

Families that may have experienced barriers to traditional forms of school engagement, or families that are “hard to reach” participated in Parent University. Participation by these groups exceeded the identified goal (60% meeting the criteria of Free and Reduced Lunch Status, Racial or Ethnic Minority Status, or English Language Learner Status).

- ❖ One quarter of families (25%) have a child that has a designation of limited English proficiency.
- ❖ Over half of families (58%) participate in the free and reduced lunch program.
- ❖ 65% had a child that is of racial or ethnic identity other than white (non-Hispanic/Latino).

Based on this data, Parent University met its attendance goal for “hard to reach” populations, with at least 65% meeting one or more of the identified criteria.

WCSD families that are Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, or American Indian or Pacific Islander were well represented among Parent University participants when compared to representation at the district. The majority of Parent University participating families (51.8%) from 2012-13 were of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. Families that are Asian, Multi-racial or White were below their representation in the District. In alignment with program goals, PIFs targeted outreach to connect with families that are typically underrepresented in family engagement activities. PIFs worked to develop relationships within the school and with parents and in addition to assisting with general school-based invitations, made personal invitations to parents at school and over the phone. In sign-in sheets, many families identified a personal name with “how I learned” and several interviewees emphasized the importance of personal connections and “word of mouth” as good ways to involve more families like their own. A summary of PIF and Parent University staff outreach activities is located in the appendix.

#### *Comparison of Special Populations in Parent University and District*

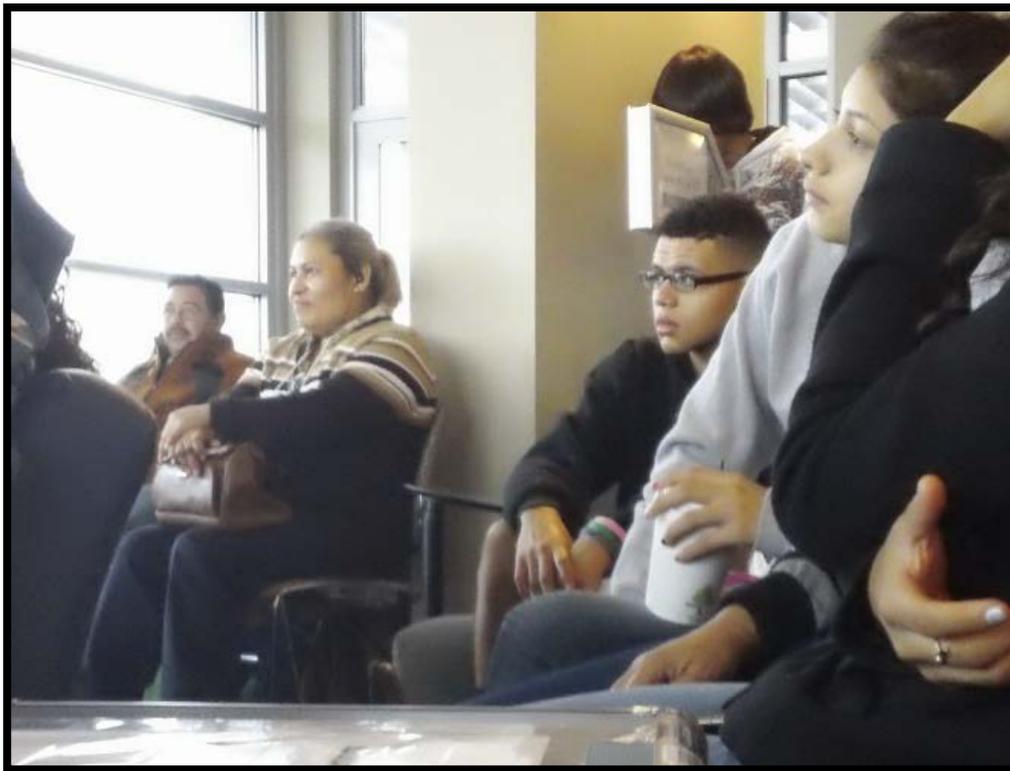
|                               | Representation in Parent University (2012-13)* | Representation in District (2011-12)** |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Free and Reduced Lunch        | 58%  | 44%                                    |
| Limited English Proficiency   | 25%  | 17%                                    |
| Racial or Ethnic Minority     | 65%  | 52%                                    |
| Individualized Education Plan | 13%  | 13%                                    |

\*Parent University information for WCSD families; percentage based on the child listed on sign-in sheets; n=1,499 \*\*Data on the District is from Nevada Report Card, Nevada Department of Education

#### *Comparison of Race and Ethnicity in Parent University and District*

|                             | Parent University Demographics* | Representation in District (2011-12)** |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Hispanic/Latino</b>      | <b>51.8%</b>                    | 37.5%                                  |
| White (not Hispanic/Latino) | 34.8%                           | 48.1%                                  |
| Multi-racial                | 3.7%                            | 4.4%                                   |
| Asian                       | 3.6%                            | 4.7%                                   |
| <b>African American</b>     | <b>2.7%</b>                     | 2.6%                                   |
| <b>American Indian</b>      | <b>2.5%</b>                     | 1.8%                                   |
| <b>Pacific Islander</b>     | <b>0.9%</b>                     | 0.9%                                   |

\*Parent University information for WCSD families; percentage based on the child listed on sign-in sheets; n=1,499 \*\*Data on the District is from Nevada Report Card, Nevada Department of Education



Many students attended Family Access Day with their Parents in fall 2012. Families pictured listened to a panel of UNR freshman talk about their experiences in their first year of college.

### Test Score Comparisons

Scores from state standardized tests including Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT, taken by students in grades 3-8) and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE, taken by students in grades 10 through 12) were compared for all participating families and for the District overall. District High school students with parents involved in Parent University were very likely to have passed high school proficiency exams. While this relationship is not directly caused by the parent’s participation in Parent University this year, it provides further evidence that involved families help children achieve educational milestones. While fewer Parent University families with younger children are passing reading and writing tests compared to the district average, classes in areas of language and literacy offered for families with young children is a promising strategy to improve educational outcomes.

*Comparison of 2011-12 State Standardized Test Scores of Children of Parent University Participants and District\**

| Assessment   |                                     | Passed     | Did not pass |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) Reading              | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=835) | <b>63%</b> | 37%          |
|  | District                            | 65%        | 35%          |
| Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) Math                 | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=835) | <b>81%</b> | 19%          |
|  | District                            | 76%        | 24%          |
| Criterion Referenced Test <sup>4</sup> (CRT) Writing | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=228) | <b>39%</b> | 61%          |
|  | District                            | 51%        | 49%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Reading          | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=189) | <b>89%</b> | 11%          |
|  | District                            | 58%        | 42%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Math             | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=189) | <b>87%</b> | 13%          |
|  | District                            | 59%        | 41%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Writing          | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=150) | <b>94%</b> | 6%           |
|  | District                            | 87%        | 13%          |
| High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) Science          | <b>Parent University</b><br>(n=188) | <b>92%</b> | 8%           |
|  | District                            | 60%        | 40%          |

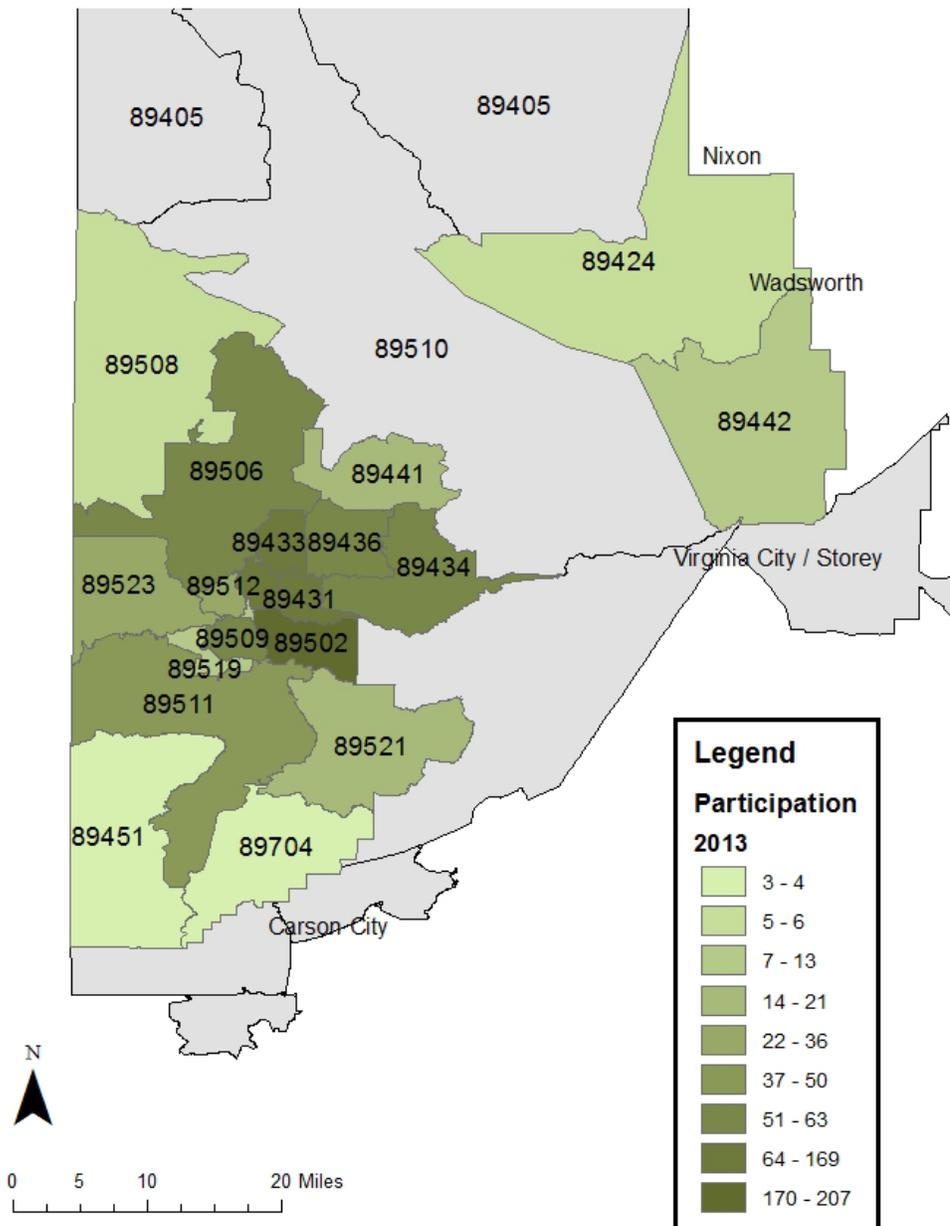
\*Test scores provided by WCSD for child listed on sign-in sheets of Parent University participants & District-wide scores; percentage based on students that completed the corresponding test during the 2011-12 school year.

<sup>4</sup> Students take the writing portion of the CRT beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Representation by Zip Code

Families represented a broad geographic distribution from within the county. Over half of the total population (57%) was from one of five zip code areas (89502, 89431, 89433, 89506 and 89512).<sup>5</sup> Parent University reached more people in more areas of the county than in 2011-12, including rural areas of Nixon and Wadsworth (Social Entrepreneurs Inc. and WCSD Office of Family School Partnerships, 2011-12). A map is provided on the following page that shows participants by zip code.

