

Evaluation of Washoe County School District's **Parent University**



2017-18 Program Year Report
Department of Family-School
Partnerships

Acknowledgements

Parent University is generously sponsored by the Washoe K-12 Foundation and the Nell J. Redfield Foundation.



Parent University is made possible with the support and efforts of many partners:

Community Services Agency–Head Start
Cooperative Extension–University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)
GEAR UP–University of Nevada, Reno
KNPB
Nevada PEP
Nevada PBIS
Sierra Nevada Journeys
Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC)
University of Nevada, Reno - College of Education
Washoe County Library System
NV K.I.D.S. Grant
Office of Student Services
Volunteer Services
Department of Assessment
Department of Child & Family Services
Department of Counseling Services
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
Department of English Language Learners & World Languages
Department of Gifted and Talented
Department of Multi -Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
Signature Academies and CTE

INTRODUCTION

Since 2011, Parent University has provided learning sessions at schools and community-based locations to fulfill its mission:

To help families **build upon skills, knowledge, and support systems to advocate for their student's success.**



Evaluation

The purpose of the annual evaluation is to inform continuous improvement and to identify program outcomes.

Evaluation Questions

- Were participation goals met? What factors contributed to this outcome?
- How did participants rate quality and usefulness of sessions?
- Were gains made in participant knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness?
- What improvements should be considered for the 2018-19 school year?

Sources of Information

- Program Records
 - Sessions, Events, and Classes Held
- Family & Student Data
 - Unique Individuals
 - Student and Youth by School
- Participant Surveys
 - Ratings and Closed-Ended Responses
 - Open-Ended Responses / Comments

Parent University Evaluation Summary

2017-18 Program Year

Program Design

Each year Parent University leadership makes adjustments to programming toward continuous improvement. A few of the changes that took place in 2017-18 are highlighted below.

1

Parent University focused on partnerships for families with **younger children, especially those in kindergarten.** This investment early in the child's educational experience is likely to have **lasting returns.**

2

Parent University worked with teachers to deepen their knowledge, skills, and confidence in engaging families. When more teachers positively connect with families, **whole systems can improve, helping more children succeed in school.**

3

Parent University partnered with the Department of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** to provide high-quality programming.

Program Design

Parent University used three primary pathways in 2017-18 for families to build upon their skills, knowledge and support systems, and advocate for student success.

Learning Sessions:

Held at Schools & Community Locations



Family Access Day:

A One-Day Session Supporting Learning at Home for Families of Children Pre-K through 6th Grade



Chart the Course:

A One-Day Session Providing Pathways to College and Careers for Families of Middle and High School Students



Parent University also Provided Online Resources: **Family Resources, Directory, and Family Learning Library**

Parent University Evaluation Summary

2017-18 Program Year

Research-Informed Design

Parent University is a strategy for family engagement.

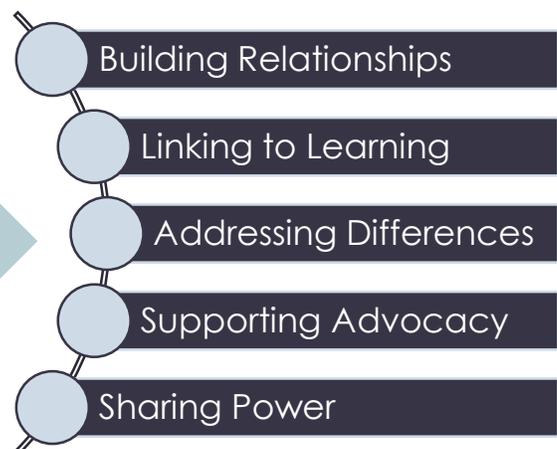
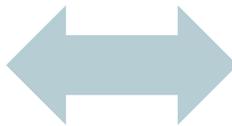
- ✓ **Family engagement matters.** In a review of 51 studies, scholars found that students with involved parents--regardless of income or background--were more likely to earn higher grades and have higher test scores, have better attendance, behave better at school, and were more likely graduate and go on to post-secondary school (Dervarics & O'Brien, 2011).
- ✓ **Family engagement is cost effective.** "Schools would have to spend \$1,000 more per pupil to reap the same gains in student achievement that an involved parent brings" (Westmorland, Rosenberg, Lopez, & Weiss, 2009).



Research-Informed Design

Parent University builds on research about "what works."

"What is important is that the engagement is **family led, authentic, and built** on a **two-way exchange of information, mutual trust, and respect between families and the schools** and community groups within which they are engaged."



1. http://www.familieslearning.org/pdf/NCFL_Family_Engagement_Brief_.pdf

2. http://www.ilcommunityschools.org/images/files/BeyondtheBakeS_rubric%20-%20Sarah%20Ogeto%20ISBE.pdf Helping children (and youth) understand the importance of education

Outreach and Engagement Strategies

Parent University used many strategies to reach families.

Outreach Methods

- Advertising and Promotion through School Channels
- Phone, Email, and Text Reminders
- Website that Includes Resources and a Calendar of Upcoming Events

Clearing the Path for Participation

Parent University helps to remove many of the barriers that keep families from attending school and community events.

Associated Services and Supports

- Information, Registration, and Sessions offered in both English and Spanish
- On-site Child Care Available
- Reminders and Follow Ups
- Sessions Held at Familiar Places: School and Community Locations
- Transportation to Events Held at the University of Nevada Reno
- Food and Refreshments Provided for Longer Sessions

Results:

Parent University Reach

Parent University Leadership sets participation goals annually. Goals are set based on resources available and the desire to reach as many students as possible. Parent University exceeded these goals in 2017-18.

