

## Background of the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project in WCSD

The 2013-2014 school year marked the fifth year the Washoe County School District (WCSD) participated in the Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project (PTHVP). The project first began in WCSD in September of 2009 at three Title I secondary schools and has expanded since that time to include 19 schools over the years. Before 2013-2014, the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project was open to any staff at Title I schools interested in participating. In 2013-2014, the process for participation was altered to promote higher staff buy-in and maximize impact of the project on school, student, and parent outcomes. This decision was based on recommendations by the national program model (<http://www.pthvp.org>) to fund schools at a level to support a significant number of home visits in a school year, rather than conducting a few visits across a larger number of schools.

For the first time this year, Title I schools were required to submit a two-page application to a committee explaining why they wanted to participate in the program in order to receive the Title I funds. Applications to participate were submitted to a committee of 10 reviewers who scored each application. In order to apply, a majority of staff at the school had to vote to approve the project at their site, schools had to complete at least 75 visits during the year, and staff had to commit to receiving training about the program to ensure fidelity to the PTHVP model. A total of 19 Title I schools applied for the funding, and twelve schools were selected for the 2013-2014 school year. Ten elementary, one middle and one high school were selected for funding. Priority was awarded to schools in WCSD's Acceleration Zone, those schools with multiple years of low student achievement and growth. Table 1 lists the twelve schools who participated in 2013-2014.

Teachers and other staff willing to participate in home visits from each school were trained in the PTHVP model, collaborating with Parent Involvement Facilitators (PIFs) to schedule home visits. Teachers generally work in teams of two when visiting families, although a third person joined in the visits to serve as a translator when necessary. The underlying purpose of the PTHVP model is to encourage positive relationships between families and schools, seeking to actively engage families as partners in the education of their children. Thus,

the goal of the home visits is not to conduct an assessment or to address problematic behaviors and deficits, rather it is to encourage positive relationships between families and schools.

## **Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project Theoretical Model**

The Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project was developed in 1998 by Sacramento City Unified School District in collaboration with their community organizing group and teacher's union, since becoming a nationally recognized model for home visits. The model is based on five tenets that shape the approach to home visits. Elements of the program include two visits throughout the year: the first visit is focused on relationship building between parents and school staff visitors; the second visit is centered on capacity building and information sharing. School visitors are encouraged to provide parents with an informational packet, or toolkit, during the first visit to ensure parents have relevant information in case a second visit does not occur.

### **PTHVP Core Tenets**

1. Families and teachers are equally important co-educators given that the family is the expert on the individual child while the teacher is the expert on the curriculum that must be mastered for success.
2. Before important information about academic status can be effectively shared, positive communication must be established and barriers addressed.
3. All students and families should be visited because targeting challenging students will only perpetuate the cycles of mistrust.
4. All families have the ability to assist their child in their academic success and that effective family involvement can happen in every home—especially in light of the educational research about rethinking exactly what is effective family involvement.
5. This project should be voluntary for all involved and that teachers should be compensated for their time.

[www.pthvp.org/history.html](http://www.pthvp.org/history.html)

## Program Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of the Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project at WCSD is *to build positive relationships with families and strengthen their capacity to effectively engage in their child's education at home and within the school environment.*

### **The primary objectives are to:**

- Cultivate a welcoming and trusting relationship between families of school-aged children and the WCSD.
- Provide a foundation for engaging parents in their child's education throughout their child's academic career by (a) raising awareness among parents and guardians regarding school policies that relate to their child's academic success and, (b) providing families with knowledge, tools, and strategies that will help them engage in their child's education at home.
- Improve the academic achievement of students and thereby improve their chances for college and career success.

### **Additional goals of the program include:**

- Provide a foundation for engaging parents in their child's education throughout their child's academic career.
- Improve the academic achievement of students receiving home visits and thereby improve their chances for college and career success.
- Adopt a train-the-trainer approach to ensure sustainability and extension of the program to other schools.

## Data Sources for SY 2013-2014 Evaluation

The evaluation employed an emergent design to allow for flexibility to accommodate unforeseen growth and change related to PTHVP. Data sources are described below:

***Participation Logs:*** The collection and review of the participation logs submitted by school staff to Title I for stipends provide contextual information about the program, including the number of students contacted, number of participating staff, and the number of times students

were contacted. All participation logs contain the participating staff's names, the date of the visit, and the students' id number to enable examinations of demographics and student academic and behavioral outcomes.

***Survey of Participating Staff:*** WCSD's Department of Accountability, Research, & Evaluation evaluated the experiences of the staff that participated in the PTHVP during the fall 2013 semester through an online survey emailed to staff in January 2014. Initially, respondents were asked about their role in the PTHVP for the visits that occurred during fall 2013, the school at which they are located, and the length of time they participated in the program. Additionally, staff was asked about the number of visits and the number of people who accompanied them on the visits as well as about their submission of a participation log to the Department of Family-School Partnerships. The survey participants were then asked about the criteria used for determining which students received home visits, their perception of support for their involvement with the PTHVP, and their beliefs about the impact the home visits have on their students. Finally, the survey had five open-ended questions for participants to write about their individual experiences and their opinions about the program.

***Strengths, Barriers, and Opportunities for Improvement Themes Identified from 2013-2014 End-of-Year Staff Meeting:*** At the end of the 2013-2014 school year, school staff who participated in the PTHVP were invited to attend an end-of-year meeting to share out their experiences with the program and explore solutions to any barriers they faced during implementation. The meeting facilitator divided schools into three smaller groups and asked them to identify the major strengths of the program, challenges of the program, and opportunities to improve the program in the future. The major themes from these conversations are described in the evaluation findings and provide a summary of staff's reactions to the program and ideas for improving it for the next school year.

