LEARNING COMMUNITY OF DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES

ANNUAL REPORT

In compliance with §79-2104.02 & §79-2118

SUBMITTED TO THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE DECEMBER 2012

learning community
OF DOUGLAS AND SARPY COUNTIES

6949 SOUTH 110TH STREET, OMAHA, NE 68128-5721 / PHONE: 402.964.2405

WWW.LEARNINGCOMMUNITYDS.ORG

EVERY CHILD • EVERY OPPORTUNITY • EVERY COMMUNITY

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

Lorraine Chang
Chair, Learning Community Coordinating Council

Rick Kolowski, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Learning Community Coordinating Council

Learning Community Coordinating Council

Subcouncil 1
Jeanne Anderson
Sandra Jensen
Nancy Jacobson

Subcouncil 4
Rick Kolowski
Mike Pate
Dwite Pedersen

Subcouncil 2
Kris Carter
Ernie Chambers
Freddie Gray

Subcouncil 5
D. Paul Hartnett
John Synowiecki
Nina Wolford

Subcouncil 3
Lorraine Chang
Jack Heidel
Martha Slosburg

Subcouncil 6
Mike Avery
Tom Grimm
Don Kelly
Ann Long

Learning Community Staff

Ted Stilwill
Chief Executive Officer

Brian Gabrial
Finance Director

Patti Benzel
Council Operations Manager

Renee Franklin
Executive Director,
Elementary Learning Centers

Paula Erlewine
Executive Assistant

Data and Evaluation Consultants

Dr. Bert Jackson
Dr. Lisa St. Clair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Executive Summary

Senator Adams and members of the Senate Education Committee,

It is our pleasure to provide this Annual Report to you on the activities of the Learning Community. This report not only meets the requirements of §79-2104.02 and §79-2118, but also provides you with information on our success in elementary programs funded through the Elementary Levy as authorized by §77-3442. The Learning Community wants to take the opportunity to share with the Committee, and the people of Nebraska, our significant progress toward the goal of establishing "visionary resources centers for enhancing the success of elementary students, particularly those students who face challenges in the educational environment due to factors such as poverty, limited English skills, and mobility." (§79-2112)

Sections I, II and III – Open Enrollment

The first section of the report makes some observations about the **demographics** of the Learning Community in 2011-12:

- 110,098 K-12 Students

- 43% were eligible for free and reduced price lunches across the two-county area

- But the FRL rate varied from 80% in North Omaha to 17% in Western Douglas and Sarpy Counties

The second section of the report details trends with regard to students applying for **Open Enrollment** in the spring, those who were accepted and, of those who were accepted, the number who enrolled the following fall. The first year that this cycle of application, acceptance and enrollment was completed was the 2010-11 school year. The second full cycle, the 2011-12 school year, is included in this report with information only on applications that were made and accepted for the 2012-13 school year.

After two full cycles of **Open Enrollment**, there are now 4,392 students enrolled through Open Enrollment. That number is now 3.96% of the K-12 student population in the Learning Community and that proportion will grow for several years to come. There is a wide range of Open Enrollment students in various Learning Community districts, with 0.49% in Elkhorn to 8.2% and 9% in Ralston and Millard respectively.

Across the Learning Community, 42.35 % of open-enrolled students qualified for free or reduced price lunches in 2011-12, which is about the same as the Learning Community percentage of 43% for all students. Of all the students who open enrolled in 2011-12, 37% contributed to the socioeconomic diversity of their new school either because they are eligible for free or reduced price lunches and they are attending a school with a lower number of free or reduced price lunch student than the Learning Community average that their original school, or they do not qualify for free or reduced price lunches and are attending a school that has free and reduced price percentage higher than the Learning Community average.

This report also includes information on the **capacity** of school districts to accept Open Enrollment students. School districts in the Learning Community are all required by the Learning Community's Diversity Plan to use a uniform methodology for determining capacity to receive students through Open Enrollment. There continues to be considerable capacity for districts to accept students through Open Enrollment, but there are significant, but reasonable, variations by district and by grade level. Across the Learning Community, 96% of elementary schools had capacity to receive students at least one grade level, while 79% of middle schools and 68% of high schools had capacity to receive students at one or more grades. Capacity is most available in schools with percentages of free and reduced priced lunch students above the Learning Community average (43%).

The report also details the number of students who apply for Open Enrollment for the 2012-13 school year and the number accepted. The number enrolled will not be available until next year's report.

For the 2012-13 school year, 3,539 students, an increase of about 10%, applied for Open Enrollment, and 2,798, or 79% were accepted. Of those accepted, 40% had the potential to increase diversity in their new school.

For this draft of the Report, we are not able to include information for Section III that deals with student performance and Open Enrollment. The 2011-12 student achievement information from the Nebraska Department of Education is embargoed until the public release of the "State of the Schools" report on November 20, and information that will be provided in this section would violate that embargo if made public before that date.

Section IV – Elementary Programs Results

In the 2011-12 school year, 6,917 students were served by programs funded through the Learning Community's Elementary Levy. The Learning Community funded **extended learning** programs, such as after school and summer school, **Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten** programs, and **family support** programs offered by the Learning Community Center of South Omaha, Lutheran Family Services and Communities In Schools. All of those programs were rigorously evaluated by the Munroe-Meyer Center at UNMC. The Learning Community is also excited to note that, for the current 2012-13 school year, programs are funded to serve more than 11,000 students across 8 school districts.

The **extended learning** programs varied in the amount of time students were served, with an average of 95 hours per student for 4,190 students in school year programs and 244 hours for the 1,545 students served in summer school programs. Students in extended learning programs showed slight to significant improvement in measures of student achievement.

In the Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten programs, 891 students were served, and those students averaged 96 hours in this summer program. Jump Start students were significantly more prepared for Kindergarten, and 96% of parents reported that their child would be more successful in Kindergarten as a result of the program.

In late spring of 2012, the Learning Community opened the **Learning Community Center of South Omaha**. The focus of the Center is family literacy and 67 parents, with 165 students, were enrolled

during the initial period studied by this evaluation. All of the families were Hispanic/Latino and all students enrolled in school qualified for free or reduced price lunches. We only have the baseline data at this point that indicates literacy levels as parents began the program. Those levels certainly confirm the need for the program, but it is too early to gather data on the direct academic benefits of program. In the qualitative data, parents have indicated that they are more comfortable talking with teachers in their school, and all participated in parent-teacher conferences. All now have, and use, library cards and report better understanding of the need to read books with their children. The number of families served has now increased to the limits of the current space. As the Learning Community is able to secure more space, we have families ready to enroll and the program will scale up considerably.

In 2011-12, the Learning Community contracted with Lutheran Family Services and Communities In Schools to provide another kind of **family support services.** We know that there can be significant academic challenges in elementary schools serving very high poverty populations. But it is also the case that such schools must become a base for providing support services for families who present family or home-based problems which directly interfere with a child's learning in school. The family or home-based services are most often provided by various community organizations and agencies, but the school has a strong interest in seeing the needs are identified and addressed in a coordinated manner. If these services are not provided in a coordinated way, an inordinate amount of the principal's and teachers' time is consumed in family support activities and less time is available to deal with instructional matters that are the main business of the school. That is the problem that these family support services are working to solve.

