

PARENT TEACHER HOME VISIT
EVALUATION FINDINGS FOR THE 2022-
2023 SCHOOL YEAR

REPORT AUTHORED BY SARAH TRESCHER, PHD

OVERVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

- 21 schools participated; 13 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 2 alternative schools
- 62% of Parent Teacher Home Visit participating schools visited at least 10% of their students
- In elementary and high school, most visits were held in-person. Conversely, most visits were held virtually in middle school. Among those who received a home visit:
 - 84% of elementary school students were visited in-person and 16% were visited virtually
 - 17% of middle school students were visited in-person and 83% were visited virtually
 - 80% of high school students were visited in-person and 20% were visited virtually

SUMMARY OF FAMILY FOCUS GROUPS

- Families who were familiar with the program were excited about the visits; families who were unfamiliar with the program expressed initial hesitancy. Community and virtual options helped first-time families feel more comfortable
- Home visits fostered a sense of connection between families and their children's school
- Families felt home visits were more meaningful when their children's teacher attended, rather than another staff member from the school
- While visits were meaningful, some families were unsure of expectations or the purpose of the visit. Families would have appreciated more structure to the visit, including understanding what to expect and the reason for the visit
 - *"We also had a situation when we tried asking about a general math question during the visit so we can help our daughter better and we were told we know the "old school way" but didn't provide resources so we can help our kids at home. They should be providing more resources to parents on how we can help our kids at home."*
- Families who received resources or learned about community or school programs found the visit very helpful
- Although all families who participated in the focus groups were from elementary schools, they expressed desire for and the importance of continuing home visits in middle and high school as their children got older

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- Home visits were associated lower absenteeism rates
- Further analysis revealed that in-person home visits were associated with lower absenteeism rates but virtual visits were not. Students who received a visit in a community location (rather than in the home or virtually), had the lowest absenteeism rates
- There was no association between home visits and academic outcomes
- Students who received a home visit reported higher levels of social emotional competencies, school engagement, and adult support compared to students who did not receive a home visit

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- There was no association between home visits and absenteeism rates. However, further analysis indicated that students who received an in-person visit had lower absenteeism rates compared to students who did not receive a visit
- Students who received a home visit were more likely to be suspended compared to students who did not. However, further analysis indicated that these students were more likely to be suspended in the 2021-

2022 school year, indicating these students might have already been higher risk. There is no association between suspensions and home visits for students who received an in-person visit

- There is no association between home visits and academic outcomes
- Students who received a home visit reported higher social emotional skills on the same scales, and reported higher levels of adult support

Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV) connect families to educators and schools through meaningful home visits conducted by school staff. PTHV follows a two-visit model in which the first visit in the fall focuses on hopes and dreams and the second visit in the spring focuses on academics. WCSD follows the [research-based model](#) based out of Sacramento and follows the 5 core practices of the program:

- Visits are always voluntary for educators and families, arranged in advance
- Teachers are trained, and compensated for visits outside their school day
- Focus of the first visit is relationship building; we discuss hopes and dreams
- No targeting – visit all or a cross-section of students so there is no stigma
- Educators conduct visits in pairs, and after the visit, reflect with their partner

In the 2022-2023 school year, 21 schools participated in Parent Teacher Home Visits: 13 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 2 alternative schools. We separated analyses based on the school level and there were too few students who received visits at the two alternative schools so they are not included in this report.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, home visits have been offered both virtually (also called bridge visits) or in-person. At the start of the pandemic all visits were virtual, and while in the 2022-2023 school year many visits went back to in-person, many visits remained virtual. Families and staff also have the option to have an in-person visit but at a community location (e.g., a park) rather than in the home. As such, we examine whether there are differences in outcomes between virtual and in-person visits, and even if there are differences between in-home visits and visits at a community location.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

The purpose of this evaluation was to explore implementation, short-term, and long-term relationships for parent teacher home visits in the Washoe County School District. The program is evaluated regularly and past evaluations have found mixed results on the association between home visits and students outcomes such as attendance. For instance, in the 2021-2022 school year, there was no association between home visits and absenteeism and in some instances, absenteeism was actually higher among students who received a home visit. However, there were some positive relationships found between home visits (particularly in-person home visits) and positive perceptions of school climate such as adult support. Student and staff focus groups also highlighted the importance of the program on relationship building and communication between schools and families. Building on the 2021-2022 evaluation, we explore the relationship between home visits and students outcomes including absenteeism, suspensions, and academics and we separate the analyses by school-level and whether a visit was in-person or virtual. We also examine important implementation questions through family focus groups. Other evaluations have included data from student and staff focus groups, as well as family surveys, but family focus groups have never been conducted to better understand their experiences.