***Student Achievement and Demographic Data:*** The relationship between visits and students' achievement and growth at both a student- and school-level were explored through various analyses. When staff submit participation logs to Title I, they are required to list the student's id number to help determine the characteristics of students selected for home visits, and facilitate analyses to determine whether the program has an impact on their achievement or growth. Student growth percentiles and the proportion of students' meeting grade-level proficiency standards on the CRT were used for these analyses. Achievement and growth of

students selected for home visits were compared against achievement and growth of students at other Title I sites who did not participate in the PTHVP. In addition to student-level data, the overall school proficiency rates and median growth percentiles of participating schools were compared to their previous years of proficiency and growth to determine if there were any improvements made in school-wide achievement.

***Parent Climate Survey Data.*** Each year since 2001, the WCSD has administered a parent climate survey to all parents in the district to gather their feedback about a variety of topics, including their perceptions about the quality of education at their child’s school, how safe and caring their child’s school environment is, whether parents feel like the communication between schools and parents is effective, and the extent to which parents feel that they are engaged as partners with the school in their child’s education. School-level results from the 2014 Parent Climate Survey data were used to determine whether parents at PTHVP schools rated the family engagement of their child’s school higher than other district schools without the PTHVP.

## Evaluation Findings

### ***Participation Logs***

Table 1 below reports the number of home visits completed by staff at the participating schools during the fall and spring semesters of 2013-2014. A total of 1,251 home visits were completed among the 12 participating schools during the school year. Of students visited, 53.3% received just one visit either in the fall or the spring. Another 46.7% received two or more visits, typically one in the fall and one in the spring. A total of 218 staff completed at least one home visit during the 2013-2014 school year.

**Table 1.**  
Number of home visits completed during SY 2013-2014.

School Name	Fall	Spring	Total
Anderson E.S.	52	72	124
Cannan E.S.	63	73	136
Corbett E.S.	6	53	59
Duncan E.S.	48	97	145
Kate Smith E.S.	77	65	142
Lemelson E.S.	34	111	145
Loder E.S.	49	34	83
Natchez E.S.	17	25	42
Sun Valley E.S.	77	76	153
Vaughn M.S.	40	44	84
Warner E.S.	34	38	72
Washoe Innovations H.S.	14	52	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>1,251</b>

Table 2 below reports the percentage of students who received a home visit in 2013-2014 (unduplicated in the event that students had more than one visit) at each grade level. Although it is unsurprising that there were more visits with students in elementary school given that only one middle and one high school participated in the program this year, the data do indicate that the majority of students visited were in grades K – 3 rather than in the older grades (e.g. 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>).

**Table 2.**  
Percentage of Students (unduplicated) who received a visit at each grade level in 2013-2014

Grade Level	Number of Students Visited	% of Students Visited
PK	4	0.5%
K	107	12.3%
1	131	15.1%
2	152	17.5%
3	113	13.0%
4	96	11.1%
5	77	8.9%

6	72	8.3%
7	21	2.4%
8	33	3.8%
9	1	0.1%
10	5	0.6%
11	18	2.1%
12	37	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>100%</b>

Finally, Table 3 below reports the demographics of (unduplicated) students who received home visits in 2013-2014. On the whole, the demographics of students who received a home visit paralleled the demographics of other Title I students except in two categories: 1) Students who were considered Limited English Proficient (51.1% versus 37.4% across other Title I schools) and 2) Hispanic students (72.5% versus 62.3% at other Title I schools). Please note that there is a higher proportion of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students than might be expected based on the proportion of that population in other Title I schools. However, this is likely because of Natchez Elementary School’s participation in the program, which is almost entirely comprised of students who are AI/AN.

**Table 3.**

Demographics of students (unduplicated) who received a home visit in 2013-2014 versus students at all Title and all District Schools.

	Home Visit	All Title I Schools	All District Students
<b>Special Populations</b>			
Free/Reduced Lunch	87.4%	84.3%	47.7%
Limited English Proficiency	51.1%	37.4%	15.9%
Special Education	15.7%	15.8%	13.4%
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	50.5%	47.8%	48.1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Asian	2.3%	2.8%	4.4%
Black/African American	2.9%	3.0%	2.4%
Caucasian	11.6%	23.7%	46.4%
Hispanic	72.5%	62.3%	38.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	4.8%	2.0%	1.6%
Multiracial	4.3%	4.6%	5.4%
Pacific Islander	1.5%	1.5%	1.0%

## Staff Survey Findings

### *Participation*

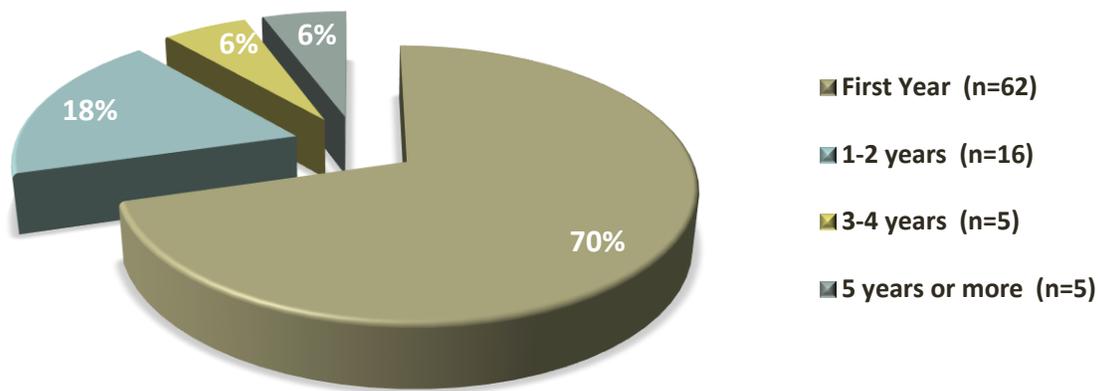
A total of 85 staff completed the survey administered in January 2014 about their fall 2013 PTHVP experiences. Table 4 describes the proportion of staff who responded to the survey at each school site. Over half of those participating in the visits (56%) completed between 1 to 5 visits followed by 22% who completed 6 to 10 visits. The number of visits and percentage of staff participating is detailed at the bottom of Table 4 below.