The report provides data on two different versions or service models, as provided by Communities In Schools and Lutheran Family Services. To one degree or another, both yielded positive results, as detailed in that section. For 2012-13, the Learning Community is implementing a single model that we believe will provide an even stronger solution to these issues. We have tremendous cooperation from the Omaha Public Schools in supporting this single model, and we are optimistic that we will see an even more improved set of results.

Following the Nebraska Legislature's historic and unique action in 2007, the elected members of the Learning Community Coordinating Council took office in January of 2009 without a support organization or structure. Since that time, operational policies and procedures have been established so that the legislation is being fully implemented and yielding results. Thanks to outstanding cooperation and good management on the part of school districts, the Open Enrollment process operates smoothly and is becoming more accessible and easier to manage for families. For programs serving elementary and early childhood students, there has been a trajectory of increasing numbers and increasing quality that has yielded documented positive academic outcomes for students. It is our commitment to continue to improve on those results.

Lorraine Chang
Chair, Learning Community Coordinating Council

Ted Stilwill
CEO, Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties

Section I – Demographic Characteristics

This section of the report summarizes the student demographics of the Learning Community. It includes total enrollment, percent of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRL), English Language Learners (ELL), and a school mobility factor[1] for the 2011-2012 school year, along with comparative data from previous years.

The Nebraska State Department of Education (NDE) provided the data for this portion of the report. The numbers are submitted to NDE by each school district and reflect enrollment as the last Friday of September. The NDE refers to these data as the Fall Membership count.

Demographic Information by Subcouncil

Nebraska Statute establishes six Achievement Subcouncils within the two-county area of the Learning Community. Election Commissioners of the two counties initially used census data from the year 2000 to establish Subcouncil boundaries, dividing the population among the Subcouncils as equally as feasible. These boundaries were in effect through the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. In 2011, the Learning Community Coordinating Council realigned Subcouncil boundaries because population shifts had affected proportional representation of Council Members. The adjustment was based on 2010 census data and brought each Subcouncil population within a 3% variance. Therefore, although comparisons among the Subcouncils across years are of interest, it is important to understand that the Subcouncils were composed of different schools in 2011-2012 than in previous years.

Table I.1 (page 5) presents demographic data for each Subcouncil, including total number of enrolled students, the percent eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL), percent of English Language Learners (ELL), and the school mobility factor.

---

[1] Mobility rate, as currently calculated by the Nebraska Department of Education, is not associated with a specific student; that is, it is not the degree to which a student has attended school in multiple buildings, rather it is an indication only of the degree of mobility associated with a school. For example, a school building begins the year with 20 students. During the year, three students move out and three students move in. The mobility number is 6 or 30%. (NDE State of the Schools Report, 2009-2010.

Table: I.1 2011-2012 Demographic Characteristics of Learning Community

	SC	Total Enrollment	Number of Schools	Percent FRL	Percent ELL	Percent Mobility
Elementary	1	7,480	18	40%	4%	10%
Middle	1	1,890	3	66%	5%	16%
High	1	3,915	3	49%	3%	19%
Subcouncil Total	**1**	**13,285**	**24**	**47%**	**4%**	**14%**
Elementary	2	8,543	24	91%	16%	19%
Middle	2	1,669	3	77%	2%	18%
High	2	6,024	3	65%	3%	22%
Subcouncil Total	**2**	**16,236**	**30**	**80%**	**10%**	**20%**
Elementary	3	9,216	28	54%	14%	10%
Middle	3	2,739	4	60%	7%	13%
High	3	2,854	2	31%	1%	5%
Subcouncil Total	**3**	**14,809**	**34**	**51%**	**11%**	**10%**
Elementary	4	10,423	25	20%	3%	6%
Middle	4	5,082	6	18%	1%	5%
High	4	6,902	3	16%	1%	5%
Subcouncil Total	**4**	**22,407**	**34**	**18%**	**2%**	**6%**
Elementary	5	11,731	25	65%	25%	11%
Middle	5	3,228	5	61%	12%	10%
High	5	7,091	4	57%	6%	15%
Subcouncil Total	**5**	**22,050**	**34**	**62%**	**17%**	**12%**
Elementary	6	10,977	27	18%	2%	6%
Middle	6	5,159	9	19%	1%	5%
High	6	5,985	7	15%	0%	5%
Subcouncil Total	**6**	**22,121**	**43**	**17%**	**1%**	**6%**
Elementary	All LC	58,370	147	47%	11%	10%
Middle	All LC	19,767	30	41%	4%	9%
High	All LC	32,771	22	39%	2%	12%
LC Total	**All LC**	**110,908**	**199**	**43%**	**7%**	**11%**

- The six Subcouncils vary in total enrollment, ranging from 13,285 in Subcouncil 1 to 22,407 in Subcouncil 4.

- The percentage of students who qualify for FRL also varies greatly, from 17% and 18% in Subcouncils 6 and 4, respectively, to 80% in Subcouncil 2. Subcouncils 1, 3, and 5 are above 43%, the percentage for the total Learning Community, with 47%, 51%, and 62%, respectively.

- At 17%, Subcouncil 5 has the highest percentage of English Language Learners (ELL). Subcouncils 1, 4, and 6 at 4%, 2%, and 1%, respectively, have the lowest and are lower than the percentage in the Learning Community as a whole (7%).

- As explained in footnote 1 (page 4), mobility rate is not associated with a specific student. Rather, it is an indication of the degree of mobility associated with a school, the frequency of

student movement into and out of a school. Mobility rates for 2011-2012 vary from a high of 20% in Subcouncil 2 to a low of 6% in Subcouncils 4 and 6.

Table I.2 compares enrollment across the three years of the Learning Community's existence. Because Subcouncil boundaries were changed in 2011, changes in enrollment between 2011-2012 and the first two years can be attributed to the movement of Subcouncil boundaries, as well as changes in the student population, while comparisons between the first two years can be attributed solely to changes in the student population.

Table I.2 Enrollment Comparisons for 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-1012

|	2009-2010 Enrollment	2010-2011 Enrollment	2011-2012 Enrollment	Percent Change
Subcouncil 1	10,409	10,402	13,285	27.63%
Subcouncil 2	15,937	16,132	16,236	1.88%
Subcouncil 3	12,455	12,519	14,809	18.90%
Subcouncil 4	26,316	26,776	22,407	-14.85%
Subcouncil 5	19,070	19,730	22,050	15.63%
Subcouncil 6	22,499	23,241	22,121	-1.68%
Total	106,686	108,800	110,908	3.96%

Enrollment in the Learning Community increased by approximately 4% between 2009-2010 and 2011-2012. The movement of Subcouncil boundaries placed considerably more students within Subcouncils 1, 3, and 5, and fewer in Subcouncils 4 and 6. Clearly, student enrollment in 2011-2012 is more evenly distributed among the six Subcouncils than in the other two years. The range between highest enrollment and lowest was over 16,000 in 2009-2010, while in 2011-2012 the range was approximately 9,000.

Figures I.1, I.2 (page 7) and I.3 (page 7) illustrate changes in FRL, ELL, and mobility in each Subcouncil.