FAMILY FOCUS GROUPS.

Staff in the Office of Continuous Improvement conducted five focus groups with families at three participating elementary schools. Families were invited to participate after school and were provided dinner. Two of the focus groups were in Spanish and facilitated by a native Spanish speaker.

PARENT TEACHER HOME VISIT ADMINISTRATIVE DATA.

The Family-School Partnerships department track all home visits and enters them into Infinite Campus. This data includes the date of the visit, the student(s) who received a visit, type of visit (virtual or in-person), and the staff members who went on the visit. These data include student ID and can be linked to other data sources (e.g., attendance).

CLIMATE SURVEY DATA

Each year, students in grades 5-12 participate in a school climate survey from October – December. Students respond to questions about both school climate and rate themselves on social emotional competencies. Fifth graders complete a shorter version of the survey. For more information about the climate survey, click [here](#).

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Administrative data from Infinite Campus was used to examine relationships between home visits and attendance, behavior, and academic outcomes. We included all 21 schools who participated in home visits, and students were included as a comparison group if they were at a home visit school, but did not receive a home visit. Students needed to be enrolled at least ten days to be included in the analysis. When students changed schools during the school year, we used the data from the school in which they were enrolled the longest. This removed about 20 students who did receive a home visit, but were not enrolled at the school long enough to have the associated outcome variables needed for analyses.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (EWS)

Currently in WCSD, students are assigned a risk score to indicate if they are at higher risk for dropout. Students who are no risk have no EWS indicators, students at low risk have 1 indicator, students at moderate risk have 2 indicators, and students at high risk have 3 or more indicators. *Prior year* risk is used in the models. There are 4 indicators (5 in high school) that are currently used:

- Attendance: 0 points for 9.5 less days absent; 1 point for 9.5 to 17.5 days absent; 2 points for 18 or more days absent
- Retention: 0 points for never retained; 2 points for retained
- Suspensions: 0 points for never suspended; 2 points for suspended
- Transiency: 0 points for no transiency events; 1 point for one transiency even of CIT; 2 points for two or more transiency events and/or CIT
- Credit deficient (HS only) – varies by grade level and ranges from 0 to 3 points.

Absenteeism

Absenteeism rates were calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days they were scheduled.

Suspensions

Suspensions were calculated based on whether or not a student was suspended in that year or not (0 = not suspended, 1 = suspended).

Academic Outcomes

In elementary school, we examined SBAC scores for students in grades 3-5. In middle school, both SBAC scores and GPA were examined, and in high school, GPA was examined.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION

1. How many schools participating in PTHV visited at least 10% of their students (either in-person or virtually) during the 2021-2022 school year?
 - a. What percentage of visits were in-person at the family's home? What percentage of visits were virtual?
 - b. How many families received one visit? How many families received at least two visits?
2. Are schools visiting a cross-section of students based on demographic factors and risk level?

OUTCOMES

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

1. What are the experiences of families who receive a home visit as part of the Parent Teacher Home Visit program?
 - a. How do families initially feel about home visits?
 - b. What do families experience while preparing for and during the home visit?
 - c. Does the home visit change the way families feel about their child's school and education? Does the home visit change the way families communicate with the school?
2. To what extent do home visits build positive connections and promote strong relationships between families and schools?