**Table 4.**  
School locations for home visits and number / percent of visits completed

School Name	# of Staff	% of Staff
Anderson Elementary	15	18%
Cannan Elementary	13	15%
Corbett Elementary	4	5%
Duncan STEM	9	11%
Kate Smith Elementary	7	8%
Loder Elementary	7	8%
Natchez Elementary	3	4%
Lemelson Elementary	2	2%
Sun Valley Elementary	10	12%
Vaughn Middle	6	7%
Warner Elementary	5	6%
Washoe Innovations	3	4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>85*</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>* 4 staff members did not identify a school.</i>		
Number and percent of home visits completed by staff members		
	Number	%
1 - 5	50	56%
6 - 10	20	22%
11 - 15	7	8%
16 - 20	7	8%
21 - 25	2	2%
36 - 40	1	1%
41 or more	2	2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority (84%) of those who participated in home visits during fall 2013 identified themselves as teachers. The remaining 16% included counselors (8%) and other school professionals such as Site coordinators, Speech Therapists, Parent Involvement Facilitators, and Graduation Specialists. When asked how many years they have been conducting home visits through the PTHVP, 70.5% said this was their first year and 18% said they have been participating 1-2 years (see Figure 1). The majority (83, 91%) stated they usually brought one other person along on the home visits and 8% brought two other people.

**Figure 1. Years Participating in Home Visits for the PTHVP**



***Student Selection***

Participating staff were asked to identify the data used to select students for visits. Survey participants could select multiple options that included students selected due to their academic performance or their behavior or attendance problems. Other available options for selection were: students that were new to the school, students who had siblings at the same school, students or families staff wanted to know better, and students selected randomly. See Table 5 for a breakdown of the selection criteria used to determine which students received visits for fall, 2013.

**Table 5.**

Responses to the question of, “How did your school select which students' families would be visited through the PTHVP this year?”

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Selected students based on their academic performance.	20	22.5%
Selected students because they had behavior or attendance problems.	21	23.6%
Selected students who had siblings at our school.	20	22.5%
Selected students who were new to the school.	13	14.6%
Selected students we wanted to get to know better.	<b>50</b>	<b>56.2%</b>
Selected students whose families we wanted to get to know better.	<b>49</b>	<b>55.1%</b>
Selected students randomly.	24	27.0%
Other	17	19.1%

*Note: Multiple selection was allowed, total number will be greater than the actual number of teachers who participated in the survey and the total percent of responses will be greater than 100%*

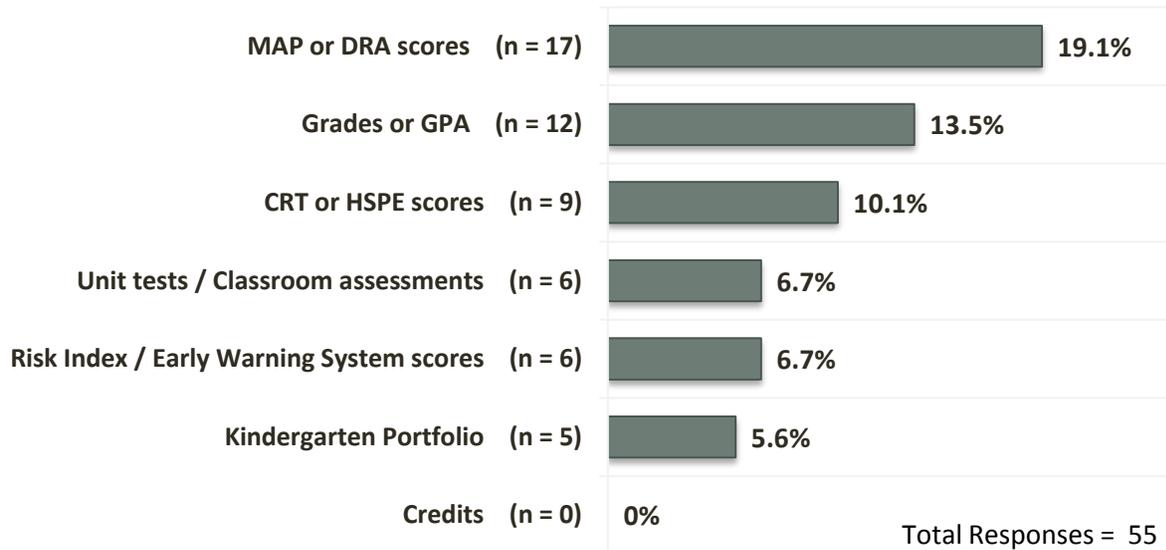
Survey participants could also select an ‘other’ option and add a comment if they felt there was different selection criteria utilized by their school. 19% (17) of the staff selected the ‘other’ option. A variety of comments were expressed. Most (7.9%) indicated that the goal was to visit all of the students. One participant stated, “Our goal was to visit each and every family that has a child attending our school,” and another explained, “...once I started the visits and saw the positive results, I attempted to visit every student’s home!”. Other comments indicated students were selected based on which families were interested in receiving a visit or students who were not visited last year were selected for this year. Some stated students were selected because there were specific concerns or the students were being mentored by the staff participating in the PTHVP. Finally, several (4.5%) indicated a combination of the criteria factors listed in Table 5 to decide which students received visits for fall 2013.

***Academic Criteria***

Survey participants who indicated student selection was based on academic performance indicators were then asked to identify the achievement criteria used (see Figure 2). The majority (19%) of those who responded to this section indicated that MAP or DRA scores were the criteria they utilized followed by Grades or the student’s GPA (13.5%). Other options included

CRT / HSPE scores (10%), unit tests / classroom assessments (6.7%), the Risk Index / Early Warning System (6.7%), a student’s Kindergarten Portfolio (5.6%), and the number of credits a student had attained (0%).