Distribution of Parent University Families by Home Zip Code



<sup>5</sup> Summary based on data from parent surveys; 1,139 of 1,244 total surveys included information on their 5-digit home zip code. Map contains 97% of all participants by zip code. 14 zip code areas had 4 or fewer participants and are not shown on map.

### Participation by Class Topic

According to sign-in sheet data, Washoe County parents attended classes in 87 topic areas. Despite exceeding overall program participation goals and high attendance at some Parent University classes, twenty-four class topics had less than five attendees and many classes had no attendees. The topics with the highest overall participation included:

| <i>Class Topics with Highest Overall Attendance</i>   | <b># of participants</b> | <b>Category<sup>6</sup></b> |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Transition to High School   | 239                      | 1                           |
| Series: Promoting Literacy with Your Child: Going from Learning to Read to Reading to Learn | 194                      | 1                           |
| Making a Successful Transition to Middle School   | 191                      | 1                           |
| Series: 123 Magic Parenting Class & More Magic  | 109                      | 3                           |
| Series: Strengthening Families  | 92                       | 3                           |
| Career Information Night  | 75                       | N/A                         |
| Infinite Campus Parent Portal   | 75                       | 1                           |
| College Access Night  | 61                       | N/A                         |
| How is My Child Doing? Understanding Your Child's Achievement Data                          | 60                       | 1                           |
| Series: Addressing Challenging Behavior   | 59                       | 1                           |
| Transition to Kindergarten  | 55                       | 1                           |

The majority of the highest attended class topics were from the knowledge and skills Category #1 “Supporting Learning and Navigating the System.” The other most highly attended courses were from Category #3 “Parenting.” Parents and Parent University staff spoke highly of Parent University Parenting classes in interviews. Parents reported changes at home since attending a parenting class, including yelling less at their child, and seeing improvements in their child’s behavior. In an interview, one Parent University staff member said,

*“It’s just knowing that our families need help and addressing the fact that they do... if people don’t know how to parent, then they don’t know how to help [their children] with their education. That’s so important.”*

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<sup>6</sup> 1=Supportive Learning & Navigating the System; 2=Leadership & Advocacy; 3=Parenting; 4=Family Health & Wellness; 5=Parents Personal Growth & Development

## Parent University – Annual Report 2012-2013

The following 13 **individual** classes and locations were the highest attended classes during the 2012-2013 school year and had over 30 participants in each class:

| <i>Individual Classes with Highest Attendance</i>  | <b>Location</b>      | <b>#</b> | <b>Category</b> |
|--|----------------------|----------|-----------------|
| <b>Transition to High School</b>   | Spanish Springs High | 239      | 1               |
| <b>Making a Successful Transition to Middle School</b>   | Traner Middle        | 187      | 1               |
| <b>Series: Strengthening Families</b>  | Dilworth Middle      | 75       | 3               |
| <b>Series: 123 Magic Parenting Class &amp; More Magic</b>  | Kate Smith Elem.     | 60       | 3               |
| <b>Series: Addressing Challenging Behavior</b>   | Traner Middle        | 59       | 1               |
| <b>Series: Promoting Literacy with Your Child: Going from learning to read to reading to learn</b> | Sun Valley Elem.     | 58       | 1               |
| <b>Series: 123 Magic Parenting Class &amp; More Magic</b>  | Dunn Elem.           | 45       | 3               |
| <b>More Than Gifted- The Twice Exceptional Child</b>   | Pine Middle          | 44       | 1               |
| <b>Executive Functioning</b>   | Swope Middle         | 37       | 1               |
| <b>Finding the Best College</b>  | Clayton Middle       | 36       | 1               |
| <b>Gear Up - College is Possible</b>   | Traner Middle        | 32       | 1               |
| <b>How is My Child Doing? Understanding Your Child's Achievement data</b>                          | Kate Smith Elem.     | 32       | 1               |
| <b>Transition to Kindergarten</b>  | Head Start           | 31       | 1               |

### Participation by Location

With the exception of Family Access Day, most Parent University classes took place at District schools, and were offered during the school day and in the evenings. According to sign-in sheet data, parents attended classes at 69 schools and community organizations throughout the area. The sites with the highest overall participation are listed below:

| <b>School or Community Based Location</b> | <b># of participants</b> | <b># of classes</b> | <b>Ave. per class</b> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Traner Middle School</b>               | <b>284</b>               | <b>11</b>           | <b>26*</b>            |
| <b>Spanish Springs High</b>               | <b>270</b>               | <b>5</b>            | <b>54*</b>            |
| Kate Smith Elementary                     | 103                      | 7                   | 15                    |
| Dunn Elementary                           | 98                       | 10                  | 10                    |
| Palmer Elementary                         | 86                       | 5                   | 17                    |
| Pine Middle                               | 82                       | 7                   | 12                    |
| Dilworth Middle                           | 81                       | 9                   | 9                     |
| Clayton Middle                            | 80                       | 6                   | 13                    |

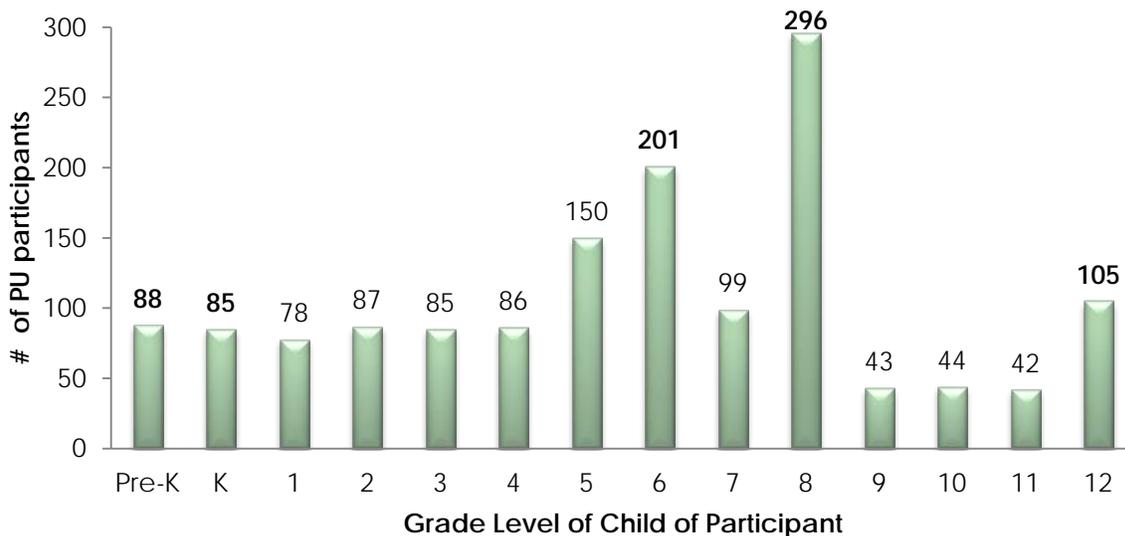
| School or Community Based Location                         | # of participants | # of classes | Ave. per class |
|--|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Booth Elementary   | 70                | 7            | 10             |
| City of Reno Community Assistance Center<br>Family Shelter | 69                | 9            | 8              |
| Boys and Girls Club  | 62                | 10           | 6              |
| Corbett Elementary   | 60                | 7            | 9              |
| <b>Sun Valley Elementary</b>                               | <b>60</b>         | <b>2</b>     | <b>30*</b>     |
| Juniper Elementary   | 52                | 7            | 7              |

\*Note that locations are ordered based on total number of participants. Traner Middle School, Spanish Springs High School, and Sun Valley Elementary School had the highest average attendance per class.

### Students Served

A total of 1,499 unique WCSD students were identified in sign-in sheets. Families only indicate one child during sign-in. Other children in the household are also likely to benefit from parent participation and are not captured directly in these counts.

Data from sign-ins show that Parent University is impacting the families of children at every grade level. Years that typically anticipate a change in schools (e.g. middle to high school) appear to have slightly higher parent enrollment than adjacent years. This trend is indicated in bold. Note that this data is based on the child indicated on the sign-in sheet. Other children in the household are not considered in this analysis.



### Distribution by Child’s School

Participating families had children from schools from throughout the District and beyond, demonstrating program reach. Data shows that several schools are leading the way in terms of attendance, and these include elementary, middle and high schools. Learning what is working in terms of outreach at these schools will help to further engage families with children at schools that are currently underrepresented at Parent University.

| <b>Children from 105* schools had parents that participated</b> | <u>Top 15 Schools Based on Child/Family Representation</u> |                       |
|---|--|-----------------------|
|   | ❖  | Shaw Middle           |
|   | ❖  | Mathews Elementary    |
|   | ❖  | Cannan Elementary     |
|   | ❖  | Sun Valley Elementary |
|   | ❖  | Kate Smith Elementary |
|   | ❖  | Pine Middle           |
|   | ❖  | Spanish Springs High  |
|   | ❖  | Traner Middle         |
|   | ❖  | Duncan Elementary     |
|   | ❖  | Palmer Elementary     |
|   | ❖  | Dunn Elementary       |
|   | ❖  | Clayton Middle        |
|   | ❖  | Reno High             |
|   | ❖  | Allen Elementary      |
| ❖   | Sparks Middle  |                       |

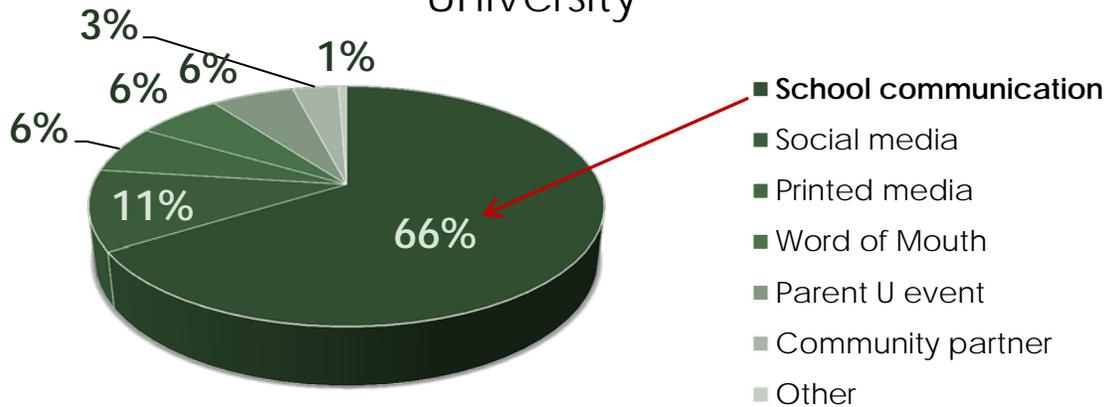
\*The vast majority of children represented are from WCSD traditional schools; the program also attracted families with children from WCSD charter schools, private schools, TMCC, and schools outside the district.