Program Participation

Measure	Count	Percent of Goal
Total Attendance	5,263	135%
Unduplicated Attendance	4,182	243%

3,419 students had at least one family member attend one or more sessions



3,059 siblings in WCSD schools



7,206 students had a parent or family member that participated in Parent University in 2017-18.

Program Reach

"Parents" is a term in this report used to describe a number of different family members that are engaging to support family learning. In 2017-18, this included:

- 3,665 mothers
- 1,058 fathers
- 123 grandparents
- 72 foster families and guardians
- ...and many others

Parent University Evaluation Summary

2017-18 Program Year

Program Reach

Families that may be hard to reach were intentionally contacted and successfully engaged. Among students whose parents participated:

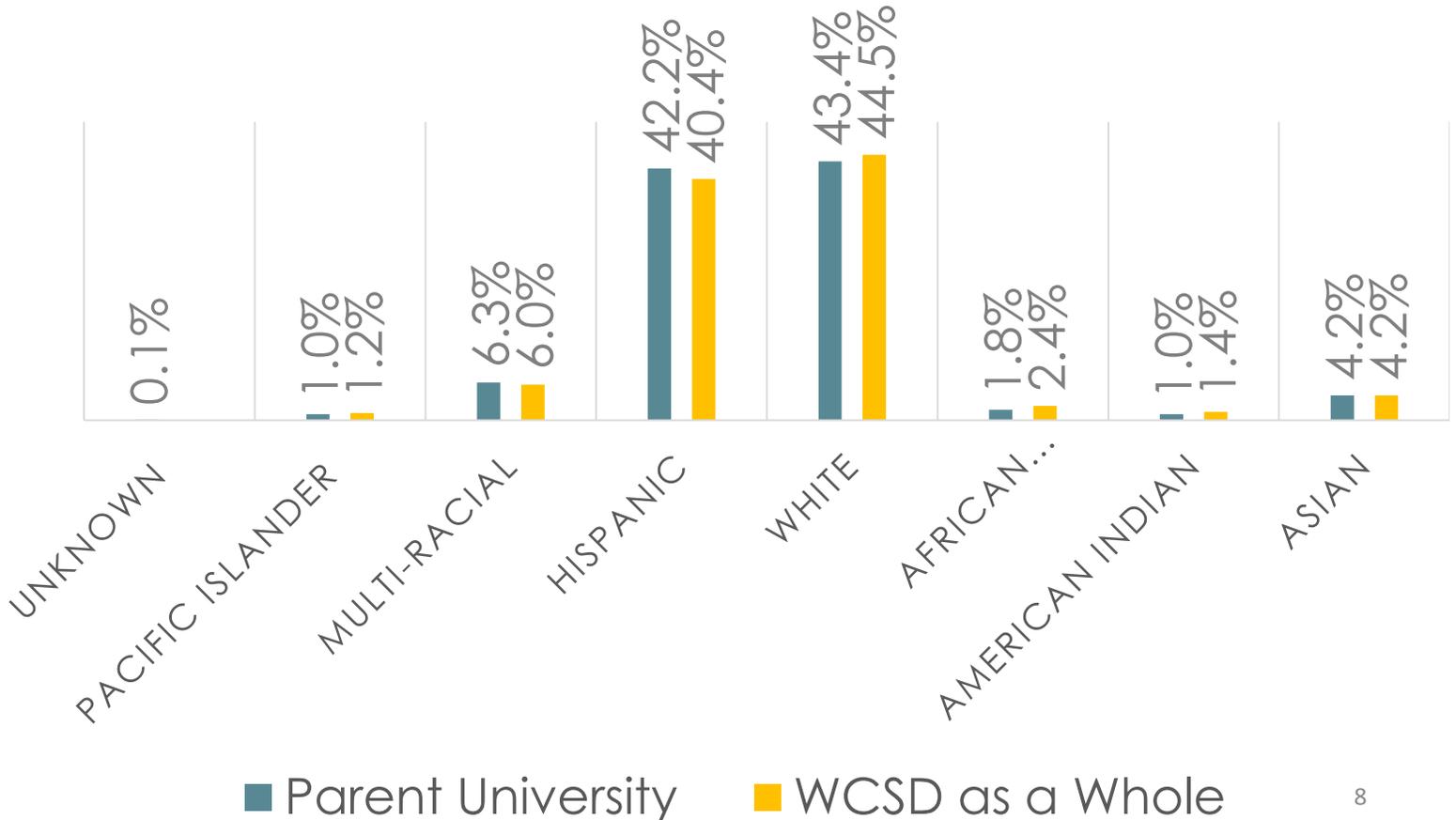


- 49% qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)
- 23% are working on English Language Development (ELD)
- 11% have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- 6% were considered “moderate” or “high risk” using the district’s early warning system*

Washoe County has an Early Warning Index that is used to help identify and help students that may not be on track. The Early Warning Index is based on research on factors associated with graduation [(Allensworth & Easton, 2005), (Bridgeland, Fox, & Balfanz, On Track for Success: The Use of Early Warning Indicator and Intervention Systems to Build a Grad Nation.)].

Program Reach

Parent University was representative of the district’s racial and ethnic diversity.