**Figure 2. Academic Performance Data used to Identify Students for the fall 2013 PTHVP**



Additionally, those respondents who indicated they used academic performance indicators in their selection criteria were asked what type of students they primarily selected for visits. The majority of the participants who responded to this question (65.4%, n=17) stated they selected students from a range of achievement levels, 19.2% (n=5) said they selected mid-range students, and 15.4% (n=4) indicated they selected lower achieving students

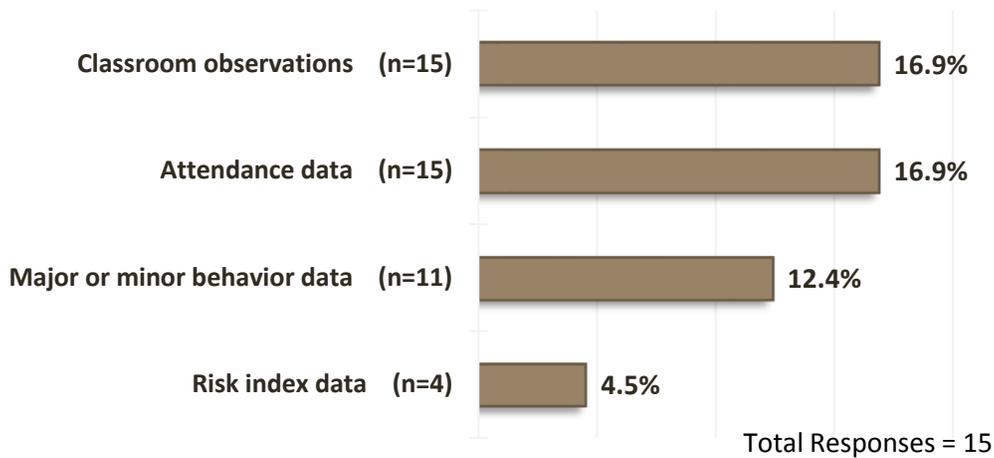
65% of staff that used academic indicators selected students from a range of achievement levels.

***Behavioral Criteria***

Survey participants who indicated student selection was based on behavior or attendance problems were asked to identify the criteria used (see Figure 3). The majority of those who responded to this section indicated that Classroom Observations (16.9%) or Attendance Data

(16.9%) were the criteria they utilized. This was followed by Major or Minor Behavior Data (12.4%) and finally, Risk Index Data (4.5%).

**Figure 3. Behavior/Attendance Data used to Identify Students for the fall 2013 PTHVP**



***Program Documentation – Logs***

Logs of visits with students at their homes provide contextual information and improve the knowledge about the impact home visits are having within the Washoe County School District. Additionally, logs increase understanding of the decision-making process utilized to select students for participation in the PTHVP. Survey participants were asked if they collected logs of their home visits and submitted them to the Department of Family-School Partnerships. The vast majority of the participants (91%) said they submitted logs for all of their home visits and an additional 4.5% said they submitted logs for most of the homes visited. Only 4.5% of those responding to the survey said they did not submit logs of the visits in which they participated.

***Outside Visits***

The staff that participated in the survey was asked if they conducted additional home visits on their own time and outside the PTHVP, and if they did, how many homes they visited. Out of the 84 respondents that replied to this question, 23.8% said they conducted additional visits. Of those who responded to the question asking how many visits they participated in on their own time (n=19), the majority (89.5%) indicated they visited between 1 and 5 students and 10.5% visited between 6 and 10 times over the course of the year. When asked if they kept a record of which student homes they visited outside of the PTHVP, over half (58%) said they kept records of their visits.

89.5% of staff state they conduct additional home visits on their own time.

39% indicate they visit these students based on student need.

The respondents that indicated they conducted home visits on their own time were asked how they identified students for visits through an open-ended question. The majority (39%) said they identified students based on need. One participant said, “These students are at risk students, identified by their grades or parental support. I do not want any of my students falling through the cracks!” and another stated their decision was “...based on social / emotional needs.” Other reasons included ‘academic need’ (16.7%) and ‘student wanted a visit’ (16.7%). A scattering of various reasons comprised the remaining 27.8% and included, “I was interested in knowing more about a family .. I was invited”, and “They were students in my class.”

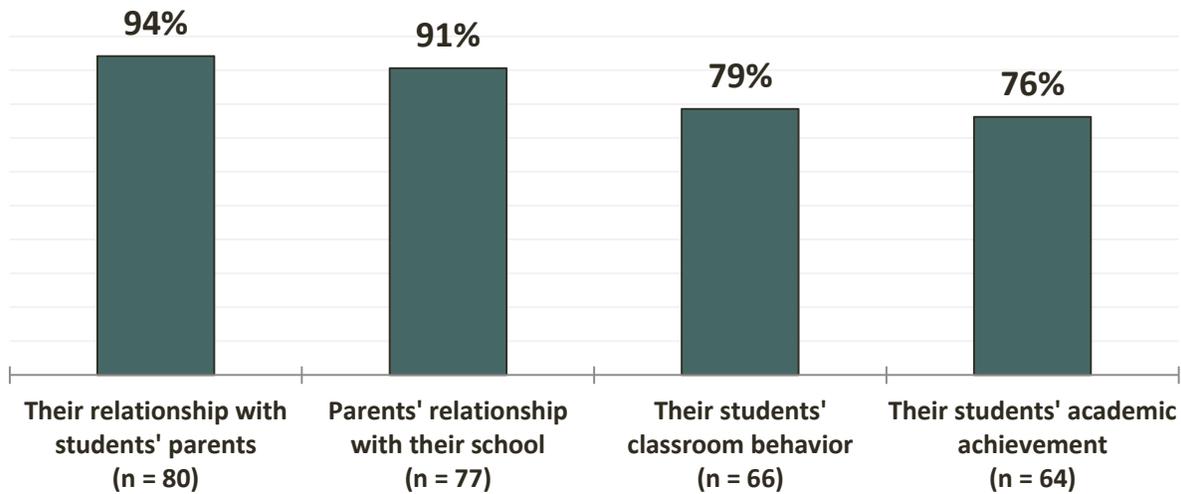
***Supportive Environment***

Two questions were asked to determine if staff participating in the PTHVP felt they had the support of their school administrators and the Department of Family-School Partnerships. A strong majority of 95% (n = 81) of survey participants reported that they felt that the administration at their school fully supported their involvement in the PTHVP. A majority of participants (93%; n = 79) also reported they felt the Department of Family-School Partnerships fully supported their involvement in the program.