### How Parents Learned about Parent University

Parents were asked on sign-in sheets to provide information on how they learned about Parent University; 829 parents completed this field. Two thirds (66%) noted their child’s school as their source for information about Parent University, underscoring the importance of administrator, teacher, and staff awareness and support for Parent University.

| <p>Two thirds of all parents say they learned about Parent U from their child’s school.</p> | Other Sources of Communication* |               |               |                |                     |       |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|-------|
|   | Social Media                    | Printed Media | Word of Mouth | Parent U event | Comm-unity Partners | Other |
|   | 11%                             | 6%            | 6%            | 6%             | 3%                  | 1%    |

How Parents Heard About Parent University\*



\*Source: Parent University class sign-in sheets

## Parent University – Annual Report 2012-2013

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In interviews with participants (n=21) immediately following a Parent University class, parents shared in more detail how they heard about the class they attended and the Parent University program, in general. Their responses are summarized below:

|   |
|---|
| <b>School sources:</b>                          |
| Word of mouth from the school PIF               |
| Notices sent home from school                   |
| Word of mouth from the child's teacher          |
| Voicemail message from school                   |
| Flyer posted at school                          |
| Note sent home to parents from school           |
| Text on cellphone                               |
| At an event at school                           |
| <b>District sources:</b>                        |
| Campus portal                                   |
| Received an email from WCSD                     |
| WCSD website-online calendar                    |
| While attending another Parent University class |
| Parent University Catalog                       |
| <b>Other sources:</b>                           |
| News on TV                                      |
| Word of mouth from a family member              |

### Family Access Day

Family Access Day was held at the University of Nevada Reno campus (UNR) and brought at least 144 attendees.<sup>7</sup> This whole-day event included sessions in nine topic areas focused on building knowledge and skills to support the pathway to college. Courses were tailored to the age and grade of the child.

Superintendent Pedro Martinez was among several speakers that welcomed families to the event and articulated a vision that all Washoe County students graduate from high school and have the choice and opportunity to attend college. Families also connected with community resources, for example, approximately 40 families completed applications to nominate themselves for a family pass to the Terry Lee Wells Discovery Museum.

Washoe County Online Learning (WOLF) also distributed information.



Families were given information that allowed them to grow their knowledge base, practice new skills within the class, ask questions of expert facilitators, and share learning with other parents. In the Building Literacy at Home class, families learned practices that support not just literacy, but a love of books and learning. One parent said, "My 7<sup>th</sup> grader is having trouble with comprehension. What can I do to help her?" The facilitator gave concrete strategies for helping her daughter improve in this area. Another parent shared how the class was helping her to promote literacy:

*"I am so glad to learn this because I didn't really grow up with books in my home. It is really important to me that my daughter has these experiences reading and seeing reading modeled at home."*

In the Math for Early Grades, parents learned how to play a card game that sharpened math skills. Modifications for every age group were described. Families experienced the game (and other activities) by playing them as part of the session. Families brought home materials with descriptions of activities to do at home.

In another session, current UNR students shared some of the excitement and challenges they experienced from the perspective of first-generation college students (children that are the first children in their family, including parents and grandparents, to attend college).

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<sup>7</sup> Based on sign-in sheet data. Some families that arrived late may not have signed in. This represents a conservative count.

## Parent University – Annual Report 2012-2013

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*“My mom didn’t know how stressful [the first year of college] was, or how to help me accomplish my goals. I found a mentor, and that has really helped.”*

Parents and high school youth asked questions referencing the panelists’ presentations – for example, how they had found scholarships, financial aid, and mentors.

*“This class was very interesting and provided me with many steps which can facilitate and help make going to college for my son more possible. The various speakers provided a much needed insight to what is necessary and what things to avoid. All information provided was priceless; thank you.”*

A session also focused on how to access and understand student data. Parents in the session followed along with handouts that included screenshots of District student reports. The presenter related the data to examples of what children need and the questions parents can ask to support improvement.

It is important to note that an unexpected power outage created additional challenges that day, but District staff, parents, and presenters were committed to continuing. Sessions were moved to areas in the building with large windows and ambient light. Presenters worked from handouts and materials rather than electronic presentations and spoke to the audience directly without assistance from microphones. This may have had the unintended benefit of better connecting facilitators and presenters with the audience.

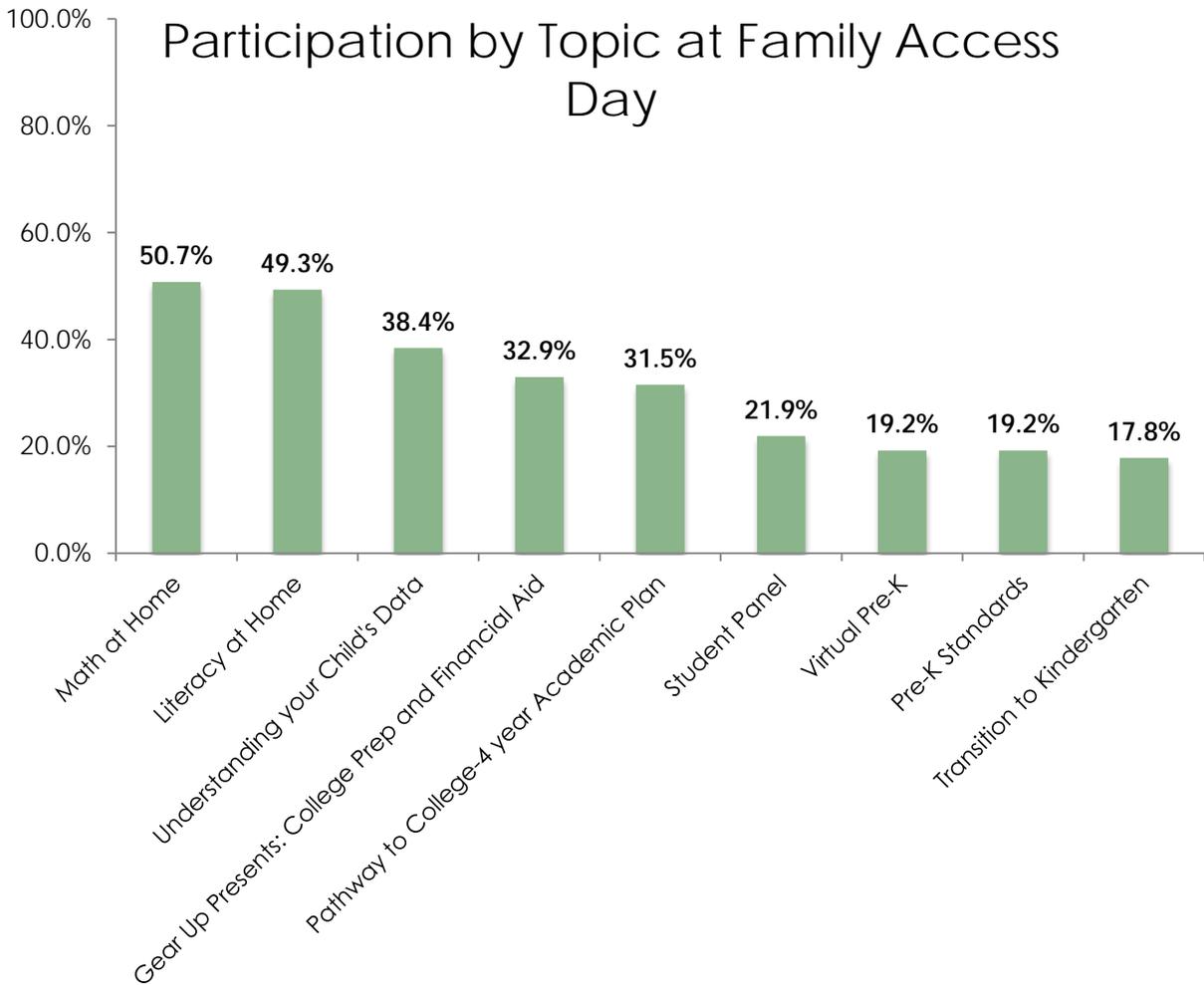
A total of 78 participant evaluations were completed at the Family Access Day event, with 47 (60%) in English and 31 (40%) in Spanish. Participants attended multiple sessions each, with Literacy at Home, Math at Home, and Understanding our Child’s Data completed by at least 38% of all respondents.



Members of a student panel talked to parents and their teens about how to prepare and what to expect on their first year of college.



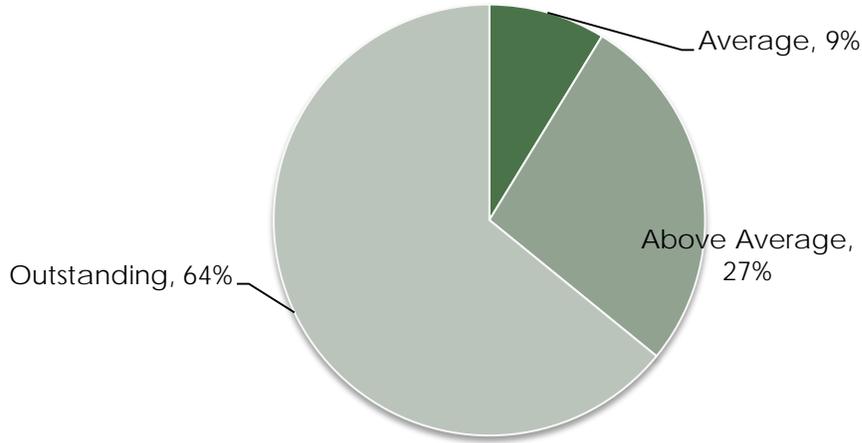
Families listened and asked questions about the students’ experiences in their first year of college.



Most (81%) had never attended a Parent University class before, and 100% (no exceptions) said they would recommend Family Access Day to another parent or family.

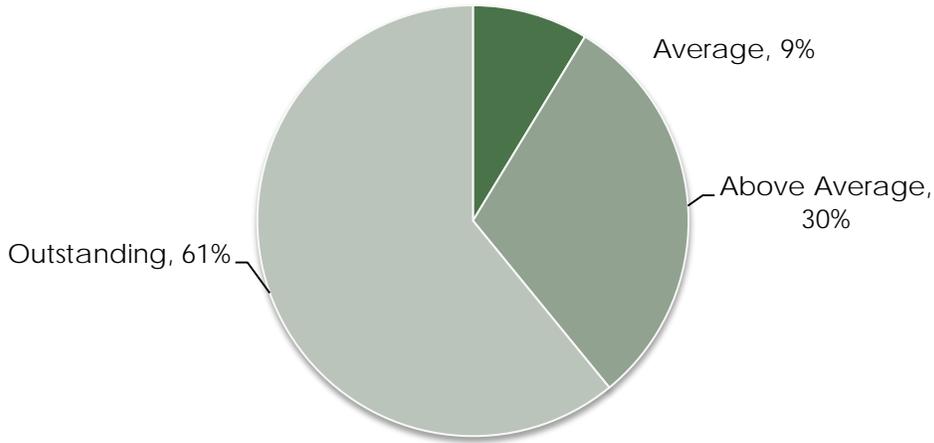
Families rated the event very highly in terms of quality and usefulness. The majority of participants (92%) described the **usefulness** of Family Access Day as outstanding or above average and 91% described the event **quality** as outstanding or above average.

### How would you rate the usefulness of Family Access Day?



Source: Family Access Day Surveys (n=69). Note: no participants selected "poor" or "below average" answer choices.

### How would you rate the overall quality of Family Access Day?



Source: Family Access Day Surveys (n=69). Note: no participants selected "poor" or "below average" answer choices.

## Parent University – Annual Report 2012-2013

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In the Family Access Day survey, 53 respondents provided additional comments in their own words about what they liked best. Responses are summarized below:

| What Family Access Day Participants Liked Best:                       |
|---|
| ❖ Information to help our children in school in general               |
| ❖ Information to help our children with/getting to/paying for college |
| ❖ The family learning together  |
| ❖ The take away materials to use at home                              |
| ❖ Supports: translation, transportation, child care, lunch            |
| ❖ Information about math  |
| ❖ Information about reading/literacy                                  |
| ❖ The personalities of the presenters and organizers of the event     |
| ❖ The interaction and helpful answers to their questions in person    |
| ❖ That the content was modifiable to any grade level                  |
| ❖ The location- that it was held at a university                      |
| ❖ Student panel session   |

"[I] learn[ed] that it's very important to read, read."