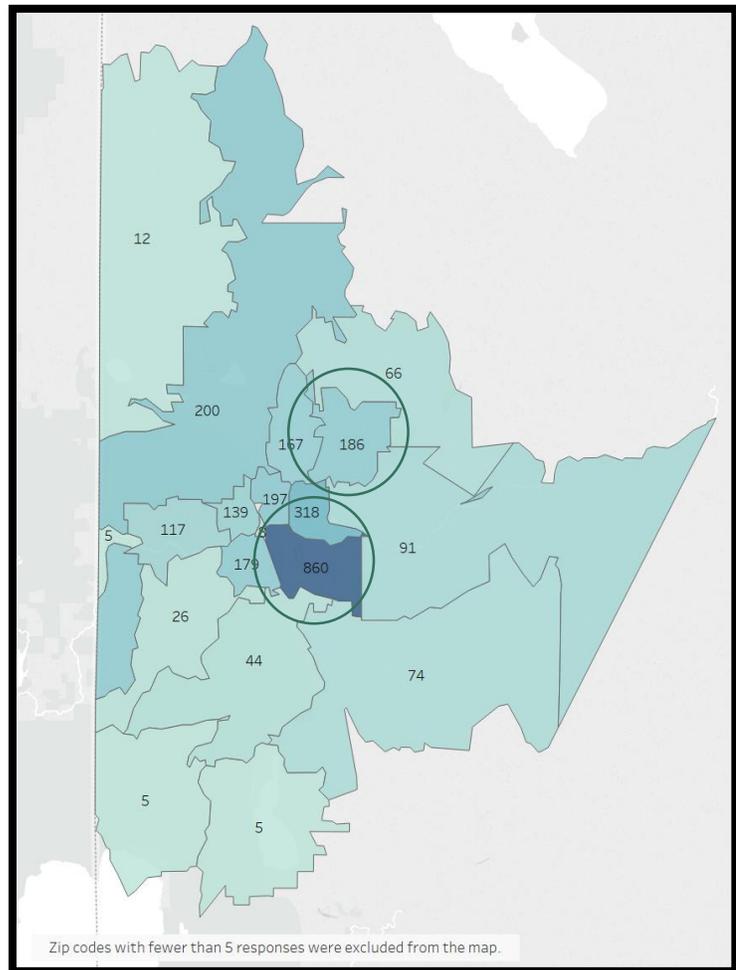


Results:

Learning Sessions at Schools and Community Locations

Where Families Live

The majority of families attending learning sessions at schools live in the zip code 89502, followed by 89431.*



*Distribution based on surveys collected at learning sessions.

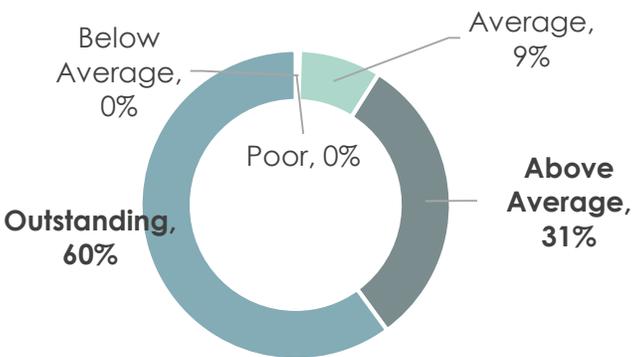
Parent University Evaluation Summary

2017-18 Program Year

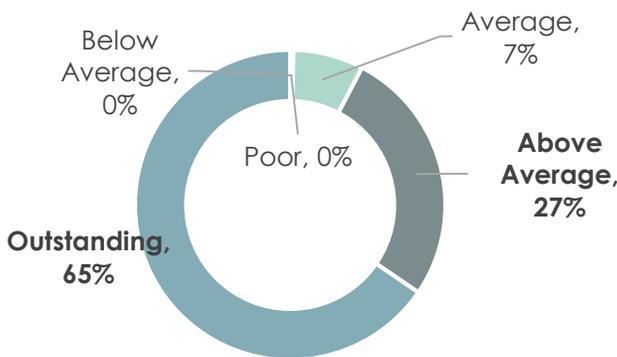
Learning Session Use and Quality

91% reported usefulness as above average or outstanding
 94% reported quality as above average or outstanding

Session Usefulness (n=2,925)



Session Quality (n=2,907)