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

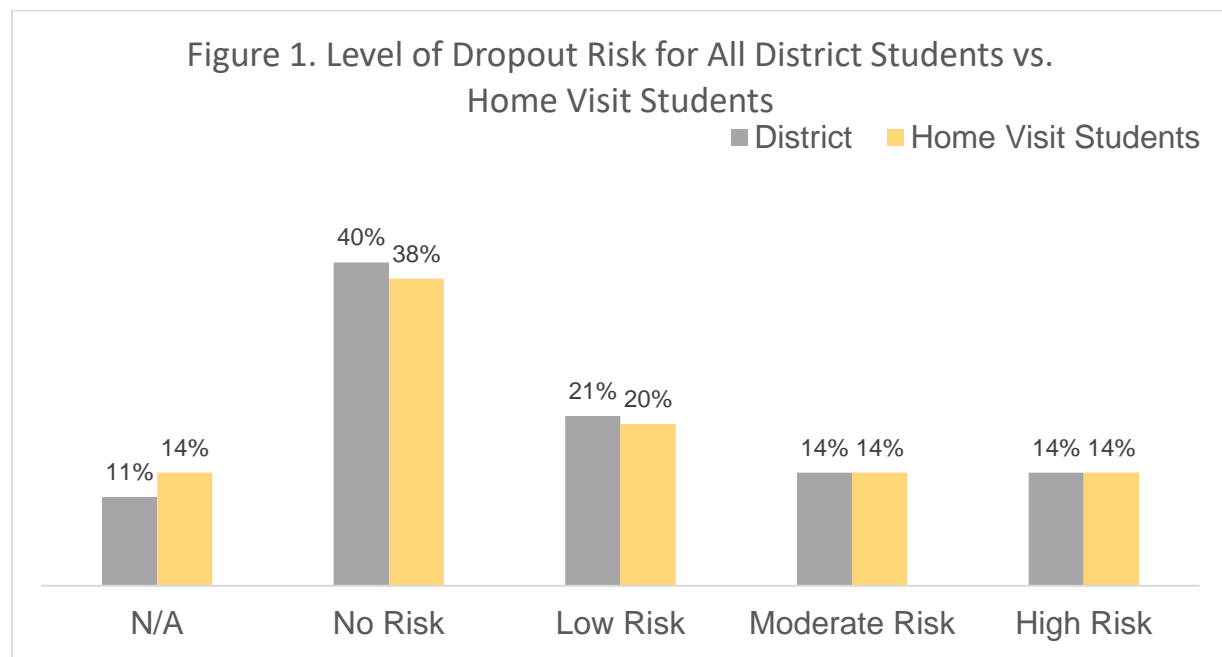
3. Do students who receive home visits have better outcomes (attendance, behavior, and achievement) than students who do not receive home visits?

RESULTS

IMPLEMENTATION

Of the 21 schools that participated, 13 visited at least 10% of their students (this was calculated by the total number of students who received a visit divided the enrollment numbers on count day). There were three schools that visited between 5 – 9 % of their students, and five schools that visited fewer than 5%. There were three schools that visited less than 1% of their student population, suggesting low levels of implementation.

Across all 21 schools, on average the risk levels of students who received a home visit were similar to the risk levels of students who did not receive a home visit. This suggests that on average, based on indicators from the early warning system, that schools are visiting a cross-section of students (although this could vary by individual school).



SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

To address the short-term research questions, staff in the Office of Continuous Improvement conducted 5 family focus groups at 3 participating elementary schools. Families were invited to participate after school and were provided dinner. Two of the focus groups were in Spanish and facilitated by a native Spanish-speaker.

THEME 1: If familiar with home visits, families felt comfortable and even excited to be invited to participate. Some families also mentioned how excited their children were about the visit. For families

who were unfamiliar with the program, there is initial hesitancy, and even some defensiveness. This sometimes stemmed from the fear that these visits were mandated and would be evasive or judgmental. This typically dissipates once families learn more and understand what the program is about. In addition, the option of having the visit in the community or virtually helped first-time families feel more comfortable with the idea of visiting with educators.

“[The student] was very thrilled and kept talking about it. He also kept telling his friends he was going to have teachers visiting his house on the days leading to the home visit.”

“Los niños se emocionaron mucho cuando vieron a los maestros llegar a la casa”
(Our kids got so excited when they saw the teachers arrive)

“Looked forward to it because was looking to learn how to move child forward. Saw it as an opportunity, or extra-moment to talk about [their child] and support their growth.”