"Asking question and talking [and] getting answers [from] a person"

Additional open-ended comments at the end of the Family Access Day survey were overwhelmingly positive. Participants expressed how much they enjoyed the event and *gratitude toward the organizers*:

*"Me gustó mucho. Estoy más interesada en participar más en la educación de mis hijas y en la mía propia aprendiendo inglés. Gracias."*

*(I liked it a lot. I am more interested in participating more in the education of my children and in my own learning English. Thank you.)*

*"Nunca me imaginé toda la información que puede uno obtener en esta clase de eventos. Te dan seguridad y confianza para preguntar y entender las respuestas a tus preguntas. Gracias y espero que éste no sea el único evento al que sea invitada."*

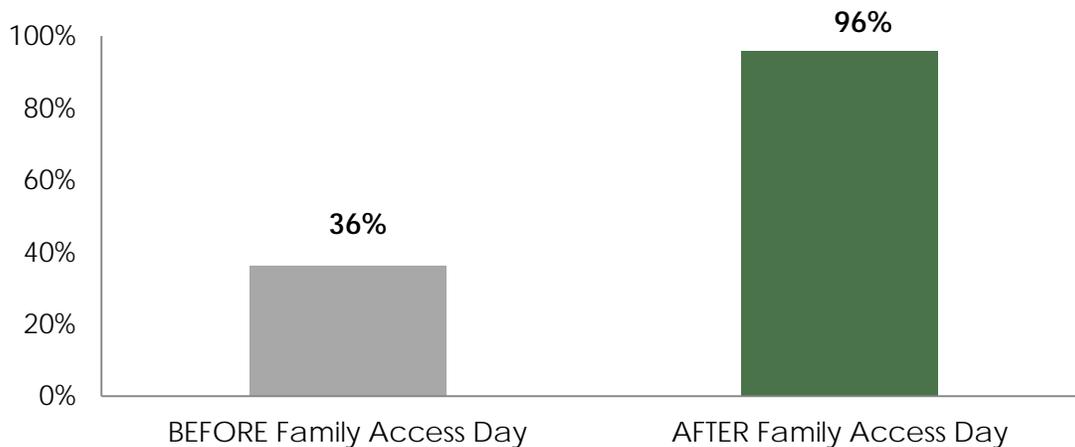
*(I never imagined all the information that one can obtain in this kind of event. They give you security and confidence to ask questions and understand the answers to your questions. Thank you and I hope that this won't be the only event that I'm invited to.)*

### Family Access Day Self-Reported Changes in Knowledge, Skills, Confidence and Awareness

In Family Access Day surveys, participants reported significant<sup>8</sup> changes in knowledge, skills/abilities, confidence as a parent, and awareness of resources to assist them in supporting their children’s learning and achievement as a result of attending the event.

**Change in Knowledge.** Prior to the event, 36% of participants rated their knowledge of what their child is expected to know and do at school as a four or five (high or very high). After the class, 96% of participants rated themselves as having high or very high knowledge. Following Family Access Day, no participants rated their knowledge as either low or very low.

#### Reporting Related Knowledge as "High" or "Very High"



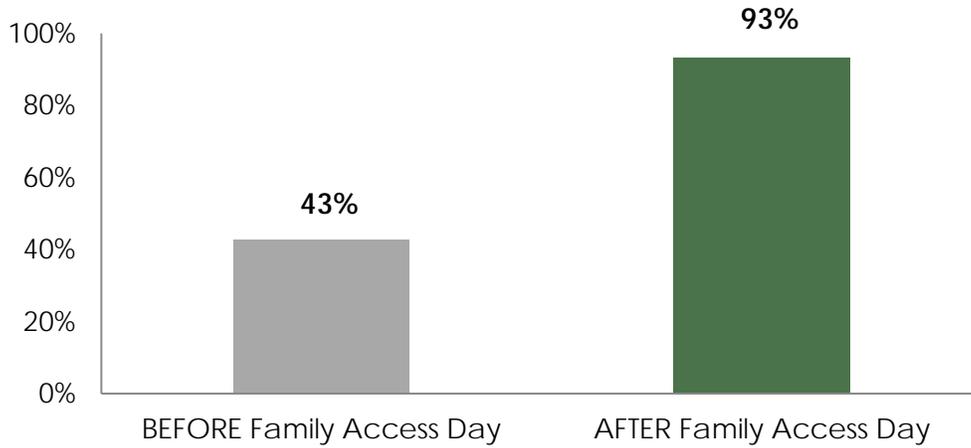
Family Access Day Survey, n=77

**Change in Skills and Abilities.** Prior to the event, 43% of participants rated their ability/skills to support their child’s learning at home as a four or five (high or very high). After the event, 93% of participants rated their skills and abilities as four or five (high or very high). Following Family Access Day, 1% rated their skills and abilities as low or very low.

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<sup>8</sup> One-tailed, paired t-tests ( $p < .001$ )

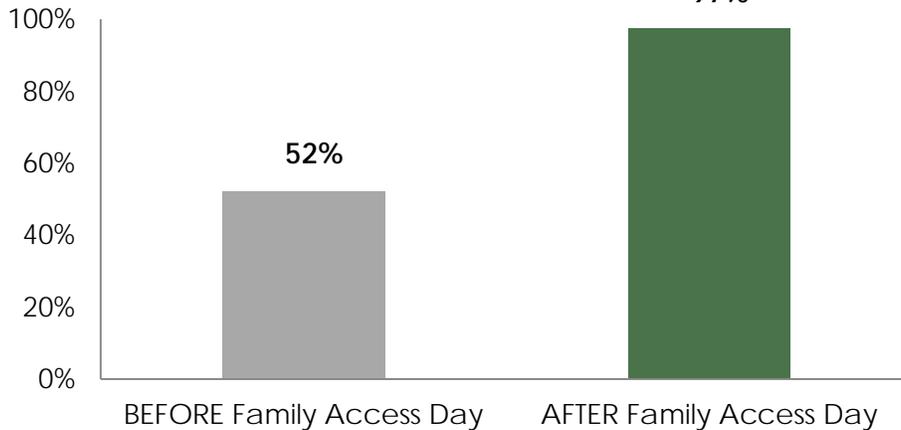
### Reporting Related Ability/Skills as "High" or "Very High"



Family Access Day Survey, n=75

**Change in Confidence.** Prior to the event, 52% of participants rated their confidence to positively impact their child’s education and help them reach their goals as a four or five (high or very high). After the event, 97% of participants rated themselves as four or five (high or very high). Following Family Access Day, no parents rated their confidence as low or very low.

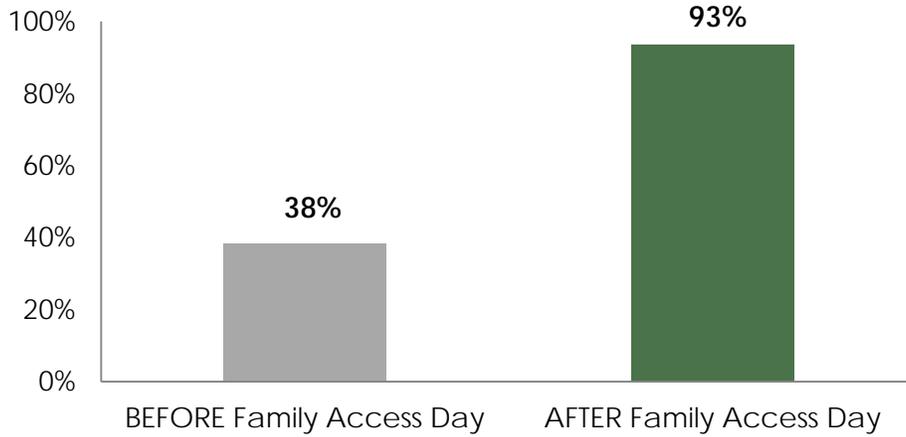
### Reporting Related Confidence as "High" or "Very High"



Family Access Day Survey, n=75

**Change in Awareness.** Prior to the event, 38% of participants rated their awareness of resources (at school or in the community) that are available to support their child’s learning and achievement as four or five (high or very high). After the event, 93% of participants rated themselves four or five (high or very high). Following Family Access Day, 3% rated their awareness as low or very low.

## Reporting Related Awareness as "High" or "Very High"

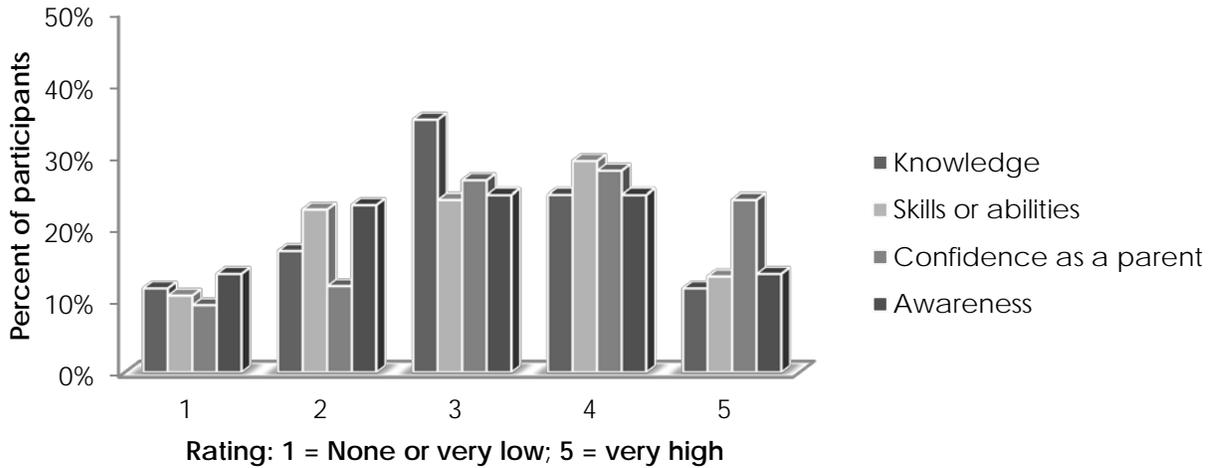


Family Access Day Survey, n=73

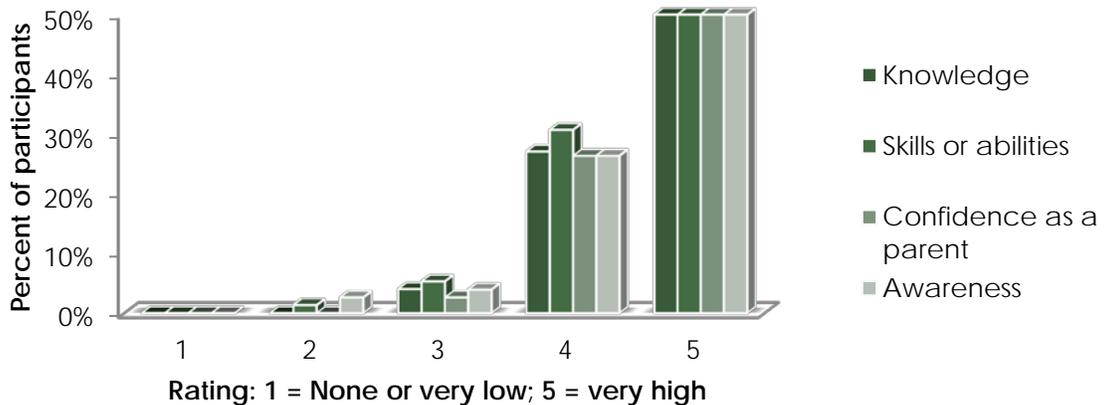


Family Access Day took place on the UNR campus.