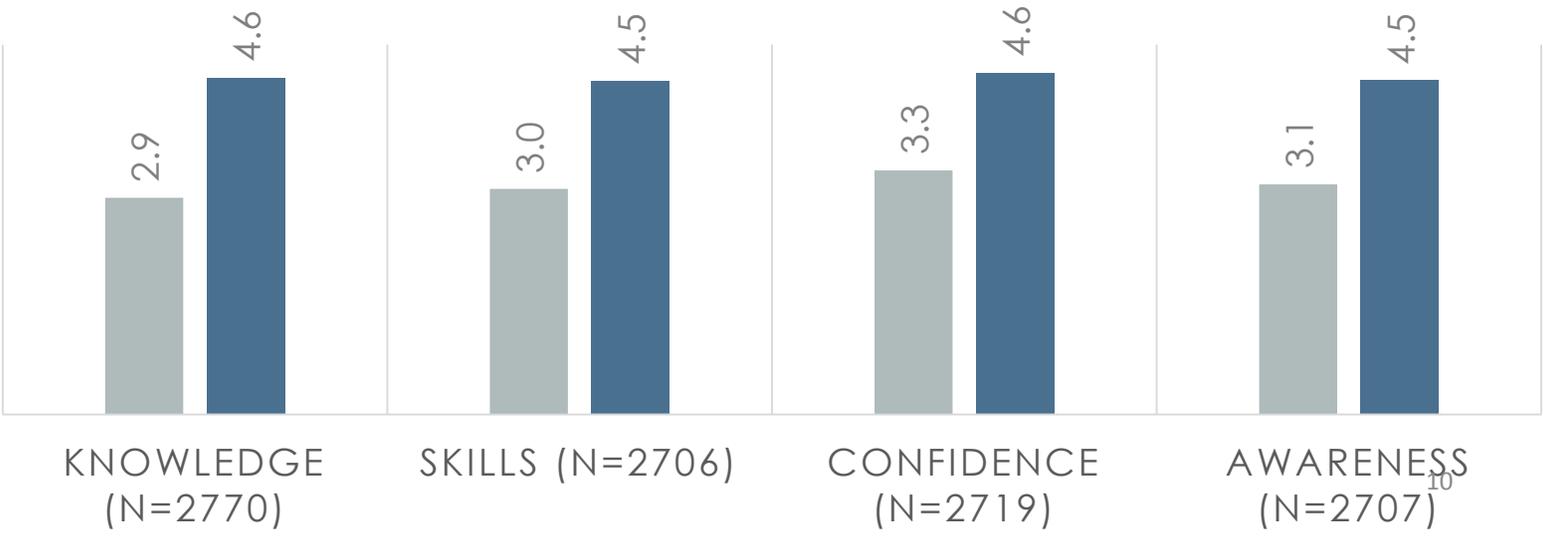


Learning Outcomes

Participants reported significant gains in knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness.

AVERAGE PARTICIPANT RATINGS BEFORE AND AFTER

■ Before Class ■ After Class



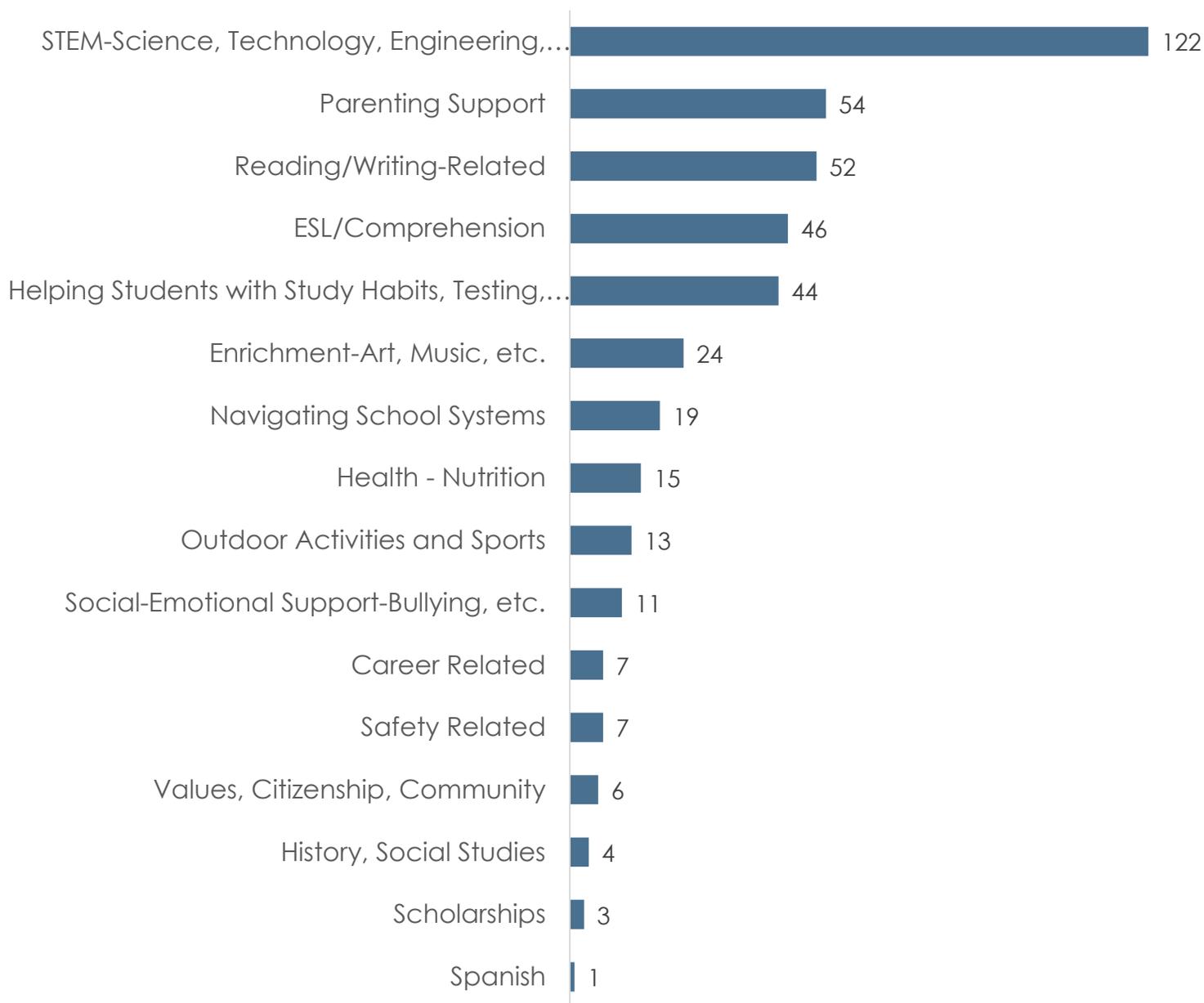
Parent University Evaluation Summary

2017-18 Program Year

Additional Topics

Participants identified additional content they would like to see through Parent University. The majority suggested more classes in STEM subjects.