[When asked about what it was like to be invited]: “Weird at first because I was like what “is he in trouble?”

“Initially wondered what [their child] had been telling the school to prompt a visit – was worried.”

“Fear. To be honest, I thought it would be evasive, they were going to evaluate, they were going to check cupboards. I am vocal so I was going to say no, and then they broke it down for us about how it is to help us. So they focused on (him), and they made it feel very comfortable.”

THEME 2: Families discussed how home visits foster connection both with the school, and within their own family. Families appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the school outside of official events like conferences.

“The kids really got to express themselves, and it gave the teachers a better window to see the kids as who they are and why they are the way they are.”

“Conferences feel like parents are being graded and judged. This was more social, I like this much better.”

“Conferences are formal and parents are told where they need to do better. Often worry, oh God, what are they going to say, what did I do, what did my child do? This is much better. More human to human, not bringing test scores, which was kind of nice.”

“It was nice as a parent to sit back and watch the interaction between teacher and children. There is not time for those types of one-on-one interactions between students and teachers at school, so it was good to have that time for that and to watch it in action as a parent.”

“Every time something happens, my daughter talks to us and then we just feel comfortable to reach out. We feel like the school’s doors are always open.”

THEME 3: Families felt the visit and connection was more meaningful when the students’ teacher came, rather than just staff at that school who did not necessarily have a connection to their student. This also was evident in visits with siblings in which if there was not a teacher for that sibling, the connection was not the same.

“There is a disconnect. The teachers from the home visits are not the students’ primary teachers. It’s helpful to have teachers visit the homes to help families with certain issues like the program we were having enrollment issues. However, it would be better to have the primary teacher visit the home to build a stronger relationship with the student and the family.”

“I feel like the connection wasn’t there for her [a sibling] because it wasn’t her teacher.”

“The visits would be more beneficial if the primary teacher visits the home. It would help if they get to know their students outside of the classroom so they can support them better in school plus it would also help strengthen the relationship with the parents because it will create a stronger connection and talk about the student’s challenges or concerns. The experience could be completely different.”

THEME 4: While visits were meaningful, some families were unsure of the expectations or the purpose of the visit. Some expressed wanting more structure to the visits and some questioned the goals of the visit, especially families at non-Title I schools. One parent expressed they wanted more resources to help their child at home.

“[I] was not sure of what to do with herself. Was not sure if the expectation was to be there to moderate or mediate, or if they should have left. Felt awkward.”

“Make parent expectations clear, such as role and should they be talking, who do you want to be talking to and how much.”

“I don’t know what the goal of it is. Coming from a Title I, I know that population it’s harder to reach families, we don’t really have those problems here. So I guess I don’t get what the goal is of the program.”

“We also had a situation when we tried asking about a general math question during the visit so we can help our daughter better and we were told we know the “old school way” but didn’t provide resources so we can help our kids at home. They should be providing more resources to parents on how we can help our kids at home.”

THEME 4A: Families who received resources or learned about new programs on the visit found this very helpful.

“The visit focused on answering questions related to a specific school program for one of their [children]. The teacher started researching information about the program on her phone right in front of them and started investigating schedules, times, locations. Teacher provided information regarding scheduling and enrollment requirements pertaining to the program.”

THEME 5: Although all families who participated in the focus groups were from elementary schools, some had older students in secondary schools who expressed the desire and importance of continuing home visits as students get older. Even families without older students expressed interest in having home visits in middle and high school.

“Definitely got a good feeling about it and the school in general. I have a daughter too who is in high school, but she didn’t get a home visit.”

“You know just to put that plant that seed while you can, in kindergarten to create momentum for school. Now it’s middle school so I want to get everything I can within those few years.”

STUDENT OUTCOMES

We examined how home visits relates to student-level outcomes including absenteeism, suspensions, and academic outcomes. Home visit data was linked to data in Infinite Campus. We used students at home visit schools who did not receive a home visit as a comparison group. Further, we report results separated out by school level (elementary, middle, and high school).