Figure I.1: FRL percentages by subcouncil for 2009-10, 2010-11, & 2011-12
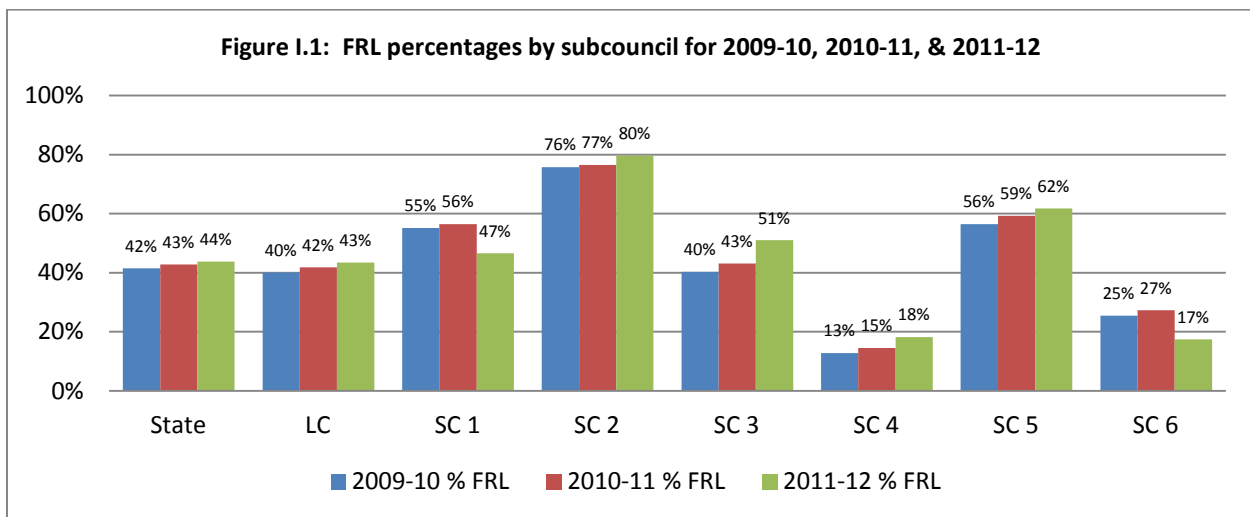
The percentage of students who qualify for FRL has increased slightly in the State and in the Learning Community, as a whole. As the graph illustrates, percentages also increased in four of the Subcouncils and decreased in two. Changes within Subcouncils between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 may be attributed to changes in the number of students who qualify, as well as changes in the Subcouncil boundaries. Although the overall enrollment is more equally distributed among the Subcouncils than it

was in previous years, the gap between the Subcouncils with the highest and lowest percentages of FRL is approximately the same across all three years, 63% in both 2009-2010 and 2011-2012, and 62% in 2010-2011.

Figure I.2: ELL percentages by subcouncil for 2009-10, 2010-11, & 2011-12
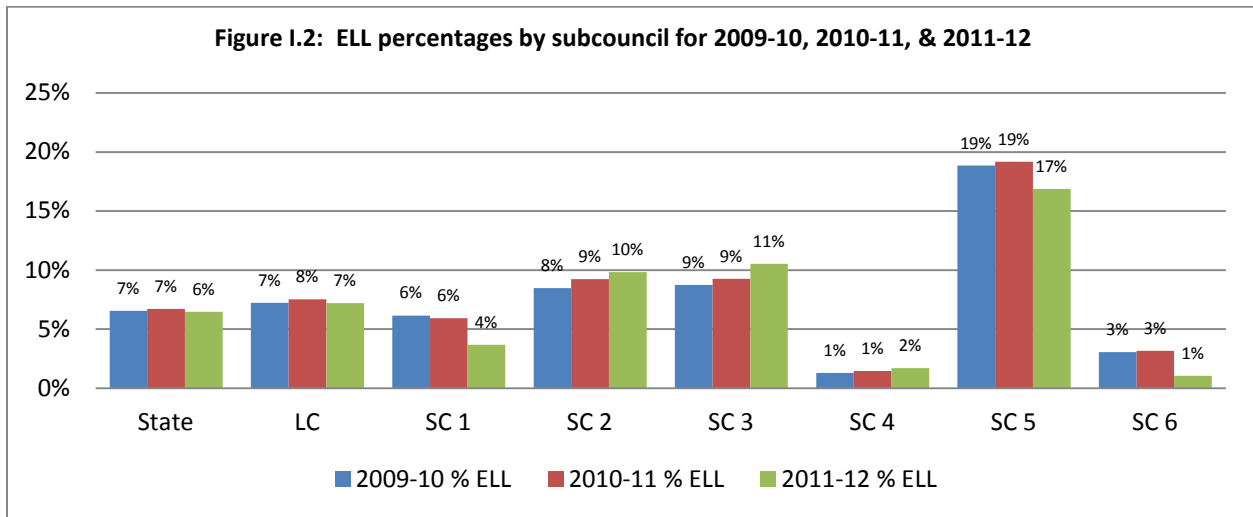
The graph above shows a slight decrease in ELL in 2011-2012 for the State, the Learning Community, and three of the Subcouncils, while the other three Subcouncils had small increases. Differences in the percentage of ELL between highest and lowest, like FRL, remain similar across all three years: 18% difference in both 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 and 16% in 2011-2012.

Figure I.3: Mobility percentages by subcouncil for 2009-10, 2010-11, & 2011-12
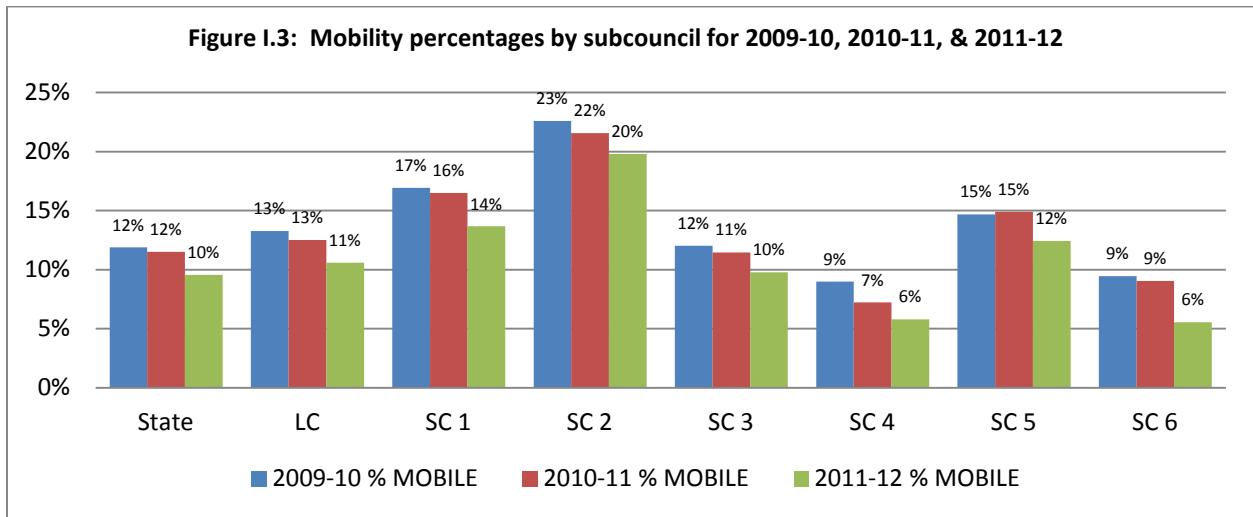

Figure I.3 shows a slightly lower mobility rate in 2011-2012 than in the previous two years in the State, the Learning Community, and each of the six Subcouncils. Again, the percentage gap between the Subcouncil with the greatest mobility and those with the least remains approximately the same across all the years: 14% in 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 and 15% in 2010-2011.