## Self-Reported Knowledge, Skills, Confidence, and Awareness Before Family Access Day\*



## Self-Reported Knowledge, Skills, Confidence, and Awareness After Family Access Day\*



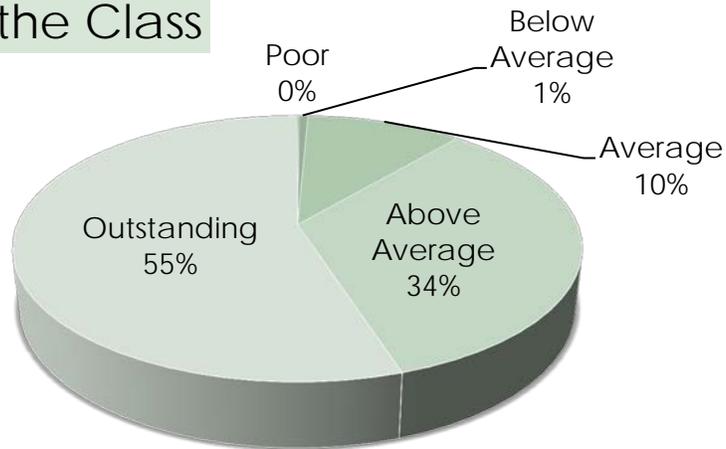
\*A total of 78 Family Access Day surveys were collected. Response counts to each of the knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness questions ranged from 73-77.

### Perceptions of Parent University Class Quality and Usefulness

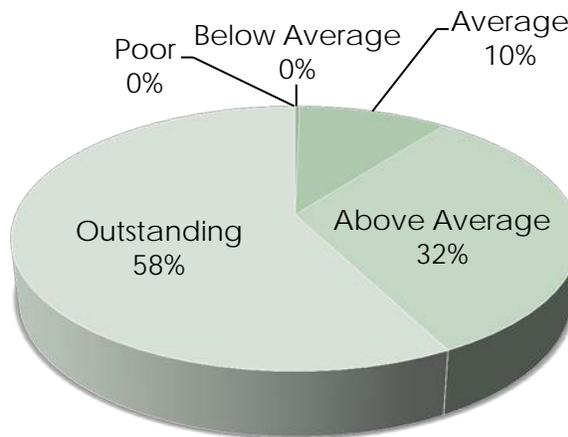
Nearly all respondents to the parent survey indicated that they would recommend Parent University classes to another parent (99%) and 87% planned to enroll in another Parent University class during the year.

Across all topics offered, families rated classes very highly in terms of quality and usefulness. The majority of participants (89%) described the class **usefulness** as outstanding or above average and 90% described the class **quality** as outstanding or above average.

#### Usefulness of the Class



#### Overall Quality



Source: Parent Surveys, n=1,218

In the parent survey, 198 respondents provided additional comments in their own words about their experience. Comments were overwhelmingly positive concerning the quality and usefulness of the classes:

*"This class was very, very educational and helpful. Mrs. Sheffield was informative and explanatory. Thank you, Mrs. Sheffield for all your help. This will be very helpful in my family and for our family to help my children with their homework and everyday education."*

*"Quiero agradecerles por compartir sus conocimientos, que a mí en lo personal me ayudan mucho. Me gusta mucho todo lo que aquí se aprende. Ustedes hacen un muy buen trabajo."*

*(I would like to thank you for sharing this knowledge with us, which I personally find very useful. I like very much all that you learn here. You are doing a great job!)*

*"[The class was] informative, useful, [and] gives you the 'want' to know more."*

*"Gracias Universidad de Padres por ayudarme a ser una mejor madre para mis hijos y una mejor persona"*

*(Thanks to the Parent's University for helping me to be a better mother to my children and to be a better person.)*

*"Love the handouts! So useful to go home with help in hand! Thank you!"*

*"Estas clases fueron para mí de lo mejor. Me están ayudando mucho y me gustaría que otras personas tuvieran la oportunidad de escuchar sobre todo al orador [y] la motivación que da."*

*(These classes were the best for me. They are helping me so much. I'd like that other people had the chance to, above all, hear the public speaker and how motivating he can be)*

## Participant Outcomes

In Parent University instructor surveys, respondents described positive changes they noticed among their participants. They noted that during class **parents appeared engaged, and that over the course of the class they began to problem solve together.**

*“...as the class went on the parents discussed what was working and what did not work. They asked each other questions and solved problems together.”*

Parent University instructors also noticed changes in participants after attending Parent University classes. They reported that **parents continued to stay in touch and call instructors with questions they had related to the course content.** One instructor commented that **parents seemed more confident in their role in their child’s education** after attending a Parent University class:

*“[Parents are] asking more questions, [and showing] more confidence in the school district programs and supports for their children.”*

Additionally, in interviews conducted with participants (n=21) immediately following one of 10 different Parent University class topics, parents shared what they personally learned in the course and what changes they planned to make (and had already made, if they had previously attended a Parent University class) based on the information they learned in class<sup>9</sup>.

### **What Parents Reported Learning in their Parent University Class:**

That the parent is not alone

Coping skills--what they are and how to use them

How to use technology to help child learn

Resources, programs and products to help parents after the class

New software skills for the parent to help with career

How to help children learn while they are playing

How to make children pay attention

How to use expressive language

How to help children continue learning at home

Importance of reading

The expectations of what children need to be learning at each age/grade

How to respond to bullying; about cyber bullying

Information from take home handouts

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<sup>9</sup> Note that interviews took place in both Spanish and English. However, all interviews were documented in English, with interpreters assisting with Spanish interviews.

## Parent University – Annual Report 2012-2013

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All parents that were interviewed (n=21) shared changes they anticipated making after the day's class.

### ***What Parents Plan to Change After Class:***

- Will do more reading and reading activities with children
  - Will talk to principal about bullying issues
  - Will improve communication at home with family
  - Will stay in touch with parents from Parent University class
  - Will use coping skills & self-soothing techniques at home
  - Will add (new computer) skills learned to resume and move toward new career
- 

Parents that were interviewed after completing at least two 2012-13 Parent University classes (n=9) shared changes they had seen or made since their first Parent University class.

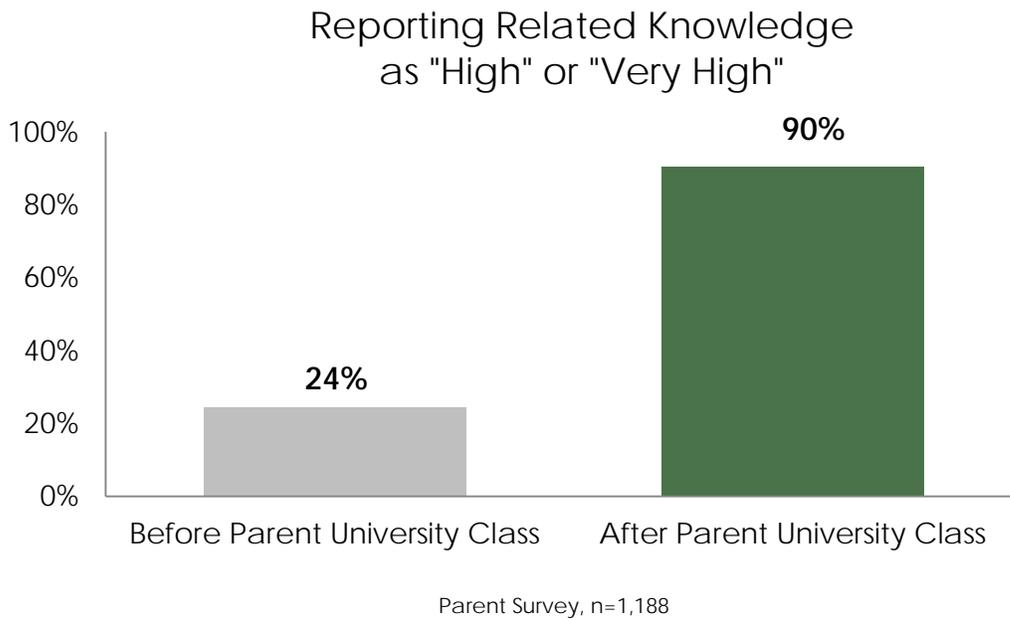
### ***Changes Parents Have Seen or Made Since their First Parent University Class***

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Changes Seen in Child     | Child's behavior improved   |
|                           | Child's self-esteem improved  |
|                           | Child speaks up for self at school  |
| Changes Parents Have Made | Parent controls self better/yells less                                      |
|                           | Parent has helped child show his work on math homework                      |
|                           | Parent better understands child's reading level and how to use the book log |
|                           | Parent saves and budgets money  |

### Self-Reported Changes in Knowledge, Skills, Confidence and Awareness

Parent University class participants reported significant<sup>10</sup> changes in knowledge, skills/abilities, confidence as a parent, and awareness of community information and resources related as a result of the class participation and topic.

**Change in Knowledge.** Prior to the class, 24% of participants rated their knowledge in the class topic as a four or five (high or very high). After the class, 90% of participants rated themselves as having high or very high knowledge. Following Parent University, less than 2% of participants rated their knowledge as either low or very low.

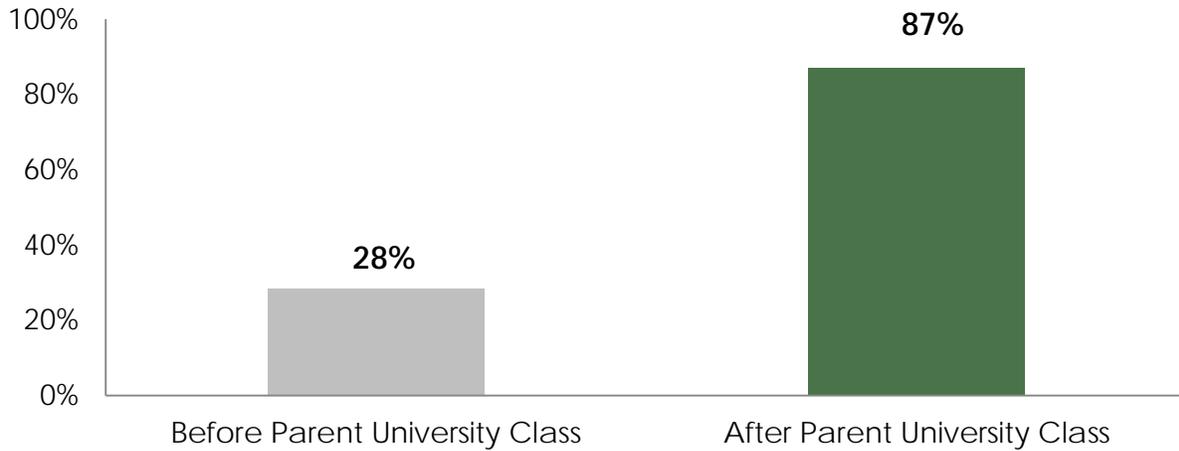


**Change in Skills and Abilities.** Prior to the class, 28% of participants rated their skills in the class topic as a four or five (high or very high). After the class, 87% of participants rated their skills and abilities as four or five (high or very high). Following Parent University, 2% rated their skills and abilities as low or very low.