Classes Participants Would Like to See Offered Through Parent University (n=428)



Parent University Evaluation Summary

2017-18 Program Year

Survey Comments

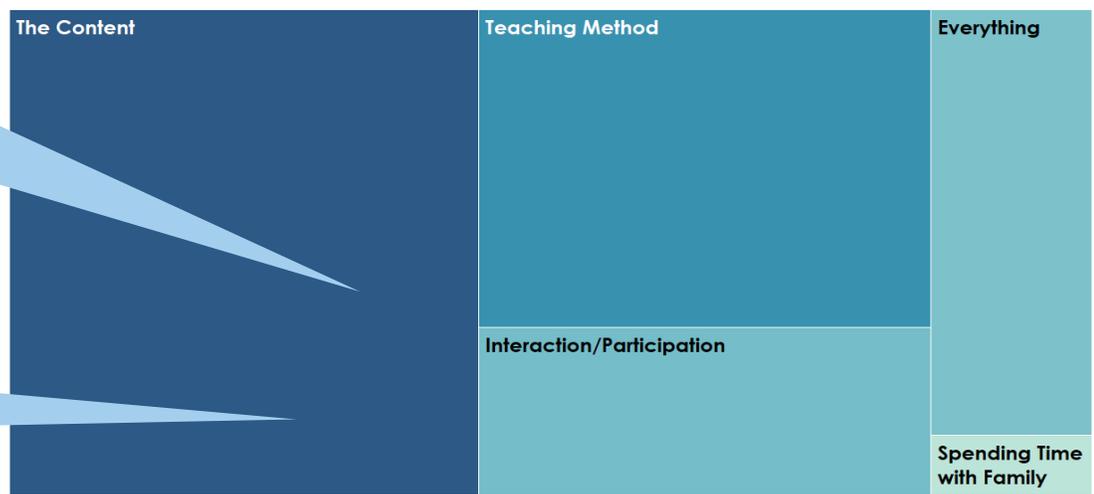
Participants noted specific aspects of classes that worked well.

“La interaccion con las actividades de mi hijo”
(The interaction with my son's activities.)

“[I] appreciate d the one on one time given to answer all of our questions.”

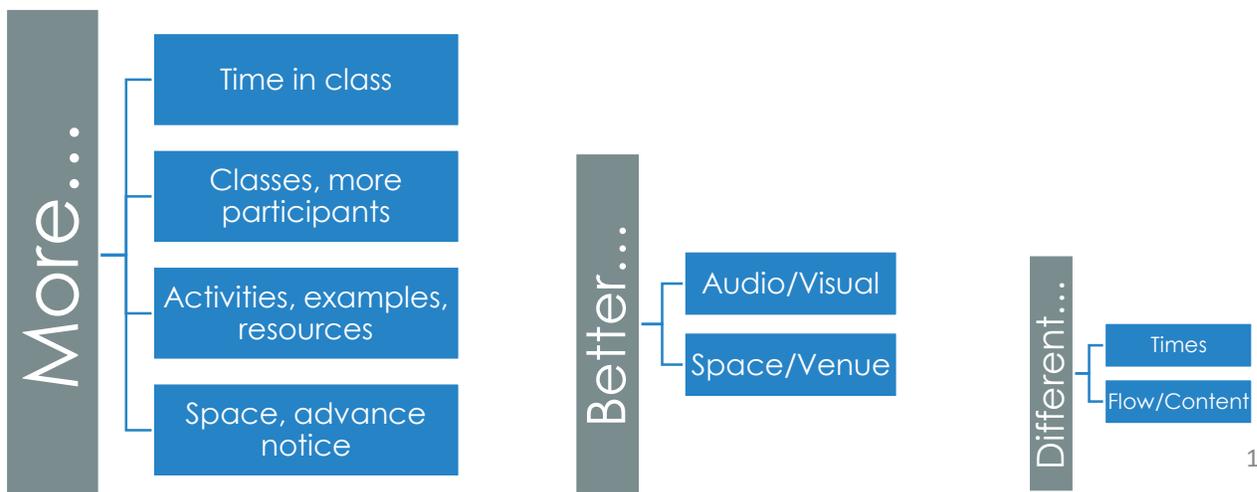
“Information- everyone was very knowledgeable and helpful.”

Things Participants Liked the Best about Class (n=2,391)



Survey Comments

Several participants offered suggestions for improvement. The majority of responses wanted “more” of the services being provided.





“Thank you! I feel like I have things I can act on right away and a place to start learning more!”

-Participant Survey

“Thank you, teachers, for spending the evening helping this frustrated parent. *Discover your True Colors* class was extremely enlightening and eye opening!”

-Participant Survey

“Muchas gracias por ayudarnos a ayudar y apoyar a nuestros hijos.”