Free and Reduced Lunch Concentration

To further examine the differences in poverty among Learning Community Subcouncils, schools were placed in quintile ranges based on the percentage of students in a building who were eligible for free or reduced price lunch in the 2011-2012 school year. This analysis provides a way to examine differences in the concentration of poverty among the Subcouncils. Table I.3 shows the number of schools in each Subcouncil, whose concentration of FRL falls in each quintile, (i.e., 0 to 20%, 20% to 40%, 40% to 60%, 60% to 80% and 80% to 100%). These data are presented by level (elementary, middle and high school).

Table I.3 2011-2012 Free and Reduced Lunch Concentration for Presented in Quartiles by Subcouncil by Level

	SC	Number of Schools	Number of schools in the following ranges				
			0% up to and including 20%	over 20% up to and including 40%	over 40% up to and including 60%	over 60% up ot and including 80%	over 80% up to and including 100%
Elementary	1	18	4	4	6	4	0
Middle	1	3	0	0	0	3	0
High	1	3	1	0	1	1	0
Subcouncil Total	**1**	**24**	**5**	**4**	**7**	**8**	**0**
Elementary	2	24	0	0	0	3	21
Middle	2	3	0	0	0	2	1
High	2	3	0	0	1	2	0
Subcouncil Total	**2**	**30**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**7**	**22**
Elementary	3	28	6	2	11	7	2
Middle	3	4	0	1	1	1	1
High	3	2	0	1	1	0	0
Subcouncil Total	**3**	**34**	**6**	**4**	**13**	**8**	**3**
Elementary	4	25	15	6	3	1	0
Middle	4	6	3	3	0	0	0
High	4	3	2	1	0	0	0
Subcouncil Total	**4**	**34**	**20**	**10**	**3**	**1**	**0**
Elementary	5	25	3	5	5	3	9
Middle	5	5	1	1	1	0	2
High	5	4	0	2	0	1	1
Subcouncil Total	**5**	**34**	**4**	**8**	**6**	**4**	**12**
Elementary	6	27	16	5	5	1	0
Middle	6	9	6	2	1	0	0
High	6	7	5	2	0	0	0
Subcouncil Total	**6**	**43**	**27**	**9**	**6**	**1**	**0**
Elementary	All LC	147	44	22	30	19	32
Middle	All LC	30	10	7	3	6	4
High	All LC	22	8	6	3	4	1
LC Total	**All LC**	**199**	**62**	**35**	**36**	**29**	**37**

Table I.3 illustrates the dramatic differences in poverty among the Subcouncils. The following are some interesting facts shown in the table:

- Just over 30%, 62 of the Learning Community's 199 schools, have a FRL concentration of 20% or less and 47 (76%) of those low-poverty schools are in Subcouncils 4 and 6 (20 in SC 4 and 27 in SC 6).

- Only 12% (15 of 122) schools in the other four Subcouncils have FRL percentages of 20% or less.
- On the other end of the continuum, 34 of the 37 schools that have FRL percentages greater than 80% are in Subcouncils 2 and 5.

Looking at the number of schools above and below 40% (the approximate FRL percentage of the Learning Community as a whole) also illustrates the great differences in the poverty level across Subcouncils. For example:

- Subcouncil 4 has only four schools with FRL percentages greater than 40%, and Subcouncil 6 has only seven. Together, 66 of the 77 schools located in these two Subcouncils have FRL percentages less than 40%.
- In the other four Subcouncils (1, 2, 3, and 5), 25% of the schools have FRL percentages less than 40%, and 75% of the schools are above 40%.

Figure I.4 provides additional information regarding the concentration of poverty within the Learning Community. The graph shows the number of schools in 10% intervals for the 2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2012 school years. For example, in 2009-2010 there were 32 schools in which 10% or less of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. In 2010-2011 there were 27 schools in that range and in 2011-2012 there were 29.

Figure I.4: Number of Schools in FRL intervals of 10% for 2009-10, 2010-11, & 2011-12
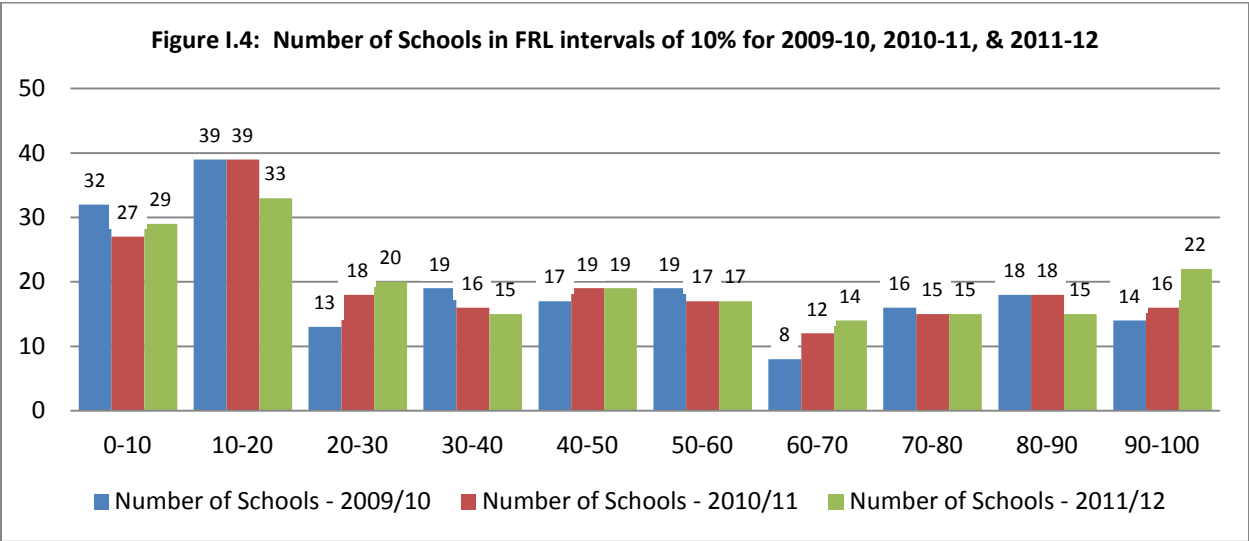
As the Open Enrollment process continues from year to year, the goal is to increase the number of schools in the middle ranges of the graph and lower the numbers on either end, indicating movement toward more balanced socio-economic diversity within Learning Community Schools. It is important to understand that changes in the number of schools in each decile of this graph may be attributable a combination of several factors: 1) increase in the number of students in the Learning Community who qualify for FRL, 2) increase in the number of schools in the Learning Community (195 in 2009 and 199 in 2011), 3) change in students' residence, and 4) movement of students to schools outside their attendance area through open enrollment or within-district transfer processes.