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<sup>10</sup> One-tailed, paired t-tests ( $p < .001$ )

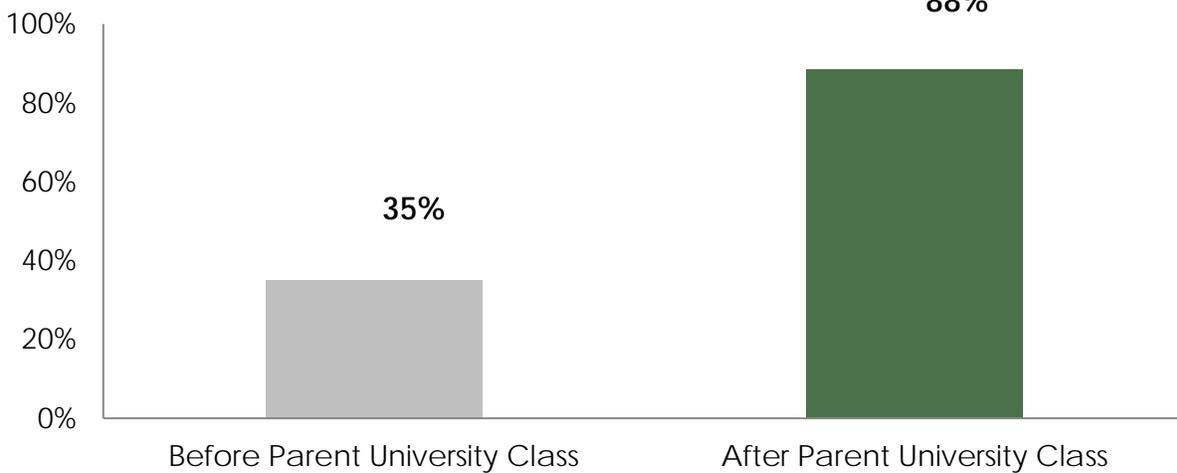
### Reporting Related Skills and Abilities as "High" or "Very High"



Parent Survey, n=1,189

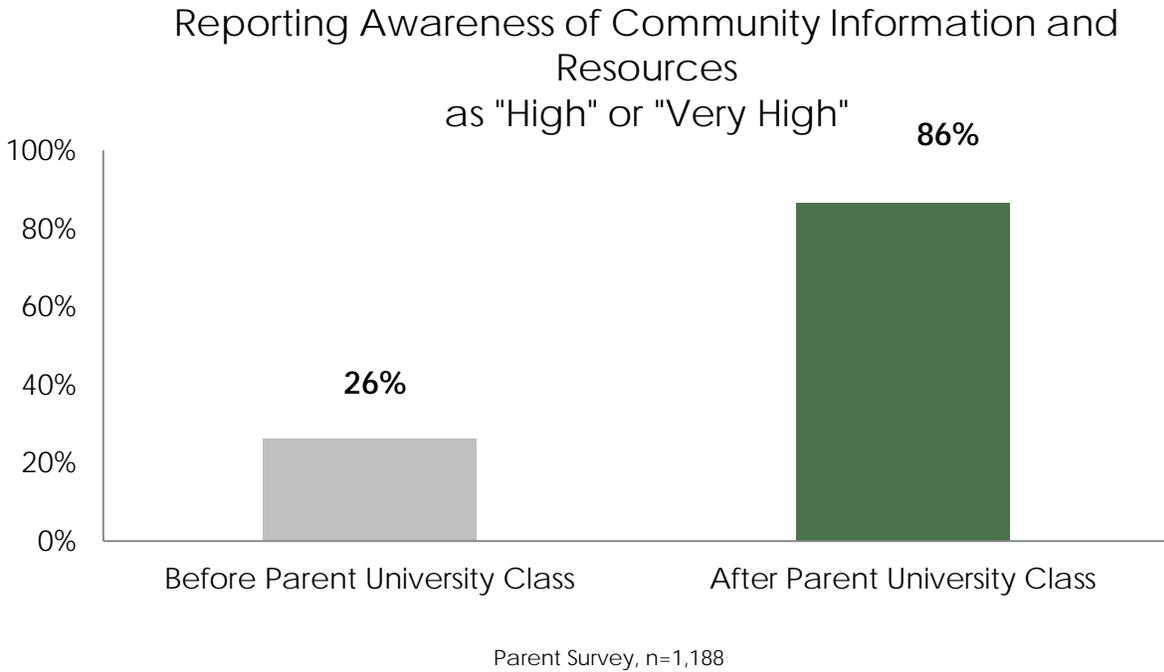
**Change in Confidence as Parent, related to the Class Topic.** Prior to the class, 35% of participants rated their confidence as a parent related to the class topic as a four or five (high or very high). After the class, 88% of participants rated themselves as four or five (high or very high). Following Parent University, less than 2% rated their confidence as low or very low.

### Reporting Related Confidence as Parent as "High" or "Very High"

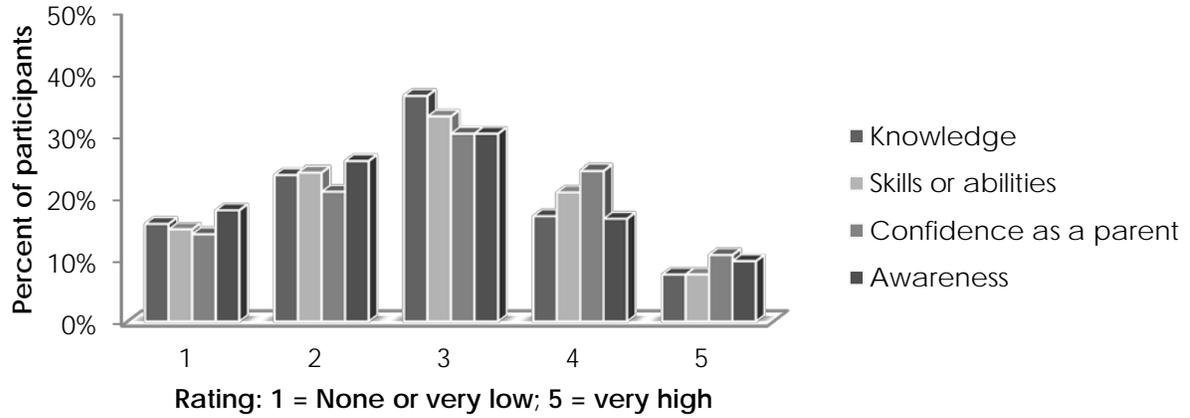


Parent Survey, n=1,187

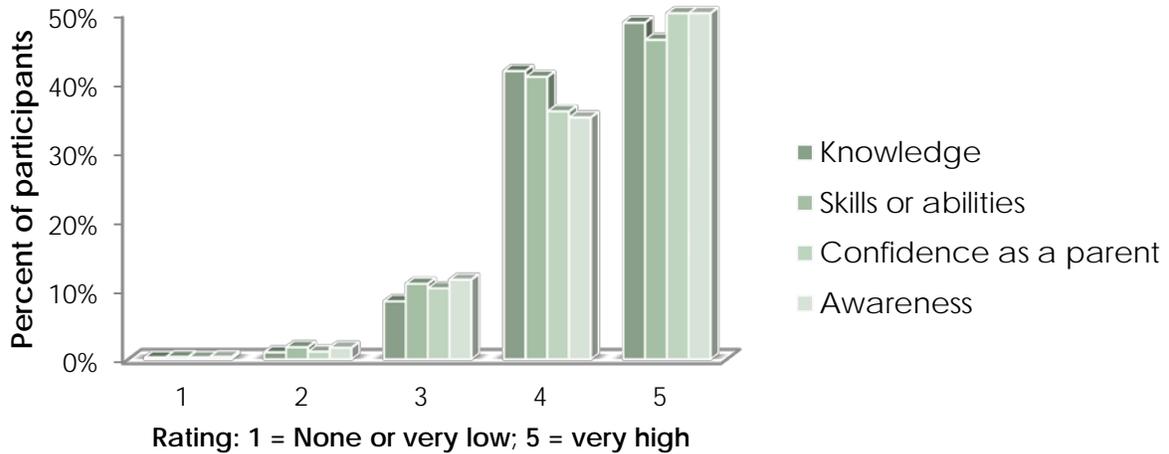
**Change in Awareness of Available Information and Resources Related to the Class Topic.** Prior to the class, 26% of participants rated their awareness of available information and resources related to the class topic as four or five (high or very high). After the class, 86% of participants rated themselves four or five (high or very high). Following Parent University, 2% rated their awareness as low or very low.



## Self-Reported Knowledge, Skills, Confidence, and Awareness Before Class, As Relates to Class Topic\*



## Self-Reported Knowledge, Skills, Confidence, and Awareness *After Class*, As Relates to Class Topic\*



\*A total of 1,244 parent surveys were collected. Response counts to each of the knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness questions ranged from 1,185-1,209.

### Key Findings

In Year 2:

- ❖ District-wide participation goals were exceeded by approximately 40%, reaching over 1,600 parents through Parent University classes.
- ❖ Families that are designated “hard to reach” were well represented (at least 65% of participating families) at Parent University classes.
- ❖ Participating families represented a broad geographic distribution from within the county and have children from schools from throughout the District and beyond, demonstrating program reach.
- ❖ While the majority of Parent University families are Hispanic/Latino, the diversity of the district’s population was well represented (including families that were African American, American Indian, Pacific Islander). This marks an improvement from Year 1 when American Indian and Pacific Islander families were underrepresented.
- ❖ Parents attended classes in every learning category; however the highest attended class topics were from the knowledge and skills areas “Supporting Learning and Navigating the System” and “Parenting.”
- ❖ While the highest attended class topics had nearly 200 participants, many classes had very low attendance (i.e., less than 5 participants). Classes with low attendance meant that participants received customized support from the instructor. Some classes had no attendees and were cancelled; staff is working to understand contributing issues and make improvements that attract families to every class.
- ❖ Participant feedback was **overwhelmingly positive** across all indicators. Families felt that their time was well-spent, the content and instructors were easy to understand, and that the classes were of high quality.
- ❖ Participants made significant gains in knowledge, skills, abilities, confidence as a parent, and awareness of community information and resources as a result of the class participation and topic. Parents and instructors reported additional positive outcomes from participating in Parent University classes for both the participating parents and their children.
- ❖ Outreach is critical to attracting families to classes. While nearly all families that participated indicated that they would refer other families to Parent University, participants were most likely to report hearing about the opportunities through the school, mailings, and other school and District-initiated outreach.