(Thank you very much for helping us to help and support our children)

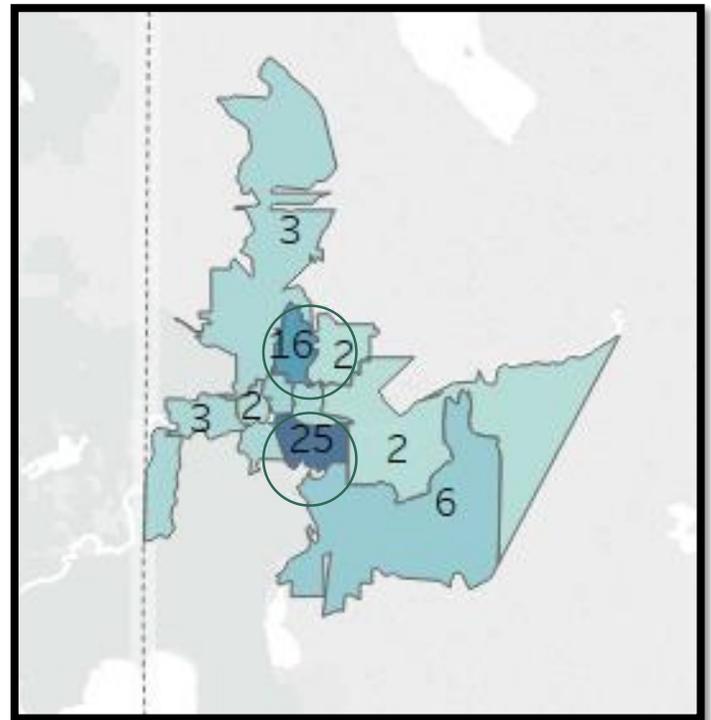
-Participant Survey

Results: Family Access Day



Where Families Live

The majority of families attending Family Access Days at schools live in the zip code 89502, followed by 89433.*



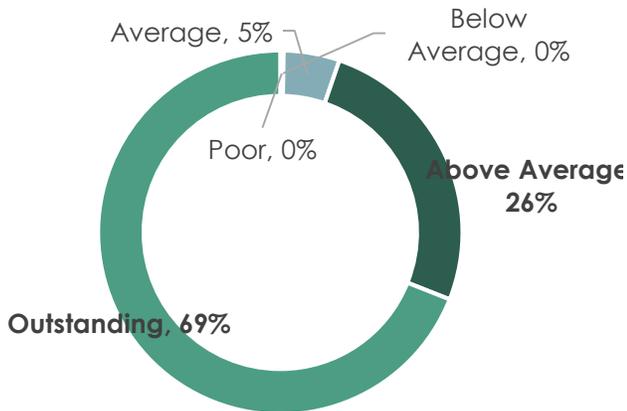
*Distribution based on surveys collected at learning sessions.

DIVING DEEPER INTO EVALUATION DATA: FAMILY ACCESS DAY

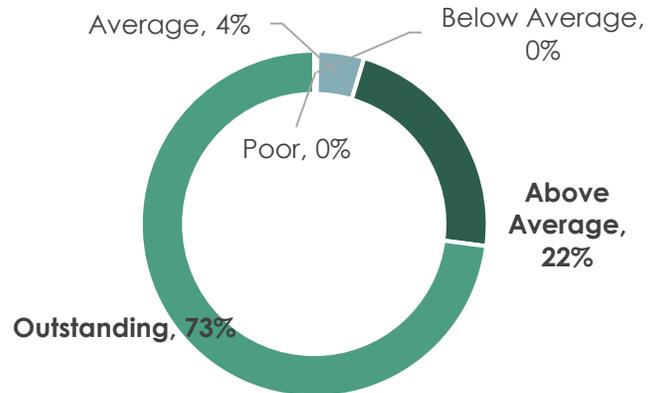
Family Access Day Use and Quality

95% reported usefulness as above average or outstanding
96% reported quality as above average or outstanding

FAD Usefulness



FAD Quality



Program Outcomes

Family Access Day participants reported significant gains in knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness.

Average Participant Ratings BEFORE and AFTER



DIVING DEEPER INTO EVALUATION DATA: FAMILY ACCESS DAY

Survey Comments

Family Access Day: What Families Liked Most

What Families Liked Most

Childcare, food, and other supports

Content and information

Organization and professionalism

Resources and speakers

“Las facilidades de transportacion y el cuidado de niños, [-- hay personal bilingue” (Transportation facilities and childcare [and] there are bilingual staff)

“The ideas from other parents and interactions in class”

“I really like the energy levels of some of the presenters. They are obviously putting the effort in, to keep it fun and educational.”

“Great content at the sessions I attended.”

Survey Comments

Family Access Day: Suggestions for Improvement

What Families Suggest to Improve

Timing / Duration

Logistics (Registration, Food, etc.)

“Mas horas” (More hours)

“Start @ 10AM-3PM? (Kids like to sleep in a bit)”

“The campus was big so hard to find the place.”

“More vegan/vegetarian options w/ lunch”

DIVING DEEPER INTO EVALUATION DATA: FAMILY ACCESS DAY



“Muchas gracias por tener paciencia con migo. Sus clases fueron fabulosas y sobre todo las interpretes, trabajar muy bien. Gracias a sus eventos....”

(Thank you very much for having patience with me. His classes were fabulous and above all the interpreters, work very well. Thanks to your events...)

-Participant Survey

“IT WAS FREE!! :) It was well directed and organized. Easy to navigate. Helpful people placed in the correct places and information/ survey were handed out at appropriate times. Resources/ information were made available [and] built in flexibility of the schedule.”