The following are some of the facts illustrated by Figure I.4:

- The number of schools in the less than 20% range has declined from 71 schools (36% of 195 schools) in 2009-2010 to 62 (31% of 199 schools) in 2011-2012.

- The schools in the over 80% range have increased from 32 to 37 (16.4% of the schools to 18.6%).

- Between 20% and 60%, the range with approximately equal intervals on either side of the Learning Community total of 43%, there has been little change. In 2009-2010 there were 68 schools within that range (34.9% of the schools), while in 2011-2012 there were 71 (35.7% of the schools).

- In a narrower mid-range, 30% to 50%, there were 36 schools in the first year and 34 last year, 18.5% of the schools in 2009 and 17.1% in 2011.

- The increase has been in the higher ranges of the graph. The number of schools in the 70% and above range increased slightly from 48 in 2009-2010 to 52 of the schools in 2011-2012. Based on the total number of schools in each of those years, this represents an increase of 1.5%.

- In the lowest three ranges 0 to 30%, there was a decrease of 1.5%.

In summary, at this point, there does not appear to be movement toward the middle, representing a more even socioeconomic distribution of students; but, again, it is important to remember that the distribution is affected by increases in the number of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, as well as student movement.

SECTION II – OPEN ENROLLMENT

This section of the report describes the status of Open Enrollment and contains two subsections. The first subsection provides Open Enrollment information for the 2011–2012 school year. It reports the total number of Open Enrollment students, the number of new Open Enrollment students in the 2011-2012 school year, and the possible effects on socioeconomic diversity in Learning Community Schools. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) provided these data. The second subsection contains data received from Learning Community school districts, and provides information about school districts' anticipated additional capacity for the 2012-2013 school year and the number of applications received and approved for the 2012–2013 school year.

Capacity, Applications, and Enrollment Descriptions

Before presenting the Open Enrollment data, it is important to have a common understanding of the concept of capacity, application procedures, and the difference between *Open* Enrollment and *Option* Enrollment.

Capacity

One of the charges in statute requires a consistent methodology that can be applied to all schools in determining the degree to which a school building has the capacity to accept students from outside the school district's attendance boundaries. Prior to the implementation of Open Enrollment, the DLR Group of Omaha, in cooperation with school district administrators and representatives of the Learning Community Coordinating Council, developed a procedure for establishing building capacity. School personnel use Enrollment Capacity Data Sheets, developed through that process, to determine available capacity in each school building.

Procedures for determining capacity vary by grade level. In elementary schools, capacity is a function of the number of classrooms per grade and class size. Middle school enrollment capacity is a function of the number of classrooms, the number of core curriculum teams, class size, and class periods in the day. As at the elementary level, middle school capacity is associated with each grade level separately. Enrollment capacity for high schools and combined junior/senior highs is a function of the number of classrooms, average classroom enrollment, and the number of periods each day that a room is scheduled for instruction. Individual grade level is not a factor.

On March 1st of each year, member districts submit completed Open Enrollment Capacity Data Sheets for each school. These data provide the districts' best estimates of the number of Open Enrollment students they can accept at each grade, in each school building, for the next school year.

Applications

Applications are available in November each year, and applicants must submit completed applications to the requested districts by March 15th. Applicants may submit applications to multiple districts and may list as many as three schools of choice in each district. The applications include self-reported eligibility for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) based on federal guidelines provided with the application. School districts approve or deny an application based on the capacity available and following the priority sequence outlined in the Learning Community Diversity Plan as follows:

1) First preference goes to siblings of students who will be enrolled as continuing students in a school for the next school year. In other words, the first priority is approval of students who have a sibling who currently attends and will also be attending the requested school the year the Open Enrollment applicant first attends.

2) Second preference goes to students who contribute to the socioeconomic diversity of the school. In schools with a percentage of students qualifying for FRL that is greater than the total of all schools in the Learning Community (approximately 43% in 2011-2012), the priority goes to students who **do not** qualify for FRL, and in schools that have a lower percentage of FRL-eligible students than the Learning Community total, the priority goes to students who **do** qualify for FRL.

3) After approving all applicants in the first and second priority categories, all other applications become eligible. At each level of priority, if there is not capacity to accept all applications in that category, a lottery is conducted.

Districts must notify applicants of approval or denial by April 5th, and applicants must notify the districts of their acceptance by April 25th. Although applicants may apply to multiple school districts, they can accept Open Enrollment in only one district.

As required by Nebraska Statute, the number of applications received and approved is submitted to the Learning Community by member school districts in September of each year. This year's Annual Report presents the capacity and application data for the 2012-2013 school year. [1]

---

[1] The actual enrollment data for 2021-2013 are supplied by the Nebraska Department of Education and do not become available until the conclusion of the school year so they are not be included in the 2012 Annual Report.

Open and Option Enrollment

Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, school districts' reports to the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) included identifying students as *open* enrolled or *option* enrolled.

- *Open Enrollment* refers to students who transfer to another school or school district through the Learning Community's Open Enrollment process, which went into effect in the 2010-2011 school year.

- *Option Enrollment* designates students who transferred between school districts prior to the 2010-2011 school year through a process that was implemented Statewide in 1993. Students who reside outside the Learning Community two-county area, and transfer to a Learning Community school, continue to be classified as Option Enrollment.

It is important to understand this distinction as it relates to the data presented in this section of the report. Learning Community schools may currently have both Open Enrollment and Option Enrollment students. All students who transferred among Learning Community Districts beginning with the 2010-2011 school year are classified as Open Enrollment students. Those who transferred prior to the 2010-2011 school year are, for the most part, still classified as Option Enrollment students, although districts report that some students who previously were classified as Option Enrollment have changed their status to Open Enrollment by going through the Open Enrollment process. One other variation is noteworthy. Some districts use the Open Enrollment process for some or all students who request a transfer to another school within their resident district, while others do not.

The Status of Open Enrollment in 2011-2012

Data for this section was supplied by the Nebraska Department of Education. As described in Section I of the report, these enrollment numbers are submitted to NDE by each school district and reflect enrollment as of the last Friday of September. This report is referred to as the "Fall Membership Report." School districts code each enrolled student to indicate whether the student is a resident of the district, an Open Enrollment student or an Option Enrollment student. Table II.1 shows the number of new Open Enrollment students for the 2011-2012 school year.

Table II.1: Number of 2011-2012 New Open Enrollment Students

Total Number of New Open Enrollment Students	2,530	
Number and percent who qualify for FRL	1,128	44.58%
Number and percent who qualify for ELL	101	3.99%
Number and percent who qualify for both FRL and ELL	83	3.28%

Of the 2,530 new Open Enrollment students, NDE reports that 56 had been Option Enrollment students in the 2010-2012 school year and continued in the same school and/or district in the 2011-2012 school year,[2] bringing the number of new Open Enrollment transfers to 2,474. In the 2010-2011 school year, this number was 2,454.   As shown on Table II.1 (page 13) 44.6% of the new Open Enrollment students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. This is a slightly higher percentage than the total Learning Community, which is 43.48%[3]. Only 4% of the Open Enrollment students are classified as ELL; in the total Learning Community 7% of the students are ELL.