## Recommendations

- 1. Strategic Planning.** In association with developing course offerings and curriculum for 2012-13, conduct a strategic planning session to clearly define the short, intermediate, and long-term measurable goals the program aims to impact over the next several years, and the data sources that provide measurement of these goals. Involve key stakeholders in this meeting (i.e., parents, students, community partners, school administrators, teachers, PIFs), and use this documentation to align current stakeholders and engage new ones. Draw from family involvement literature, behavioral change/educational theories, data from the first two years of the program, and input from key stakeholders to create course offerings and curriculum with specific learning objectives aimed at reaching the short, intermediate, and long-term goals of the program. While the overall participation goal for 2012-13 was exceeded by approximately 40%, many classes had low or no attendance suggesting that program course topics could be streamlined to preserve program resources and better reflect the needs/requests of the District's parents and schools. Attendance goals should be adjusted upward to reflect the ability of the program staff to attract families, the benefits reported by participants, and to address the needs as identified by the District. Program capacity has been built in years 1 and 2 that can be used to reach more families and maximize return on investment.
- 2. Annual Planning.** Increase involvement of the individual schools in annual program planning. School administrators report desire to better align Parent University events and activities with other family involvement efforts held at their individual campuses each year. Before deciding upon annual course offerings at each school, conduct a needs assessment (which would concurrently promote program awareness) with BOTH the parents and the school staff to determine the courses that are most appropriate for their families. In addition to overall District participation goals, create (in partnership with PIFs, school administrators, and teachers) class and individual school-level participation goals.
- 3. Supports.** Maintain the supports provided to parents in Year 2 including no-cost classes, childcare, interpretation, and translation. Consider partnerships to support transportation for selected events (for example, Family Access Day transported families, and this helped to make the day a possibility to families that don't have cars or live far from campus).
- 4. Outreach and Referral.** 1) Incorporate strategies to improve communication about the program's purpose, events and activities between Parent University staff, PIFs, school administrators and teachers. School administrators report being overwhelmed with email communication, and correspondingly, Parent University

staff recommend one-on-one, in-person communication and relationship building with school staff to increase buy-in and family involvement in Parent University at the individual campus level. 2) Create a toolkit of PIF “best practices” based on the campus activities of PIFs at the schools with highest family attendance from Year 2. Incorporate best practices into PIF responsibilities and increase communication of those responsibilities to school administrators and teachers as data suggests that the PIF role is still not well understood at some schools. 3) Consider new strategies to engage teachers and other school personnel in outreach and referral. Data from the first two years of the program suggest that schools are the most common way families learned about Parent University.

5. **Content Delivery.** 1) Expand series of classes so that families build on new knowledge, as both participants and partnering agencies indicated that families are interested in continuing their growth topic areas. 2) Pilot at least one online course, to expand reach of Parent University (and collect data to measure its reach, audience, and effectiveness). Parents with at-home computer access report interest in webinars. Some parents stressed that the online courses still needed to be interactive while others requested that they be archived so they could complete them when convenient. 3) Consider the importance of individual schools in attracting families to Parent University classes and target content delivery that matches family needs by school. 4) Increase the number of Family Access Days to provide this opportunity to more families.
6. **Evaluation.** 1) Incorporate a District-wide annual assessment of “family involvement” into program activities to track change over time after cumulative years of program implementation. For example, the Washoe County School District’s Climate Survey may provide opportunities to see longer term impacts of Parent University at a school and district level.<sup>11</sup> 2) Map annual evaluation efforts to planning efforts to ensure that information is available to report on goals, objectives, and, toward overall impact of Parent University. Improvement of data collection tools is recommended to provide more meaningful process evaluation of activities and to inform programming for the following year. Explore opportunities to incorporate the District’s Climate Survey with Parent University outcomes. For example, schools that strongly participate in family engagement activities would be expected to see improvements through time on parent, child, and teacher perceptions of involvement and communication. Ongoing, detailed documentation of the following is recommended:

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<sup>11</sup> Additionally, [the Harvard Graduate School of Education \(HGSE\) recently developed a family involvement assessment survey for parents](#) that can be accessed [online](#). The creators of this survey are currently inviting school districts across the country to assist in piloting this assessment tool.

- a. PIF outreach/recruitment activities by date and campus (or specify District-wide)
- b. Additional outreach/recruitment efforts by date and campus (or specify District-wide)
- c. Report on each class (could be a Survey Monkey online survey that instructors complete immediately following each class):
  - i. Campus/Class/Date/Day of Week/Instructor/Community Partner/ Start and Stop Time
  - ii. Was child care provided? How many children attended?
  - iii. Was translation provided? How many Spanish speakers attended?
  - iv. What was the final attendance number for each class?
  - v. How were the facilities? Did the class have refreshments? Were restrooms available? Did all equipment work properly?
  - vi. Did a PIF or any other school staff member attend the class?
  - vii. Instructor report of successes/challenges/suggestions from this class
  - viii. Any additional information to inform future classes

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Sources of Data for Parent University Evaluation

#### Parent Interviews (n=21)

Interviews were conducted by SEI staff with 21 parents immediately following a Parent University class they attended. Parents interviewed had children ranging from 1.5 years to 20 years of age. A translator was available for all interviews. Interview topics included how the parents had heard about Parent University, why they chose to attend, what they learned, what they liked best about the class, if they planned to make any changes based on what they learned in class, if they would prefer to attend classes online, and any suggestions they had for the program or how to involve more parents in the program. Between one and five participants were interviewed after completing the following classes between April 2<sup>nd</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013:

| Class                                    | Location                  |
|--|---------------------------|
| Stress Reduction for Families            | Double Diamond Elementary |
| WCSD Speaks                              | 380 Edison Sparks, NV     |
| Math Paths                               | Rita Cannan Elementary    |
| Family Storyteller                       | Corbett Elementary        |
| Transition to Kindergarten               | Smithridge Elementary     |
| Computer Basics II                       | Maxwell Elementary        |
| Family Storyteller                       | Corbett Elementary        |
| How to talk to your child about bullying | Palmer Elementary         |
| Stress Reduction for Families            | Double Diamond Elementary |

#### Instructor Surveys (n=19)

Nineteen (19) Parent University instructors completed an electronic survey between April 22<sup>nd</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 about their experience with Parent University during the 2012-13 school year. The majority of respondents were WCSD staff. Respondents taught the following classes:

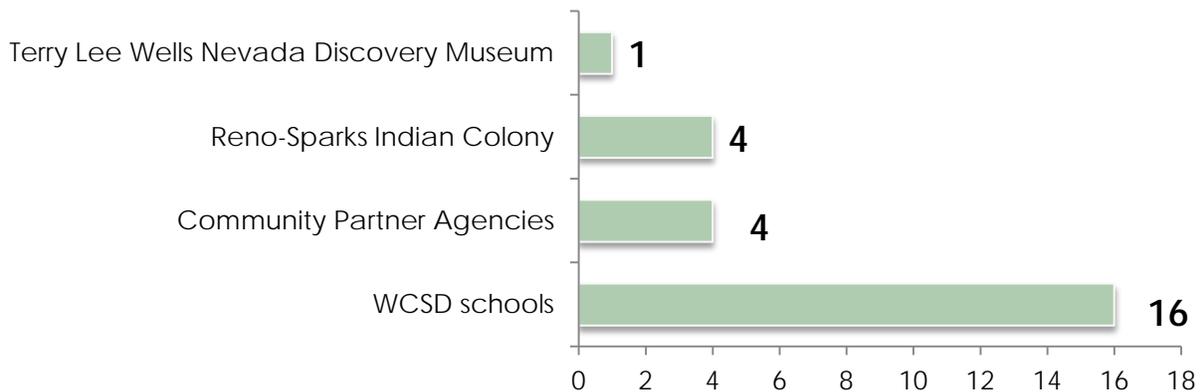
| Classes of Instructors that Participated in Survey          |
|---|
| Anger Management  |
| Beyond Nuggets and Fries                                    |
| College and Career Ready: What does this mean for my child? |
| Common Core State Standards                                 |
| Conflict Resolution   |
| Discovery Learning  |
| Drug and Alcohol Prevention                                 |

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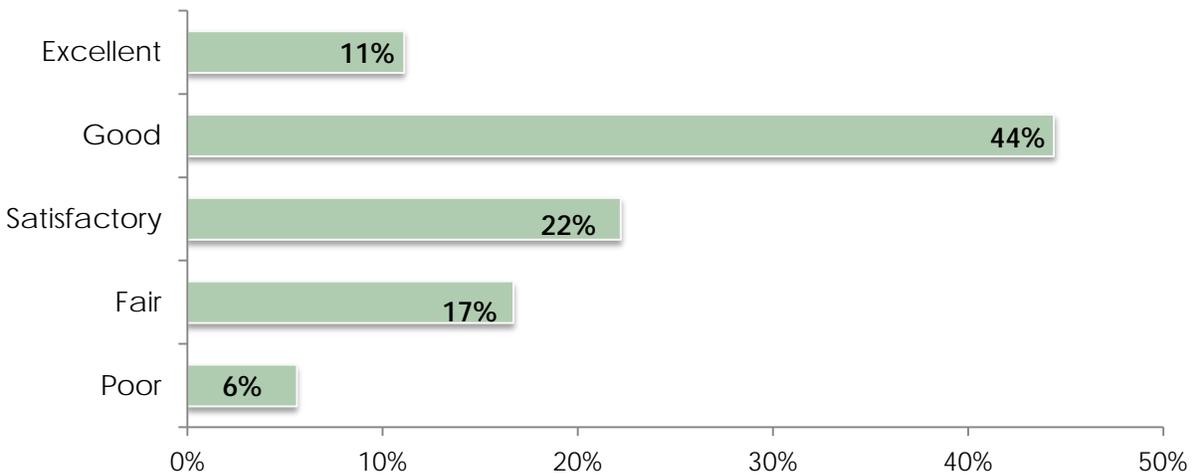
|   |
|---|
| Everyone Can Learn Through the Arts Grades Pre-k to 2                                       |
| First Teacher Reading/ Writing  |
| Getting From Point A to Point B   |
| Healthy Choices, Healthy Kids   |
| How Am I Going to Pay for My Child's College Education?                                     |
| Infinite Campus Parent Portal   |
| Little Changes, Better Health   |
| Navigating the Road to Teen Driving   |
| Potty Pros  |
| Read & Succeed  |
| Series: Addressing Challenging Behavior   |
| Series: 123 Magic Parenting Class & More Magic  |
| Series: Promoting Literacy with Your Child: Going from learning to read to reading to learn |
| Series: UNR Admissions and Tour   |
| Terry Lee Wells Discovery Museum  |
| The Parent's Toolbox  |
| Use Your Words  |
| Washoe County Library system: Keeping you Connected   |

Most instructors provided classes at the following locations. The chart below shows locations where participating instructors taught, along with the number of classes held at each type of location.



Instructors answered questions about class and program logistics and support, observations of participants, and suggestions for improving the program. Their responses are found throughout the evaluation report. Roughly half of the instructors (55%) rated their Parent University experience this year as “good” (44%) or “excellent” (11%). Nearly one quarter of instructors (23%) rated their experience as “poor” (6%) or “fair” (17%).

Overall how would you rate your experience as a Parent University Instructor?



**Focus Group (n=1; 4 participants in total)**

A 1.5-hour focus group was held at Juniper Elementary School on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The primary objective for this focus group was to identify opportunities and strategies for improvement of Parent University. Participants were selected to represent diverse views and experiences with the program. Four participants were in attendance. This included three principals (two elementary and one for middle school) and a representative from Boys and Girls Club. Two Parent University staff (D’Lisa Crain and Maria Fernandez) were present and helped to answer participants’ questions. Sarah Marschall from SEI facilitated the meeting and recorded notes. Findings are represented in the Recommendations section of the report. In summary, participants had different levels of engagement and connection to Parent University. Overall, they had basic questions about the program’s history and direction, and offered ideas to make it more effective at their school. In general, these improvements were oriented around more choice and autonomy at school, with Parent University providing resources to support identified needs and preferences.

**Parent University Staff Interviews (n=4)**

Sarah Marschall from SEI conducted a 20 -minute interview with a Parent University staff member on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The interview included questions related to the goals of the program, the successes and challenges observed this year, and suggestions for program improvement. In addition, Sarah conducted several informal interviews during phone calls, meetings, email communications and class observations with Parent University staff throughout the 2012-13 school year. Comments from staff interviews are included throughout the evaluation report.