-Participant Survey

“Gracias por su organización por la planificación y el desarrollo de la actividad. Ha estado excelente. Felicidades por su esfuerzo.”

(Thank you for your organization for the planning and development of the activity. It has been excellent. Congratulations for your effort.)

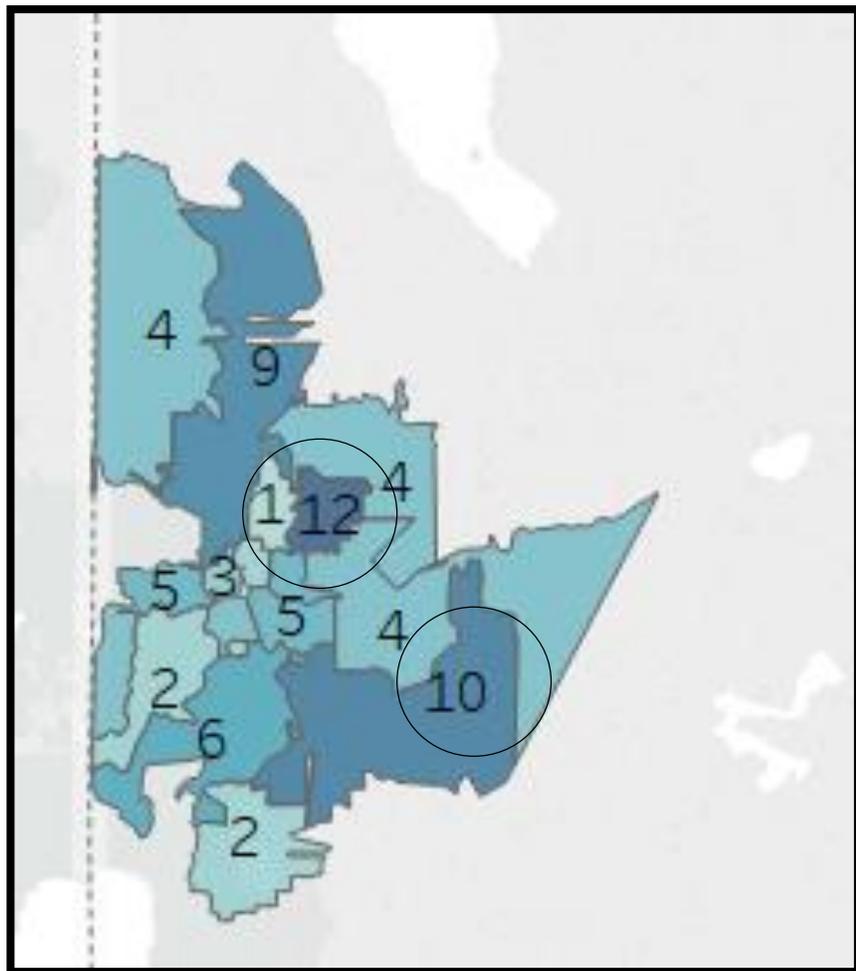
-Participant Survey

Results: Chart the Course



Where Families Live

Chart the Course participants were from across the district. The most participants live in 89436 and 89521.*



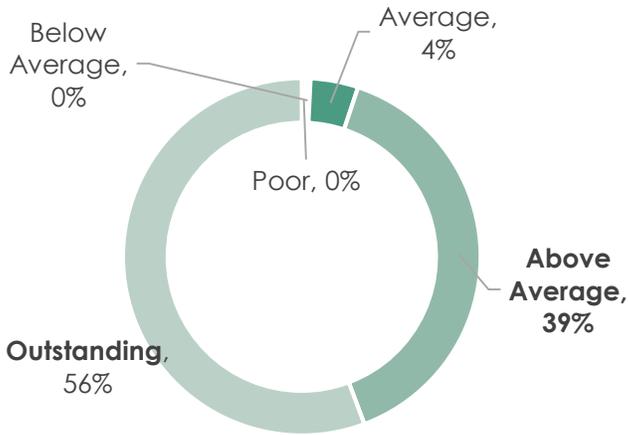
*Distribution based on surveys collected at learning sessions.

DIVING DEEPER INTO EVALUATION DATA: CHART THE COURSE

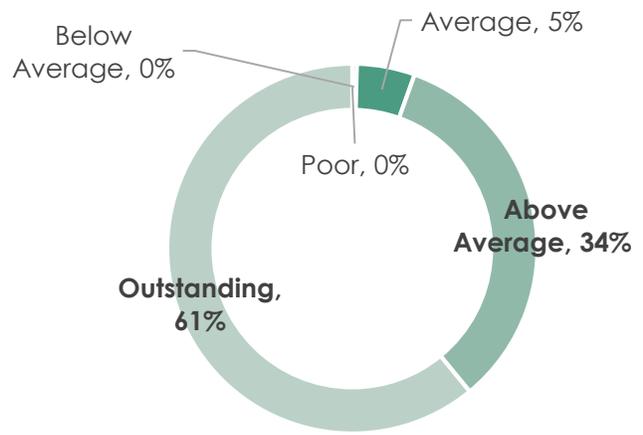
Program Outcomes

95% reported usefulness as above average or outstanding
95% reported quality as above average or outstanding