Table II.2 shows the total enrollment for each school district, the number of Open Enrollment students, and the proportion that represents. The Open Enrollment numbers are as of the last Friday in September in the 2011-2012 school year. These numbers include students who open-enrolled for the first time in the 2011-2012 school year, as well as those who open-enrolled in the 2010-2011 school year and continued to be enrolled in 2011-2012.

Table II.2: Number of 2011-2012 Open Enrollment Students by School District

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL FALL MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT	OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OPEN ENROLLED IN FALL MEMBERSHIP
OPS	47,879	503	1.05%
Elkhorn	5,896	29	0.49%
DC West	652	21	3.22%
Millard	22,407	1,696	7.57%
Ralston	2,860	235	8.22%
Bennington	1,457	7	0.48%
Westside	5,899	535	9.07%
Bellevue	9,664	832	8.61%
Papillion-LaVista	10,048	437	4.35%
Gretna	3,154	25	0.79%
Springfield-Platteview	979	72	7.35%
Total	**110,895**	**4,392**	**3.96%**

The difference across districts is attributable to numerous factors, but capacity to accept students from other districts at the grade level and in the school requested has a great effect on that variation. It is also important to remember that, for some districts, the numbers in the Open Enrollment column include students who used the Open Enrollment process to request transfer to another school within their resident district. This is the established practice, at least in some cases, in five of the Learning Community School Districts. The other six either do not have multiple school buildings at any grade level, or they use the Learning Community Open Enrollment application process only for students who

---

[2] Some of these families may have been motivated to re-apply as Open Enrollment so transportation would be provided which, in most cases, was not provided under Option Enrollment. It is important to understand that these students are not newly transferred; in fact, they may have been enrolled in the District and school they now attend since kindergarten.

[3] The Nebraska Department of Education reports that 48,220 students in the Learning Community Qualify for free or reduced price lunch. This represents 43.48% of the total Learning Community enrollment.

open-enroll from another school district and have other processes in place for transfer requests within the district. The Nebraska Department of Education provided separate counts for resident and non-resident Open Enrollment students, but, through contacts with school district officials, it was discovered that a large number of Open Enrollment students were mistakenly coded as residents of the district when they actually resided in another Learning Community School District. For this reason we do not know what proportion of the 2,530 students are residents of the district in which they were open-enrolled and what proportion were residents of another school district. The next subsection, which contains information received directly from the school districts, will report the number of resident and non-resident *applications* that were received and approved by each district.

As shown in Table II.2 (page 14), with 1,695 students, Millard Public Schools has the largest number of Open Enrollment students (7.57% of its total enrollment); however, Millard is one of the five districts that uses Open Enrollment for within-district transfers, so a portion of the 1,695 Open Enrollment students reside in the Millard School District and have used Open Enrollment to transfer to another Millard school. In 2010-2011, Millard reported that approximately 29% of the Open Enrollment applications they received for the 2011-2012 were from Millard residents. Bellevue, with 832 Open Enrollment students (8.61% of its total enrollment), has the second largest number, and Westside School District has the largest proportion of Open Enrollment students (approximately 9%). Neither Bellevue nor Westside use Open Enrollment for within district transfers, so all the Open Enrollment students in those two districts (832 in Bellevue and 535 in Westside) reside in other Learning Community School Districts.

Table II.3 shows the number of Open Enrollment students in the 2010-2011 school year and the *total* number of Open Enrollment students in 2011-2012 by grade. The degree of change (increases or decreases) from the 2010-2011 to the 2011-2012 school year appears in the last two columns of the table.

Table II.3 Number of Open Enrollment Students by Grade in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012

GRADE LEVEL	2010-11 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2011-12 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	CHANGE IN OPEN ENROLLMENT	PERCENT CHANGE
KG	512	609	97	18.95%
1	165	582	417	252.73%
2	182	264	82	45.05%
3	150	283	133	88.67%
4	150	250	100	66.67%
5	124	236	112	90.32%
6	118	266	148	125.42%
7	219	275	56	25.57%
8	105	304	199	189.52%
9	387	384	-3	-0.78%
10	152	391	239	157.24%
11	167	293	126	75.45%
12	132	255	123	93.18%
Total	2,563	4,392	1,829	71.36%

The number of Open Enrollment students increased by approximately 71% in 2011-2012. The numbers in the 2011-2012 column include both students who open-enrolled in the 2010-2011 school year and the students who enrolled for the first time in 2011-2012. The number at a

particular grade level reflects students who newly enrolled at that grade level and those who were one grade below that grade in 2010-2011. For example, the 2011-2012 first grade enrollment of 582 includes 2010-2011 kindergartners who continued as Open Enrollment first graders and first grade students who were newly enrolled in 2011-2012. Obviously, not all of the 512 Open Enrollment kindergartners in 2010-2011 would continue as Open Enrollment first graders in 2011-2012. Some, undoubtedly, moved out of the Learning Community, some moved to another school district within the Learning Community and chose to enroll as a resident of that district, others may have returned to their original resident district, and a few may have repeated kindergarten. We can expect that, as in the last two years, more kindergarten students than any other grade will use Open Enrollment, in part because the greatest capacity is often in kindergarten. As that first cohort of Open Enrollment kindergartners (those who first enrolled in 2010-2012) moves up the grades, the number of Open Enrollment students at their grade level will grow. For example, in 2012-2013 we would anticipate that the number of second grade Open Enrollment students will increase dramatically as that first group of Open Enrollment kindergarten students enters second grade.

The total enrollment in the Learning Community in 2011-2012 was 110,908 (see Table I.1 page 13) meaning that approximately 4% of the Learning Community students are open-enrolled. In 2010-2011, approximately 2.4% of the Learning Community students were open-enrolled.

The primary purpose of Open Enrollment is to produce a more balanced socioeconomic diversity in Learning Community Schools, with the hope of positively affecting academic performance of students who have economic disadvantages. Tables II.4, II.5 (page 17), and II.6 (page 18) provide information about the proportion of the Open Enrollment students eligible for free or reduced price lunch and the number of Open Enrollment students enrolled in a school to which they contributed to the socioeconomic diversity (i.e., FRL-eligible students in schools with a FRL percentage less than the Learning Community, as a whole, and non-FRL students in schools with a FRL percentage greater than that of the Learning Community).

Table II.4 (page 17) shows the total number of Open Enrollment students by grade and the proportion of the students eligible for FRL.

Table II.4 Total Number of Open Enrollment Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch by Grade

GRADE LEVEL	2011-12 OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	2011-12 FRL OPEN ENROLLMENT STUDENTS IN FALL MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT FRL
KG	609	190	31.20%
1	582	206	35.40%
2	264	145	54.92%
3	283	135	47.70%
4	250	127	50.80%
5	236	131	55.51%
6	266	119	44.74%
7	275	122	44.36%
8	304	150	49.34%
9	384	145	37.76%
10	391	151	38.62%
11	293	146	49.83%
12	255	93	36.47%
Total	**4,392**	**1,860**	**42.35%**

There is considerable variation in the percentage of FRL-eligible students across grade levels, but the total of 42.35% is just slightly less than the Learning Community as whole, which is 43.48%.