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In the 13 elementary schools, most students received a home visit received an in-person visit (n=683) compared to 134 who received a virtual visit. See Table 1.

Type	Number of Visits	Percent
Home Visit	683	12.72
Bridge/Virtual Visit	134	2.5
No Visit	4,551	84.78
Total	5,368	

Table 1. Elementary School Home Visit Summary.

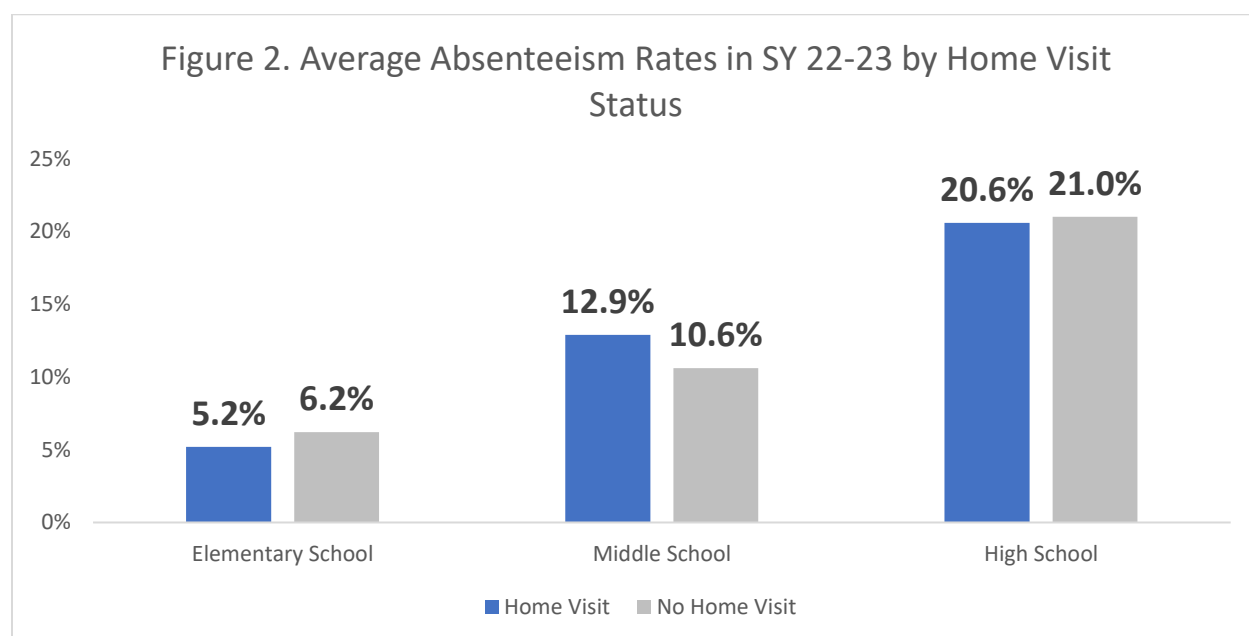
We broke the home visit category down further by analyzing how many students received a visit in the home, and how many students received a visit in the community such as at a park or restaurant. In elementary school, this is evenly split, with 343 students receiving a visit in the home and 340 students receiving a visit in the community.

Type	Number of Visits	Percent
In Home	343	6.39
Community Location	340	6.33
Virtual	134	2.5
No Visit	4,551	84.78
Total	5,368	

Table 2. Elementary School Detailed Home Visit Summary

We first used regression analyses to examine whether receiving a home visit affected student outcomes including attendance, behavior, and SBAC proficiency. We controlled for demographic variables (gender, IEP, ELL, FRL, CIT, and foster status) and clustered the school standard errors to account for differences in school-level variance. We conducted additional analyses that also accounted for prior year risk level, or early warning system indicators. This variable is important to include to account for differences in students who went on home visits vs. those who did not. However, not every student was enrolled in the previous school year so it also leads to a lot of missing data, especially in elementary school. As such, we report findings for both analyses.