Usefulness: Chart the Course



Quality: Chart the Course

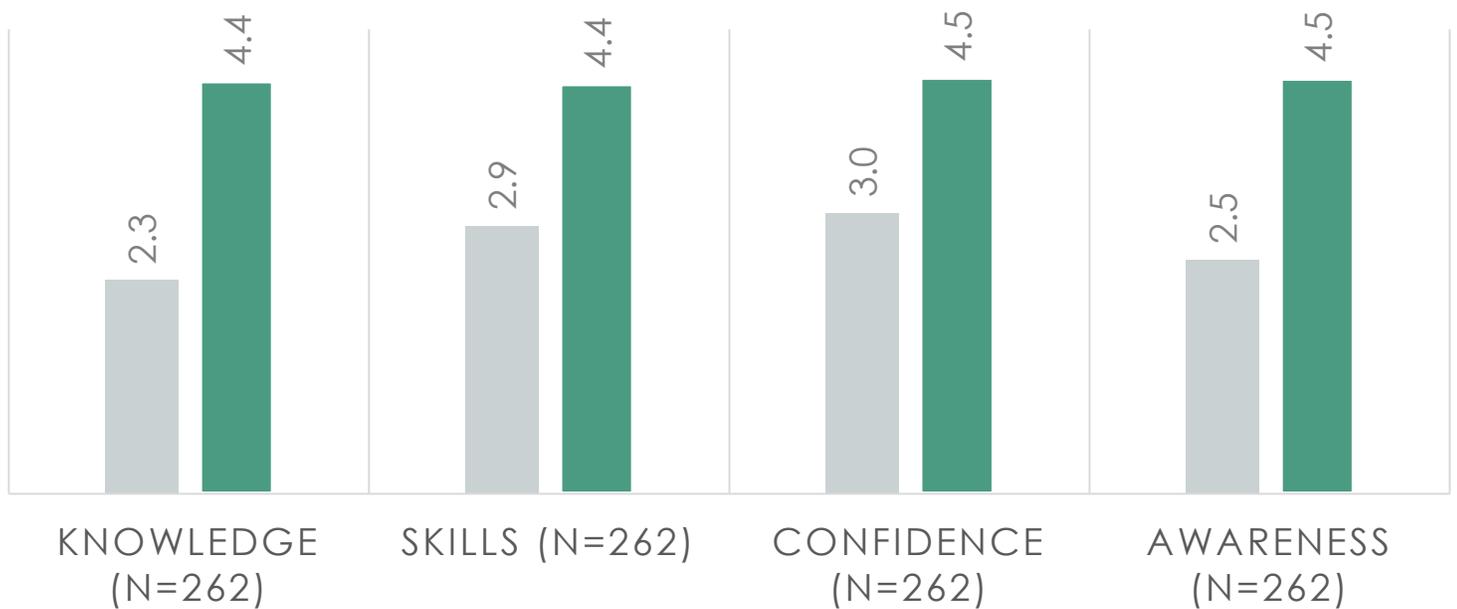


Program Summary

Chart the Course participants reported significant gains in knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness.

AVERAGE PARTICIPANT RATINGS BEFORE AND AFTER

■ Before ■ After



Survey
Comments

Chart the Course: *What Families Liked Most*

What Families Liked Most

Organization / Staffing

"It was wonderfully organized and staffed. We are walking away with the information we were hoping for."

Content

"I loved everything. The information that was provided, the professionalism of everyone, so much to do so little time."

Speakers

"It was all very informative. Makes you think about how different learning and higher education looks now."

New Insights

"Awesome information, worth every minute of a Saturday! I will be spreading the word to coworkers and public. So appreciative of speakers time!"

Usefulness of Information

"Thanks for such information! I want to put it into practice now with my 1st year son. and continue to support my 8th grade son."

Survey
Comments

Chart the Course: Suggestions to Improve

What Families Suggested to Improve

Process for Interpretation

"I believe that incorporating the Spanish speaking (translators) are important. However, incorporating after the English translation became tedious and ineffective. More importantly, it was extremely time consuming."

Scheduling / Different Use of Time

"I think for being the first time is great, but there is different courses and not enough time to attend all."

Space/More Room

"One room was not big enough for the amount of families that attended."



“We have a much better understanding of the resources pertaining to learning about options available for the various signature academies, CTE course, etc. in high school. Also, it's so great to hear/see what is being invested to secure futures for our communities children!”

-Participant Survey

“Thank you so much for putting this event together and coordinating the resources. I wish I would know more when I was attending high school & colleges. Thank you very much!”

- Participant Survey

“Muchas gracias por la ayuda y toda la información muy bien trabajo.”

(Thank you very much for the help and all the information very well work.)

- Participant Survey

Conclusions

Findings

- All delivery methods for Parent University resulted in statistically significant self-reported gains in knowledge, skills, awareness, and confidence. Gains were slightly higher among participants that participated in the full day sessions.
- Families continue to report high quality and usefulness of sessions offered. Further, nearly all would recommend the class, most plan to attend another class, and a large proportion of survey respondents had ideas for additional content they would find useful.

Recommendations

- Continue to seek funding to serve more families.
- Continue efforts to increase school and teacher interest and stewardship for family engagement.
- Continue to provide learning sessions including longer sessions that deepen the knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness of families.
- Identify community partners and pathways to provide the resources and information that families are seeking.
- Continue targeted outreach to families with factors associated with lower graduation rates.

Contact Information

Department of Family-School Partnerships

5450 Riggins Court, Suite #3

Reno, NV 89502

Phone: 775.789.4685

Fax: 775.689.2625

<https://www.washoeschools.net/parentu>