***Program Impact***

Survey participants were asked how much they agreed that their participation in the PTHVP had a positive impact in four areas: their relationship with their students' parents, the parents' relationship with their school, their students' classroom behavior, and their students' academic achievement. Respondents could choose from five options, strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Overall, a majority of those responding to these questions agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in the program was having a positive impact (see Figure 4). Out of the 85 participants responding to the first two questions, 94% (n = 80) agreed or strongly agreed that the PTHVP program had had a positive impact on their relationship with their students' parents, and 91% felt there was a positive impact on parents' relationship with their school. Out of the 84 participants who responded to the last two questions, 79% believed there was a positive impact on their student's classroom behavior, and 76% believed there was a positive impact on their students' academic achievement because of the PTHVP program.

**Figure 4. Areas where Staff Agree or Strongly Agree that the PTHVP program has had a positive impact**



*Open-ended Questions*

### Question 1

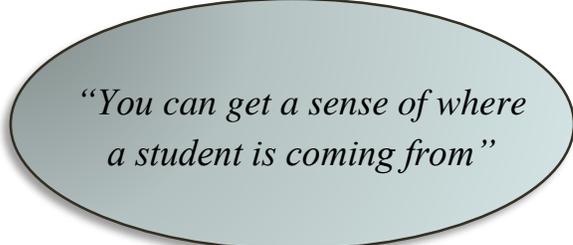
At the end of the survey, a series of five open-ended questions was included where participants could respond in their own words to the questions being asked. The first of the questions asked participants to express what they learned about the families that they visited. Most of the survey participants (81%, n = 72) reported that they learned more than they expected and that the visits were enjoyable. Over a quarter of those responding to this question reported learning that all the families they visited had hopes and dreams for their children, despite the barriers they experience and the concerns they might have. One participant reported, “I learned that most of the parents have similar desires and dreams for their children that my parent had for me: to be successful in school, graduate high school, go on to get a job or go to college.” Another stated, “Our families have great concerns for their children’s success in school and their futures. Most had strong family ties, connections, and relationships. Most had a good sense of humor and a willingness to communicate and talk with us.”

*“So many things were learned! There are too many to list! Almost every family shared that their main goals for their children are health and happiness. Some mentioned college or specific careers, especially when their own education had been cut short in Mexico to enter the job market to help support their families.”*

Others expressed an appreciation that they were able to learn more about their student’s family life, culture, and family dynamics. One respondent stated, “What the home environment is like, how many siblings there are in the family and their ages, and some things about their background”. Others commented on how the visits allowed them to become more aware of the barriers families face. One of the staff said, “Each home visit has allowed me to learn what unique barriers the families have to educational attainment. I have also been able to identify family strengths so that I can meet the family where they are and set appropriate goals.” Others noted that the families were happy to have the visits and that they were eager to work with the staff members for the benefit of their children. For example, one participant stated, “They are welcoming and we were well received. They were very receptive to us coming to visit and excited about how we could work together to help their child succeed.”

### Question 2

The second question in the series asked participants what they learned about the students whose homes were visited. There were 71 (80%) of the staff participating in the survey that responded to this question. Many of the comments mirrored those expressed in the prior question. The staff mentioned they learned about the challenges students face and that they had the opportunity to get to know their students better as well as on a more personal level. They appreciated finding out about their likes and dislikes, number of siblings, what pets were in the home, what hobbies students had, and what the student's time after school was like. For example, one respondent stated, "Most of these students do not have a parent at home in the evening to help with school work. They, the students, have a lot of responsibilities other than homework." Another said, "I have been able to see their home environment and it helps to understand what their home life is like for the better or worse."



*"You can get a sense of where a student is coming from"*

Many of those commenting also mentioned the reaction of the students, which tended to be overwhelmingly positive. Respondents noted the receptivity and excitement exhibited by the students who were visited as well as how they reacted later when returning to school. For example, one comment said, "The students were excited to see us ... when the other students came to school and shared that we had made a visit to their house, the other students started asking when we were coming to their houses!", and another stated, "Our students were so happy that we shared their homes and families with us. Some shared food with us, others shared their pets, grandparents and siblings. The students bragged to their friends that we visited their homes." Additionally, other comments mentioned the supportiveness of the students' families, such as, "They have their parent's support" and "They have very loving homes."

Several of the comments noted the challenges their students face in their environment outside of school. One respondent reported, "I have learned about the home environment and more of the challenges they face along with their strengths as a family." Others commented, "They are dealing with incredible obstacles, but still manage to try their best to get to school", and "They have been through some really hard times which may explain some emotional outbursts one has from time to time." Others noted the responsibilities outside of school they discovered students had. For example, one respondent said, "Most of these students do not have

a parent at home in the evening to help with school work. They, the students, have a lot of responsibilities other than homework.”

### Question 3

The third question asked respondents to report on what were some of the main questions, comments, suggestions, or discussions they had with parents during their visits. There were 69 (78%) survey participants that responded to this question. Comments covered a wide range of topics; from general (“Our discussions were basically just talking getting to know each other. On our next visit I hope to go more in depth”) to more specific. Almost a third (32%) of the survey participants said they discussed the student’s future, what parent’s goals for their children were, and the hopes and dreams parents had for their children. Many used the visit to explore how they could support parents and what resources parents needed that staff could provide. For example, one participant reported, “We discussed hopes and dreams for the parents and students. We also asked about ways we could support them. Most felt the school was very helpful” and another stated, “Parents have asked how their children are doing in class, what can they do to help them, etc. But mostly, we talked about student interests and relationships with siblings and how they like to spend their free time. We have also discussed how students can practice reading strategies at home”.

*“Some of the main discussions we had included the families movement from school to school, difficult home/job situations, goals for family”*

The staff also reported many of the conversations they had with the parents centered on parental concerns with safety, grades, homework, and after-school programs. Others stated they focused conversation on the family, such as one participant that said, “We mostly talked about their family: how long they lived in Reno, where is their family from, does family live nearby. We also talked about school: how satisfied/dissatisfied are they with the school, their children's peers, the school neighborhood”, and another who said, “Some of the main discussions we had included the families movement from school to school, difficult home/job situations, goals for family.” The participants who answered this question also noted ways in which they were able to assist families during the visits, for example, “I enrolled both into the after-school program to get extra support.”