Table II.5 reports the proportion Open Enrollment students who are contributing to the socioeconomic diversity of the school in which they are enrolled. It shows the percentage for those who enrolled in the 2010-2011 school year and the total for the 2011-2012 school year. As described previously, these are students who qualify for FRL and have open-enrolled in a school with a FRL percentage that is lower than the Learning Community as a whole and students who do not qualify for FRL enrolled in a school with a percentage of FRL-eligible students that is greater than the Learning Community total.

Table II.5 Number and Percent of Open Enrollment Students Contributing to Socioeconomic Diversity

School Year	Total Open Enrolled	FRL Students in Schools < LC Avg	Non-FRL Students in Schools > LC Avg	Total Students Contributing to Diversity	Percent Contributing to Diversity	Students Not Contributing to Diversity	Percent Not Contributing to Diversity
2010-11	2,563	711	234	945	36.87%	1,618	63.13%
2011-12	4,392	1,214	404	1,618	36.84%	2,774	63.16%

The proportion of students who contributed to a school's diversity is approximately 37% in both years. In 2011-2012, 1,214 (75%) of the 1,618 who are contributing to the socioeconomic diversity of their school are students who qualify for FRL attending schools with a lower percentage of FRL students than the total Learning Community, and 25% (404) are students who do not qualify for FRL attending schools with higher percentages of FRL.

In 2011 it was reported that 37.8% of the *applications* approved in 2009-2010, for the 2010-2011 school year potentially contributed to the socioeconomic diversity of the accepting school (2011 Annual Report, page 23). Table II.5 (page 17) shows that just 1% less (36.87%) *enrolled,* indicating that the proportion of students who enrolled in schools to which they contributed to the diversity was about the same as the proportion who applied and were approved. In 2010-2011, 41.5% of the approved applications had the potential to contribute to the socioeconomic diversity of the school for which they were approved (2011 Annual Report, p. 18). From the data in Table II.5 (page 17) we know that approximately 37% of the students who enrolled in 2011-2012 are contributing to a school's diversity, approximately 4.5% less than the percent that approved.

Table II.6 shows the number and percentage of FRL-eligible Open Enrollment students at each grade who are enrolled in schools having a percentage of FRL students that is less than the Learning Community as a whole (43.48%).

Table II.6 *Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) Eligible Open Enrollment Students Enrolled in Low FRL Schools*

GRADE LEVEL	NUMBER OF FRL STUDENTS	FRL STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS < LC AVG	PERCENT OF FRL STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS < LC AVG
KG	190	111	58.42%
1	206	108	52.43%
2	145	71	48.97%
3	135	68	50.37%
4	127	65	51.18%
5	131	71	54.20%
6	119	65	54.62%
7	122	92	75.41%
8	150	114	76.00%
9	145	123	84.83%
10	151	127	84.11%
11	146	123	84.25%
12	93	76	81.72%
Total	1,860	1,214	65.27%

The NDE reports that in the 2011-2012 school year 48,220 Learning Community students qualified for FRL. Table II.6 shows that 1,860 (approximately 3.9%) of the 48,220 FRL students open-enrolled, and 1,214 of those students enrolled in a school with a FRL percentage lower than the Learning Community as a whole. It is important to understand that some of the 1,214 FRL students who open-enrolled in a school to which they contributed to the diversity may have left a school to which they also contributed to the diversity, perhaps causing that school's diversity to decline. From the available data, we cannot know to what extent that was the case.

Although the majority of Open Enrollment students transferred to schools where they did not contribute to the socioeconomic diversity, some schools almost certainly did become more diverse. Consider the following hypothetical example:

- Elementary School A has a K-6 enrollment of 200 students with 15% (30) of its students qualifying for FRL

- It has capacity for 10 additional kindergarteners and 5 first graders. The remaining grades are at capacity.

- School A receives 15 applications for kindergarten and 10 for first grade. Sixteen (16) of the applications (10 kindergarten and 6 first Grade) are from students who do not qualify for FRL and 9 (5 kindergarten and 4 first grade) are from students who do qualify.

- Three of the kindergarten applications are from siblings who do not qualify for FRL.

- Using the required priority sequence described in Section II (page 12) of this report, the school fills its 10 kindergarten and 5 first grade openings as follows:

Kindergarten

   a. Accepts the 3 kindergarten siblings.

   b. Accepts all 5 FRL-eligible kindergartners.

   c. From the remaining 7 kindergarten applications that do not qualify for FRL, the school randomly selects 2.

   d. Applying the required sequence, the school has filled its kindergarten capacity with 10 Open Enrollment students, 5 qualify for FRL and 5 do not.

First Grade

   a. Accepts all 4 applicants who qualify for FRL.

   b. From the 10 applicants who do not qualify for FRL, the school randomly selects 1.

   c. The school has filled its first grade capacity with 5 Open Enrollment students, 4 qualifying for FRL and 1 not.

- School A now has an enrollment of 215 with 39 (18.1%) qualifying for FRL.

This illustration demonstrates that, even though the data in Table II.5 (page 17) show that far more students open enroll in schools to which they do not contribute to the diversity than in schools to which they do contribute, the diversity of some schools will likely improve; however, it may be just as likely that, at the same time, other schools' diversity is declining as a result of Open Enrollment. For example:

- Some schools may receive few or no applications that would enhance diversity. In the example above, if all 25 of the applications had been from students who did not qualify for FRL, the enrollment would have increased to 215, but the number of students who qualify for FRL would remain at 30. The FRL percentage in the school would change from 15% to 14%.

- The resident school's diversity may also decline as a result of Open Enrollment. In a school that has an enrollment of 200 with 60% FRL (120 students), if 10 students who do not qualify for FRL and 5 who do qualify leave that school to enroll in another school, the FRL percentage increases to 62.2% in their resident school.

One other factor is worth noting. As explained earlier in this section of the report, students have been transferring across school district boundaries through Option Enrollment for nearly 20 years. Under Option Enrollment there was no requirement to give priority to applicants who would enhance socioeconomic diversity. The student who did not qualify for FRL may have been just as likely to be accepted in a school with a low percentage of FRL students as the student who qualified for FRL, and vice versa. In fact it is likely, although not verifiable, that students who did not qualify for FRL were more likely to apply to option-enroll into a school with a relatively low percentage of FRL-eligible students than into schools with higher percentages of FRL students. The acceptance priority sequence required by Open Enrollment, which gives preference to students who improve a school's socioeconomic diversity, has greater potential for equalization of socioeconomic diversity among schools than did the previous system. In addition, providing transportation may also have served to encourage such transfers to a greater extent than did Option Enrollment.

To this point the data presented in Section II have been relative to the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. The next subsection reports capacity and application data for the 2012-2013 school year. Enrollment data for the 2012-2013 school year will not be available until the conclusion of the current school year and will be reported in the 2012 Annual Report.

2012-2013 School Building Projected Capacity, Applications, and Approvals

Data for this subsection were provided by Learning Community School Districts. It contains districts' estimates of available capacity for the 2012-2013 school year and the number of applications each district received and approved. It also provides an analysis of the potential these accepted applicants have for improving the socioeconomic diversity of Learning Community schools.

Projected Building Capacity

As described in the beginning of Section II, districts supply the Learning Community with completed capacity worksheets by March 1st of each year. In this section, capacity data received from school districts in March 2012 for the 2012- 2013 school year are reported.