When examining absenteeism rates in the first regression model ($n=5,367$), there is a small, but positive association between home and attendance (descriptive absenteeism rates for all 3 school levels can be found in figure 2). Absenteeism rates for students who received a home visit are lower compared to students who did not receive a home visit ($B = -0.008$, $p < 0.01$). This effect is smaller when you include prior year risk in the model ($B = 0.005$, $p = 0.07$). We did not examine suspensions in elementary school because there were too few students who received a suspension for meaningful analysis. We examined SBAC proficiency in both ELA and math and there were no associations between home visits and SBAC proficiency levels.



IN-PERSON VS. VIRTUAL VISITS

Next, we further examined whether there were differences in outcomes based on whether students received an in-person or virtual visit. For this analysis, the treatment groups are too small compared to the comparison groups and so we randomly selected one fourth of the comparison group to run the analyses. The results in the first regression model indicate that students who received an in-person home visit had lower absenteeism rates than students who did not receive a visit ($B = -0.107, p < 0.01$) but there is no relationship between for students who received a virtual visit ($B = 0.96$). In other words, based on this analysis, **in-person visits are associated with lower absenteeism rates but virtual are not.** Further exploration of this indicated that the **lowest absenteeism rates are among students who received a visit in a community location rather than in-home, and in fact, when accounting for prior year risk, the result is significant for community location but not for in-home visits.**

Last, we examined how students responded to items on the annual school climate survey. In elementary school, only 5th grade students take the climate survey and as such, we compared 5th grade students who received a home visit to 5th grade students who did not receive a home visit. This significantly reduced the n-size of the sample and only 292 students are included in this analysis. An overview of the results are shown in table 3, a “+” sign indicates a positive relationship and cells that are left blank indicate no relationship. Students who received a home visit, regardless of whether it was in-person or virtual reported higher engagement and adult support compared to students who did not receive a home visit. Students who received an in-person visit reported higher social emotional competencies compared to students who received a virtual visit or no visit. There is no association between home visits and adult respect. These results are similar to the 2021-2022 evaluation in which students reported higher engagement and adult support.

Climate Scale	Home Visit	Bridge Visit
Social Emotional Learning	+	
Engagement	+	+
Adult Support	+	+
Adult Respect		

Table 3. Elementary School Home Visit and Climate Survey Summary.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

There were three middle schools that participated in home visits that were included in the analysis. Unlike in elementary school, most students received a virtual visit rather than an in-person visit. Of the students who received an in-person visit, only 8 (<0.5% of the students) received a visit at a community location so we do not analyze that separately in middle school.

	Number of Visits	Percent
Home Visit	46	1.94
Bridge/Virtual Visit	221	9.3
No Visit	2,110	89
Total	2,377	

Table 4. Middle School Summary of Home Visits.

Based on a regression and a weighted analysis, there was no association between home visits and absenteeism. Figure 2 indicates that absenteeism rates are actually slightly higher in the home visit group, however, this difference is not statistically significant when accounting for demographic variables and academic risk. We did further break that down to examine home visits and virtual visits. In this analysis we randomly selected one fourth of the comparison group and examined only 697 students who did not receive a visit compared to 46 who received a home visit and 221 who received a virtual visit. For the small group of students who received an **in-person visit, their absenteeism rates were lower ($B = 0.026$, $p = 0.02$) compared to students who did not receive a visit. This association was not present for virtual visits suggesting that attendance could be related to in-person visits but not virtual visits.**

Based on a logistic regression analysis, **suspensions were significantly higher in the group who received home visits.** Further exploration of this trend found that students who received a home visit also had more suspensions in the 2021-2022 school year suggesting that students who received a suspension were already at higher risk. However, even when accounting for that in the analysis, suspensions were still higher among students who received a home visit. When we randomly selected one fourth of the comparison group and examined in-person vs. virtual visits, only students who had received a virtual visit had higher suspension rates. In other words, this negative association was only present for virtual visits, not in-person.