### Question 4

The fourth question asked survey participants what contact information or invitations to participate in school activities they provided to families during their visit. There were 61 (69%) of the survey participants that responded to this question. Many report that they share information about upcoming school activities such as data nights, multicultural night, fall festival, and parent engagement activities, as well as information about after-school programs, and upcoming field trips. For example, one respondent said, “We invited parents to a Family Student achievement night where we would go over assessment data and show them a class, school, district and national comparison.” Other survey participants said they shared their contact information with parents, including their personal and school phone numbers, as well as for resources within the community such as ESL classes and parent classes. One of the staff reported, “We provided a list of community contacts and a list of upcoming school activities and asked/encouraged parents to attend” and another said, “We provided school calendars, flyers for upcoming events, a list of educational web sites, local library hours (shared computer access at library), parent classes at our school.” Finally, survey respondents also mention informing parents about opportunities for volunteering within their student’s classroom, for field trips, and additional opportunities for volunteering at their student’s school.

*“I made sure every Spanish speaking family had names and contacts of Spanish speaking staff members. I personally invited them to attend a family night at our school through follow-up phone calls after the home visits. I always told them there is an open invitation for them to visit our school or request a home visit”*

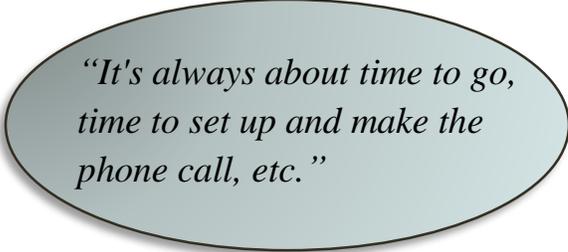
**Question 5**

The last question in this series asked survey participants what additional supports they need to conduct home visits through the PTHVP. Just under a third (30%) of the survey participants responded to this question and of the 27 responses, 30% expressed their satisfaction with the program overall stating, “Support has been very good and positive” and “None, our admin is behind it 100%.” Other comments expressed appreciation for the program or program specifics such as, “The program is worth the time and effort of everyone working together” and “I feel like our training was very helpful and well thought out and the program is very easy to

understand and participate and be a successful representative of our school.” Several expressed a desire to, “do more than the limited amount of visits.”

A number of those responding to this question mentioned time. Many expressed a desire for more time for visits or a restructuring of the visit day. For example, one participant stated,

“Time is always the biggest barrier. Release of other requirements would be helpful, but I know this is hardly possible. Administrators here are so inspiring about home visits and LOVE to hear our



*“It's always about time to go, time to set up and make the phone call, etc.”*

stories and that makes doing them that much more worthwhile” and another said, “Visits done during the regular work day take one hour out of the teacher's day which must be made up at a later time ... Parents are not always available at times that are not within our regular hours. Some of our students do not live with parents. Home visits should encompass non-traditional family situations.” Other suggestions included translation support such as, “Paid translator from our campus. It helps to encourage parents to attend school activities if they know someone on our campus speaks Spanish” and “The only things I can think of are: A few district provided translators”. Finally, some suggestions offered ideas to support the program such as, “It would be nice to have books or writing notebooks with pens to leave with the children” and “Someone to take care of the paperwork.”

### **Summary of Staff-Identified Strengths, Challenges, Barriers, and Recommendations from End-of-Year Meeting with PTHVP School Teams**

At the conclusion of the school year, staff from ten of the PTHVP schools participated in a discussion of the school's experience with implementation at their sites. Schools were split into three groups and were asked to summarize the major strengths of the program at their schools, as well as the challenges and ongoing barriers they face while implementing the program. Staff were also asked to provide recommendations both schools and the district could make to improve

the program in the future. These major themes are summarized below across all three school groups in the section below.

## ***Strengths of Implementation at School Sites***

- Created a strong relationship with parents.
- Parents were more open about their child's learning and what their needs were.
- Parents were more comfortable speaking, and sharing their concerns in their home than they typically are during traditional Parent-Teacher conferences.
- Strengthens the relationship between the community and school
- Having an administrative team supportive of the program was critical
- Having a core group of teachers at the site to help staff stay motivated to conduct the visits
- Engaging in monthly collaboration with other staff at the school around home visits helped promote ongoing success of program.
- Rewarding to teachers to meet students' families.
- Home visits helped staff develop meaningful connections with students
- Having the opportunity to explain data to parents during the second visit helped link the program back to student achievement
- Sharing resources across participating staff at the school was helpful, especially to staff new to the program.
- Having a PTHVP at the school site who led by example and conducted visits him/herself was helpful

## ***Challenges of Implementation at School Sites***

- Finding extra time to make phone calls and conduct visits
- Motivating staff who have been trained to do home visits and complete the requirement.
- Consistent communication from site coordinator.
- Inconsistent information from the program.
- New staff.
- Training started late in school year.
- Non-certified staff not being counted towards total visits counted
- Not having an adequate tracking system to monitor who has been visited.
- Reaching the visit target at a smaller sized school with fewer families to visit.
- Initial fears about making the calls.
- Parents not showing to the appointment.
- Staying within the hour time limit.

- Classified staff did not receive compensation.
- Not having adequate staff to help with translation.
- Not being able to count siblings as a visit.
- Team members not turning in paperwork on time.

**Ongoing Barriers to Future Success of Program**

- No plan to help pay classified staff who help with scheduling and translations.
- Personal safety in neighborhoods
- Needing more opportunities for teachers to be trained.
- Shortage of bilingual teachers.
- Miscommunication between site coordinator and staff.
- Reporting stipend confusion.
- As initial excitement wears off and the number of visits needed can sometimes feel like a burden.
- Student transiency makes selecting and visiting difficult.
- Not enough staff available/willing to conduct home visits.