### **Parent University Class Sign-in Sheets**

WCSD supplied SEI with data compiled from sign-in sheets from all 2012-13 Parent University classes. Data included the class name and location, participant names, how the parents heard about the class, student ID of each participant's child, and the child's school. In addition, WCSD supplied demographic and scholastic information for the child listed on the sign-in sheet for each of the Parent University participant families. Data from sign-in sheets are summarized in the Results section of the report.

### **Parent Surveys (n=1,244)**

Parent University participants were invited to complete a paper survey in English (67%) or Spanish (34%) immediately following their participation in a class. Spanish responses were translated to English by SEI and all surveys were entered into Survey Monkey for compilation and analysis. Approximately 1,200 parents completed a survey between September 25<sup>th</sup> and May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013. Two thirds (66%) reported that it was their first time taking a Parent University class. Parents rated the overall usefulness and quality of the class and rated their knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness in the class content area both before and after taking the class. Findings are summarized throughout the report.

### **Class Observations (n= 7)**

SEI staff and WCSD interns attended Parent University classes in April and May of 2013 to observe program process and immediate outcomes of participants. Classes were selected to represent families with students of all ages and across diverse class topics. Observations occurred before interviews. Observations included:

- ❖ Math Paths
- ❖ Family Storyteller
- ❖ Computer Basics 2
- ❖ How to Talk to your Child about Bullying
- ❖ WCSD Speaks – Assistive Technology
- ❖ Transition to Kindergarten
- ❖ Stress Reduction for Families
- ❖ Strengthening Families (session 1)
- ❖ Making a Successful Transition to Middle School

(The UNR Admissions Process and Helping Kids Cope with Deployment had no attendees and were not observed).

### **Family Access Day Surveys (n=78)**

Family Access Day participants were invited to complete a paper survey in English (60%) or Spanish (40%) immediately following their participation in the event. Spanish

responses were translated to English by SEI and all surveys were entered into Survey Monkey for compilation and analysis. Seventy-eight (78) parents completed a survey. Two thirds (81%) reported that it was their first time attending a Parent University event. Parents rated the overall usefulness and quality of the event and rated their knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness of resources to assist them in supporting their children’s learning and achievement both before and after participating in the event.

**Appendix B: Program Improvement Suggestions from Year 2 Parent University Participants and Instructors\***

| <b>Program &amp; Course Planning</b>  |
|---|
| Have more/more frequent classes/at more locations & follow-up classes to continue parent learning in favorite subjects  |
| Make sure course description/title accurately reflect course content and provide detailed descriptions of the courses available so parents can make informed choices of which classes would be most applicable for them |
| Only provide specific class to schools that request it  |
| Schedule classes during the school day so PIFs and parents who drop off their children can attend   |
| Conduct needs assessment with participants registered for class prior to attending class so instructors can custom-tailor class to participants' needs  |
| Inform parents if children should or should not accompany parents to class ahead of time.   |
| Provide handouts in English and Spanish; provide handouts of PowerPoint slides  |
| Have a "parking lot" so instructors can cover course material during class time and answer off-topic questions after class  |
| <b>Increasing Participation</b>   |
| Send out monthly notice of upcoming classes   |
| Ask school administrators to encourage parents to attend  |
| Phone calls home to parents to encourage attendance   |
| More flyers/notices in public places  |
| Ask parents what SHOULD be taught at Parent University  |
| Word of mouth from parents who have attended  |
| Word of mouth from teachers/school about ALL classes available in District  |
| Schedule Parent University classes with other school/parent events  |
| Announce at parent/teacher conferences  |
| Advertise within other Parent University classes  |
| More mailings/notices home (once is not enough)   |
| Reminders from school   |
| Have incentives/food at all classes   |
| Message on campus portal  |
| Send catalog out earlier  |
| List locations of classes on "the calendar"   |

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### Facility Logistics

Improve communication of logistics with facilities hosting class

Make restrooms available

Have childcare close to classroom

Ensure projector equipment is functioning and instructors have password access

Ensure schools provide food/drink/refreshments

Put up signs to inform participants where class is held and help participants find class

\*Summarized from parent surveys, parent interviews and instructors surveys

### Appendix C: What Parents Liked Best about Parent University Classes

| What Parents Liked Best about Parent University Classes 2012-13*                |
|---|
| Learning from the "experts"   |
| Personality/Teaching style of instructor  |
| The new material/activities learned in class to take home and use with children |
| Translation/cultural conscientiousness  |
| How interactive the class was/learning with other parents                       |
| Material was easy to understand   |
| Free child care   |
| Snacks  |
| Proximity of classes to participant's house                                     |

\*Summarized from parent surveys open-response and parent interview responses

"It reinforced things we had thought about before but it was good to hear from the "experts""

"I really enjoy[ed] this class. The speaker was very articulate, easy to understand and very pleasant. He gave a lot of good information, I learn a lot from his class."

"Loved the tailor-made presentation for the Native community"

"I love these interactive classes; it allows me to be hands on with my child"

**Appendix D: Parent Involvement Facilitators and Parent University Staff’  
Outreach Activities 2012-2013**

Parent University staff reported that the most successful PIFs in 2012-13 were those that went “outside their comfort zone” in their outreach/recruitment activities. This included things like going out to parents’ cars while they were waiting to pick up their child from school and personally inviting them to a Parent University class.

In addition, Parent University Staff conducted outreach at school and community events and visited businesses in their communities that parents frequent.

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Parent University Staff attended the following community and school events/locations to represent Parent University in 2012-13:

Juneteenth

Coalition of Churches meeting

Day for Kids at Sparks Marina

Day care centers

Stewart’s Powwow

School open houses

Thrift stores

Partner with RTC to have display stands at the transfers stations

Lights Out event at the Boys and Girls Club

WCSD Kinder Fair

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## Appendix E: Sources Cited

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### Appendix F: Parent University 2012-13 Complete Course Listing

Parent University staff provided a comprehensive list of all courses (n=102) offered in 2012-13. In some cases, the class is a series (rather than a one-time class) and indicated below:

- ❖ 10 Ways to Save for College
- ❖ 123 Magic Parenting Class & More
- ❖ A Parent's Guide to Pre-K Standards
- ❖ Access to College
- ❖ Accountability Family Engagement Committee
- ❖ Addressing Racial/Ethnic Conflict in Your School
- ❖ Advance Topics in Lowering College Cost
- ❖ Advocacy
- ❖ Anger Management
- ❖ Autoestima
- ❖ Basic Parenting Class
- ❖ Basics of College Financial Aid
- ❖ Being Involved in a Parent Group and Your Child's School - Foundations for leadership
- ❖ Beyond Chicken Nuggets and French Fries
- ❖ Born Learning
- ❖ Bridging the High School Arts Experience to Become College and Career Ready
- ❖ Career Information Night
- ❖ College and Career Ready: What does this mean for my child?
- ❖ College is Possible
- ❖ Common Core State Standards
- ❖ Conflict Resolution
- ❖ Discovering a Gifted and Talented Child
- ❖ Discovery Learning
- ❖ Drug and Alcohol Prevention
- ❖ English Language Learners: Busting the Myths about Learning at Home
- ❖ Everyone Can Learn Through the Arts Grades 3-4
- ❖ Everyone Can Learn Through the Arts Grades Prek- 2
- ❖ Family Storyteller
- ❖ Finding the Best College
- ❖ First Teacher Reading/Writing
- ❖ Getting From Point A to Point B
- ❖ Getting Ready for Kindergarten with Virtual Pre-K
- ❖ Head Start Kindergarten Transition
- ❖ Healthy Choices, Healthy Kids
- ❖ Helping Kids Cope with a Parent's Deployment
- ❖ Helping Your Child with Literacy in Middle School
- ❖ High School Graduation Requirements
- ❖ How Am I Going to Pay for My Child's College Education?
- ❖ How is My Child Doing? Understanding Your Child's Achievement Data
- ❖ How to Intervene if you Suspect your Child is Using Alcohol or Drugs
- ❖ How to Make the Most Out of Your Parent Teacher Conference
- ❖ How to Talk to Your Child about Bullying
- ❖ Individual Educational Program (IEP)
- ❖ Infinite Campus Parent Portal
- ❖ Is your Child a Target of Bullying?
- ❖ Liderazgo
- ❖ Little Changes, Better Health
- ❖ Making a Successful Transition to Middle School
- ❖ Math & Parent Partnerships - Problem Solving - K-4
- ❖ Math Paths K-6
- ❖ Mediawise

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- ❖ More Than Gifted- The Twice Exceptional Child
- ❖ Motivación
- ❖ Navigating the Maze of College Admissions
- ❖ Navigating the Road to Teen Driving
- ❖ Parenting through Greatness
- ❖ Parenting to Promote Abstinence
- ❖ Perfectionism and the Gifted Child
- ❖ Positive Behavioral Interventions
- ❖ Potty Pros
- ❖ PreK/K Literacy Night
- ❖ Read & Succeed
- ❖ Ready to Launch? Preparing Yourself and Your Student for College
- ❖ Resource Fair
- ❖ Series: Addressing Challenging Behavior
- ❖ Series: WCSD Speaks
- ❖ Series: 123 Magic Parenting Class & More Magic
- ❖ Series: Achieving Your Goals
- ❖ Series: Basic Computer Class Part I & II
- ❖ Series: Black Student College Education series for Elementary School
- ❖ Series: Black Student College Education series for High School
- ❖ Series: Black Student College Education series for Middle School
- ❖ Series: Come Tour Our Campus!
- ❖ Series: Family Literacy Experience (FLITE): Inside the Earth
- ❖ Series: Family Literacy Experience (FLITE): Our Solar System
- ❖ Series: Promoting Literacy with Your Child - Going From Learning to Read to Reading to Learn
- ❖ Series: Signing at Home: Basics of Homework Help
- ❖ Series: Signing at Home: Friends & Family
- ❖ Series: Signing at Home: Mealtime
- ❖ Series: Signing at Home: Survival skills
- ❖ Series: Strengthening Families
- ❖ Series: The University of Nevada, Reno: Admissions Process
- ❖ Series: Tour to your local Washoe County Library
- ❖ Series: Two Way Immersion (TWI) Series: Correcting Errors
- ❖ Series: Two Way Immersion (TWI) Series: Help! My Child Doesn't Want to Speak in His/Her Second Language
- ❖ Series: Two Way Immersion (TWI) Series: How Long Does it Take to Become Bilingual?
- ❖ Series: Two Way Immersion (TWI) Series: TWI Program Structure
- ❖ Series: Washoe County Library system: Keeping you Connected
- ❖ Strengthening Families
- ❖ Stress Reduction for Families
- ❖ Teaching Your Child Anger Management and Problem Solving Skills
- ❖ The Parent's Toolbox
- ❖ The Right Question
- ❖ Transition to Kinder
- ❖ Transition to Middle School
- ❖ Transition to High School
- ❖ Understanding Academic Vocabulary and its Importance in High School
- ❖ Understanding ADHD
- ❖ Use Your Words
- ❖ Washoe County Library system: Keeping you Connected
- ❖ Why Is My GT Child So Scattered?
- ❖ You and Your Money



**Parent University is a project of the Washoe County School District.**

**To learn more, please contact:**

The Department of Family-School Partnerships

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775-325-2000

[http://www.washoecountyschools.net/parent\\_university/](http://www.washoecountyschools.net/parent_university/)

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