There were no associations between home visits and academic outcomes for both SBAC proficiency and GPA. We examined climate survey responses using the randomly selected comparison group. Table 5 shows the associations between home visits and climate survey responses. Notably, **adult support is positive for both home and bridge visits, which is consistent with the findings from elementary school and findings from the 2021-2022 school year.**

Climate Scale	Home Visit	Bridge Visit
Self-Awareness of Self-Concept		
Self-Awareness of Emotions		
Social Awareness		
Self-Management of Emotions		-
Self-Management of Goals	+	
Self-Management of Schoolwork		
Relationship Skills	+	+
Responsible Decision-Making		
Engagement		
Adult Support	+	+
Adult Respect		

Table 5. Overview of Middle School Home Visit and Climate Survey Results.

HIGH SCHOOL

There were three high schools that participated in parent teacher home visits in the 2022-2023 school year. However, only 95 students received a home visit (compared to 3,884 students who did not receive a visit at the same schools). Of the 95 students who received a home visit, 19 received a virtual visit and 76 received an in-person visit making it too small to run any meaningful analyses. When comparing home visits to no home visits in high school, there is no association between visits for attendance, suspensions, or academic outcomes. There is a small association between home visits and adult support as reported on the climate survey.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Home visits has continued to be offered virtually since the 2020-2021 school year. Even though many things have largely gone back in-person, having a virtual option is convenient for everyone involved. Results from the focus groups in this year's evaluation and in the 2021-2022 evaluation revealed that virtual visits can be a great way to get buy-in from both families and staff who might be hesitant to participate. One family member even indicated they would not have initially participated if there had not been a virtual option. Virtual options are also convenient for staff as they do not have to travel and can both save time, and participate in more home visits.

Despite the benefits of virtual home visits, the results indicate that there tends to be more of an association between in-person home visits and student outcomes. Data from elementary school suggest that in-person visits are associated with lower absenteeism rates but virtual visits are not. There is no association between home visits and attendance in middle school, until the analysis is broken down by in-person and virtual, and then there is a small association between in-person visits and attendance.

Further in middle school, suspensions are actually higher for students who received a home visit, but this association is not present for students who received in-person visits.

As such, while virtual visits can be a great tool especially families who are new to the program or are hesitant, the data suggest that visits should shift more toward in-person whenever possible. Having a visit in a community location, rather than in the home, can be a great alternative for families who do not necessarily feel comfortable with staff in their homes.

Results suggest that home visits might be related to absenteeism rates in elementary school and students responses to the climate survey, but not other outcomes such as behavior or academics. In middle school, suspensions are higher for students who received a home visit compared to those who did not (although this effect is no longer present when looking only at in-person visits). However, in middle school there is some evidence of targeting higher risk students as those same students were also more likely to be suspended in the previous school year.

Home visits were also associated with how students feel about their school as measured by the annual climate survey. Notably, students who received a home visit reported higher levels of adult support compared to students who did not receive a home visit in elementary, middle, and high school (although the association in high school was not as strong).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Results from both qualitative and quantitative analyses suggest there are modest benefits associated with the home visit program (especially in elementary school and in-person visits), and there are also areas for improvement. While families value the visits and would like the program to continue, there are important considerations that could improve the program:

- Consider adding more structure to the home visits. Although the first visit is not intended to include a discussion on the student's academics, visits could include general resources around parenting, academics, or other resources that do not target to the student specific. For example,
 - Staff could bring information about Parent University.
 - Staff could discuss what they are learning about and include a resource on how parents can support their student's learning at home.
 - Staff could bring information about different programs that are offered at the school or the community that is of interest to the student, and staff can show parents how to register their student.
 - Especially in high needs communities, staff can provide resources to support not only the family but others in the community such as hours and locations of local food banks, programs to help pay utilities bills, family resource centers, or other local resources that might benefit families.
- Ensure families understand the expectation and their role for the visit.
- Consider prioritizing in-person visits. Consider only using virtual visits for families who might not feel comfortable having someone in their home, but use in-person home visits or community

visits whenever possible. Visits at a park, restaurant, or somewhere else in the community are also a great alternative for families who are not comfortable having visits their home.

- Consider having at least one teacher or adult attend the visit who has regular contact with the student at school. This could be their classroom teacher or another adult (e.g., a counselor) who regularly interacts with the student.
- As the program expands, continue to offer the program in middle and high school. In general, middle and high schools tend to have lower levels of implementation compared to elementary schools.