**Recommendations to Improve Program in Future**

- Need an online tracking system in central location (like IC) to facilitate tracking.
- Assistance to help with teacher follow through.
- More firm deadlines for completing paperwork and visits.
- Not scheduling deadlines after a school break.
- Having a quick cheat sheet for coordinator.
- More regular check-ins with staff.
- Positively recognize schools that complete most of their home visits more regularly (even monthly) throughout the year to encourage ongoing participation.
- Develop ways to tie impact of home visits to student outcomes at site level.
- More centralized location to staff rather than multiple emails from district coordinators.
- Site coordinator should commit to going on one visit with each trained staff to ensure follow-through.
- Have two site coordinators at larger school sites.
- Use BIG to print reports for use in data discussions during second visits.
- Send home questionnaire for parents at beginning of year to determine which days are best for the home visit at the beginning.

## Student Achievement Outcomes

The student ids listed on the participation logs submitted by staff were used to link home visits with student outcomes, including proficiency rates and student growth measures for students in grades 3-8 (4-8 for growth measures), especially as they compared against other students at Title I schools. Table 6 below indicates that students who received a home visit had a significantly lower likelihood of being proficient on the math and reading CRTs at the end of the school year than other students who at Title I schools. This is likely because, as staff indicated in their survey responses, many staff selected students for a home visit because they were struggling academically. Table 7 separates the achievement outcomes by elementary and middle school. A chi-square analysis was conducted to determine whether the reading and math achievement differences between home visit schools and other Title I schools was significant, both of which were significant at the elementary school level. That is, students selected for home visits had statistically significantly lower reading and math proficiency rates than their peers at other Title I schools. There were too few cases to run a chi-square analysis at the middle school level.

**Table 6.**

Percentage of students proficient on CRT Math and Reading tests at all Title I schools vs students selected for a home visit through the PTHVP in 2013-2014.

	All Students at PTHVP Schools (home visit and non-home visit)				Students from Participating Schools <u>Selected</u> for a Home Visit			
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Reading Proficiency</b>	46.3%	52.2%	53.3%	<b>53.7%</b>	33.8%	40.2%	33.1%	<b>44.3%</b>
<b>Math Proficiency</b>	62.3%	65.9%	54.7%	<b>51.0%</b>	49.4%	53.2%	42.8%	<b>48.1%</b>

**Table 7.**

Percentage of students proficient on CRT Math and Reading Tests among students at all Title I schools versus just students who received a home visit during 2013-2014.

	Title I Math	Home Visit Math	Title I Reading	Home Visit Reading
<b>Elementary School</b>	58.3%**	50.9%	56.1%***	30.2%
<b>Middle School</b>	34.0%	44.2%	47.5%	45.7%

\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Finally, Table 8 below examines the percentage of students who were proficient on the Reading and Math CRT by whether they received just one visit versus whether they received two or more visits during the school year. Findings indicate that students who received two or more visits during the school year had higher proficiency rates than those who only received one visit.

**Table 8.**  
Percentage of students proficient in math and reading who received just one home visit during the 2013-2014 school year vs. students who received more than one home visit during the year.

	One Visit Math	>2 Visits Math	One Visit Reading	>2 Visit Reading
<b>Elementary School</b>	46.2%	56.2%	42.4%	46.2%
<b>Middle School</b>	17.4%	40.0%	37.5%	52.6%

One of the primary reasons for changing the structure of the PTHVP in 2013-2014 from an open-to-all schools format to selecting fewer schools to do more visits was to increase the likelihood of impacting schools on a larger scale. To determine whether, at a school-level, the new model of the PTHVP might have had a stronger impact on student achievement, several school-level analyses with CRT data are provided. Table 9 below reports the reading and math proficiency rates and the median SGPs of participating schools as they compared to their rates and SGPs from 2012-2013.

In reading, three of the 11 schools improved their proficiency rates on the CRT from 2013 to 2014, and four improved their median student growth percentile. In math, three schools improved their proficiency rates and six schools improved their median student growth percentiles. As the asterisks indicate, only two schools were new to the PTHVP this year, Anderson and Warner Elementary Schools. These findings should also be noted within the broader district context. District-wide, elementary schools decreased reading proficiency by one percentage point and math by two percentage points from 2013-2014. Elementary schools also decreased one student growth percentile point in reading, but increased 2 percentile points in math. Thus, while not all participating schools increased in reading and math proficiency and growth, many schools did, in spite of decreases in most areas seen district-wide. Of course, these

gains are likely the result of a multitude of initiatives and strategies applied at the school site, of which PTHVP is only one.

**Table 9.**

2013-2014 Reading and Math CRT proficiency rates and median student growth percentiles of participating PTHVP schools and change in scores from 2012-2013.

School Name	Reading				Math			
	% Proficient	Change from SY 12-13	SGP	Change from SY 12-13	% Proficient	Change from SY 12-13	SGP	Change from SY 12-13
Anderson E.S.*	57	1	61	12	66	2	73	15
Cannan E.S.	37	-13	41.5	-8.5	47	-12	46	-5
Corbett E.S.	57	12	59	6.5	56	1	50	12.5
Duncan E.S.	42	-2	40	-3	54	0	39	7.5
Kate Smith E.S.	52	-8	64	3	61	-4	69	2
Lemelson E.S.	49	0	51	-1	55	0	56	14
Loder E.S.	49	-4	24	-25	57	-8	34	-2
Natchez E.S.	56	-6	49.5	-5.5	51	-16	43.5	-25.5
Sun Valley E.S.	48	-6	44.5	-6.5	44	-12	34.5	-11.5
Warner E.S.*	57	-2	38.5	-10.5	56	1	52	3
Vaughn M.S.	49	2	61	13.5	35	-7	43.5	-6.5
<b>DISTRICT E.S.</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>2</b>

\*School's first year participating in the PTHVP was 2013-2014.

### Parent Climate Survey Results

Each year since 2011, the WCSD has administered a parent climate survey to all parents in the district to gather feedback about their child's school, including their perceptions about the quality of education at their child's school, how safe and caring their child's school environment is, whether parents feel like the communication between schools and parents is effective, and the extent to which parents feel that they are engaged as partners with the school in their child's education. Table 10 below reports the results of the 2014 Parent Climate Survey at the participating PTHVP schools across three scales related to parents' perceptions about the extent to which school's successfully engage them in their child's learning:

- a. **Supportive Environment for Parents:** Consists of six items that assess how welcoming school is to parents and school expectations about parental engagement (e.g. “I feel welcome at my child’s school, “My child’s school sees parents as important partners”).
- b. **Positive Contact with School Personnel:** Consists of three items that ask parents whether contact they had received from teachers, counselors, and administrators has been mostly positive and one item about whether their child’s teacher have given them ideas on how to support their child’s learning at home (e.g. the contact from my child’s teacher has been mostly positive” and “My child’s teacher has given me ideas on how to support my child’s learning at home.”)
- c. **School Communication with Parents:** Consists of eight items that ask parents about the quality and frequency of school and staff’s communication with parents (e.g. “I am kept informed about my child’s behavior”, “My child’s teacher is available to discuss my child’s learning needs with me.”)

**Table 10.**  
Percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree with items across 2014 Parent Climate Survey Scales.

	<b>Supportive Environment for Parents</b>	<b>Positive Contact with Personnel</b>	<b>School Communication with Parents</b>
Anderson E.S.	96%	96%	96%
Cannan E.S.	93%	93%	93%
Corbett E.S.	95%	96%	93%
Duncan E.S.	96%	95%	96%
Kate Smith E.S.	96%	97%	93%
Lemelson E.S.	93%	88%	89%
Loder E.S.	92%	92%	90%
Natchez E.S.	81%	92%	84%
Sun Valley E.S.	95%	95%	94%
Warner E.S.	85%	86%	85%
Vaughn M.S.	91%	84%	85%
Washoe Innovations H.S.	93%	89%	92%
<b>All District Schools</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>All District ES</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>All District MS</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>All District HS</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b>

*All items rated along a four-point scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 4 = Strongly Agree.*

As Table 10 above indicates, the majority of parents who completed the Parent Climate Survey agreed or strongly agreed that schools were supportive environments for parents, that the contact from school personnel was mostly positive, and that the school's communication with parents was effective and timely. In fact, nearly all schools had a higher percentage of agreement across all three scales than was seen across other district schools. That said, as noted in the section on student achievement data, schools engage in a multitude of strategies to engage families, of which home visits are only one. These findings may only point to a preliminary trend between the PTHVP and family perceptions of their children's school, which future analyses should explore in greater detail.

## **Conclusion**

A primary goal of the PTHVP is to provide opportunities for growth and connection between students and their families and the teachers and other staff members who are part of the educational team within the WCSD, striving to engage parents as co-educators in the education of their children. This supports the objective of the WCSD strategic plan to actively engage families in education and "increase meaningful parent involvement and family engagement initiatives." Most of the staff who responded to the survey evaluating their experiences in the fall 2013 program reported it as positive, stating parents and students welcomed the interactions within the home visit context. These findings were paralleled in the group discussions with PTHVP school teams at the end of the year.

Survey data indicate that a variety of criteria were utilized in selecting the students for home visits with over half of the staff indicating those they selected were students and families they wanted to know better. Indications are that behavioral and academic criteria are utilized in selecting students for participation in the PTHVP, although the national model recommends against selecting solely on the basis of students' academic and behavioral outcomes. A strong

majority of the staff participating in the survey reported the visits they participated in resulted in improved relationships with the families and students in their school as well as improvements in students' behavior and academic achievement, indicating the program is having a positive impact in developing positive engagement between parents, students, and school staff.

An examination of the students who received visits indicate that for the most part, students selected for visits were very similar demographically to other Title I students who were not selected for visits. The only exception to this finding was that a higher number of Hispanic and Limited English Proficient students were selected for a visit than would be expected given the proportion of those groups across Title I schools more generally. This may indicate that staff specifically targeted Hispanic and LEP students for a visit, perhaps in an effort to build their own cultural competency, to form relationships with families who may be more difficult to reach, or for another reason. In addition, findings indicate that the majority of students who were selected were in the younger (kindergarten through 3rd) grades, rather than the older elementary school grades (e.g. 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>).

Student-level achievement data indicates that students who received a home visit, as a group, were less likely to be proficient on the math and reading CRTs than students at Title I schools in general. This is likely because staff may have selected students who were already struggling academically, not because the home visit had a negative impact on student outcomes. Future analyses will need to identify a more comparable set of students to make better assessments of how students who received a home visit performed academically compared to students who did not receive home visits.

School-level achievement and growth data was also examined from this year to last year to determine whether any gains were seen as a result of deeper implementation of the program at school sites in 2013-2014. District-wide, proficiency rates and growth percentiles decreased from last year to this year. Unsurprisingly, many of the participating PTHVP schools, a large number of which were selected because of prior low performance, also decreased in reading and math proficiency/growth. That said, several PTHVP schools experienced impressive gains in reading and math achievement as well as growth. These findings obviously cannot be tied to the PTHVP specifically, but survey data from participating staff do parallel staff's belief that the program has an impact on student achievement. PTHVP is one of a host of strategies used by schools to promote achievement, but future analyses should attempt to examine longitudinally, while

controlling for prior achievement, the impact of PTHVP on school and student level outcomes. Future analyses should also focus on achievement in the earlier grades, where the majority of visits tend to occur, possibly examining Developmental Reading Assessment or Measures of Academic Progress measures as outcomes since CRT data is not available in grades K - 2.

Finally, an examination of school-level Parent Climate Survey data indicate that participating PTHVP schools on the whole had higher agreement among parents that their child's school was supportive for parents, that the school's communication with parents was efficient and effective, and that the communication from staff was primarily positive than was found across district schools. That said, these findings may indicate a self-selection bias, in that schools who opted into the PTHVP program which has fairly rigorous requirements on the part of staff, may have already had strong family engagement practices even prior to their participation in the program.