Table II.7 Number of Elementary, Middle and High Schools with Additional Capacity for 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013

Level	Number of schools submitting capacity worksheets			Number of schools with additional capacity			Percent of schools with additional capacity		
	2010-11*	2011-12**	2012-13***	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Elementary	146	146	149	93	138	143	63.70%	94.52%	95.97%
Middle School	29	30	30	21	25	23	72.41%	83.33%	76.67%
High School	22	22	22	17	15	15	77.27%	68.18%	68.18%
Total	197	198	201	131	178	181	66.50%	89.90%	90.05%

* For capacity information, the total number of schools is 197, which includes 2 new schools that opened in fall 2010
** For capacity information, the total number of schools is 198, which includes 1 new school which opened in fall 2011
*** For capacity information, the total number of schools is 201, which includes 3 new schools that opened in fall 2012

There was a slight increase in the proportion of elementary schools having capacity for additional students in the 2012-2013 school year. The number of high schools with additional capacity remained the same as the previous year, and there were two fewer middle schools with available capacity. Figure II.1 (page 22) graphically illustrates these differences across years.

Figure II.1: Percent of Schools With Additional Capacity
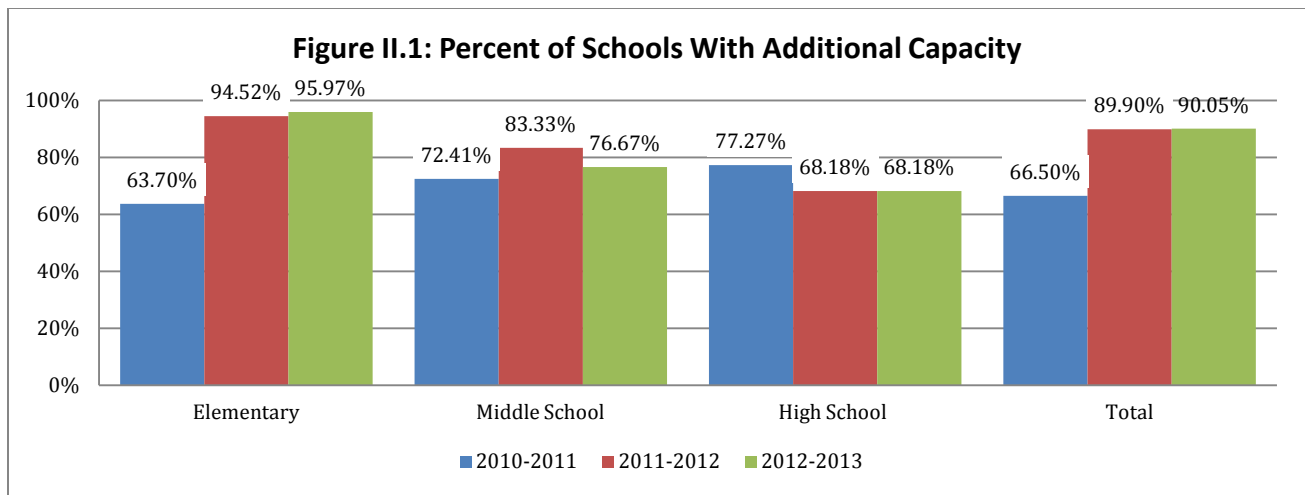
To examine capacity in relation to a school's socioeconomic composition, schools were placed in quintile ranges based on the percentage of students in a building who were eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) in the 2011-2012 school year (i.e., schools with 0 to 20% FRL, 20% to 40%, 40% to 60%, 60% to 80%, and over 80%). (FRL percentages are based on data received from NDE.) Table II.8 shows the total number of schools in each of these categories and the number reporting they had additional capacity for the 2012-2013 school year. Since FRL percentages for the three new elementary schools that opened in 2012-2013 were not known in the 2011-2012 school year, they are not included in the table.

Table II.8 Number of Schools Reporting Additional Capacity for 2012-2013 by FRL Quintile Range

Level	FRL rate ranges									
	0% up to and including 20%		over 20% up to and including 40%		over 40% up to and including 60%		over 60% up ot and including 80%		over 80% up to and including 100%	
	Total number of schools	Schools with capacity	Total number of schools	Schools with capacity	Total number of schools	Schools with capacity	Total number of schools	Schools with capacity	Total number of schools	Schools with capacity
Elementary	44	42	22	21	29	28	19	19	32	31
Middle School	10	6	7	5	3	3	6	6	4	3
High School	8	6	6	4	3	2	4	3	1	0
Total	**62**	**54**	**35**	**30**	**35**	**33**	**29**	**28**	**37**	**34**

Space was available in schools in each of the FRL concentration groupings (e.g., ≥ 20%, 20% to 40%, etc.) except in the single high school in the over 80% range. At the elementary level available capacity is distributed relatively evenly across the quintile ranges. At the middle school level in the 40% to 80% range, all nine schools (6 in the 40% to 60% and 3 in the 60% to 80% range) had additional capacity, while 6 of the 17 schools with FRL percentages of 40 or less did not have additional capacity.

Obviously, changes in the number of schools in each quintile affect capacity. Table II.9 shows the number of schools with FRL concentrations of 40% or less and those with more than 40% for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years[4].

Table II.9 Total Number of Schools by FRL Concentration 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

| Level | FRL rate ranges | | | |
| | 0% up to and including 40% | | over 40% up to and including 100% | |
	2011-12 Total number of schools	2012-13 Total number of schools	2011-12 Total number of schools	2012-13 Total number of schools
Elementary	70	66	76	80
Middle School	18	17	12	13
High School	15	14	7	8
Total	**103**	**97**	**95**	**101**

In 2011-2012 there were a total of six fewer schools with FRL percentages $\leq$ 40% – four at the elementary level and one at both the middle and high school levels–and six more with percentages greater than 40. Some of this change is likely related to the simple fact that the percentage of students who quality for FRL is increasing throughout the Learning Community and the State, but some of the change may be related to Open Enrollment.

The number of schools with capacity for additional students is of interest, but the number of students for whom capacity exists is far more relevant. Some schools that report having available capacity may have capacity for only a very few additional students and, perhaps, at only one or two grades, while others have space for many students at all grades. For that reason, the number of schools that have capacity for additional students may not align with the number of students for whom capacity exists. On elementary and middle school Enrollment Capacity Data Sheets, capacity is designated by grade. Table II.10 (page 24) shows the reported student capacity by grade for all the Learning Community Schools comparing capacities in each year of the program along with the percent difference between 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

---

[4] FRL percentages for 2011-2012 are based on 2010-2011 data and 2012-2013 percentages are based on 2011-2012 data.

Table II.10 Available Student Capacity by Grade for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

Grade	Total number of students for whom capacity exists			Difference between 2011-12 and 2012-13	Percent change betweem 2011-12 and 2012-13
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13		
K	734	529	495	(34)	-6.43%
1	321	329	385	56	17.02%
2	384	316	445	129	40.82%
3	444	382	385	3	0.79%
4	655	638	631	(7)	-1.10%
5	598	494	625	131	26.52%
6	609	474	443	(31)	-6.54%
7	553	670	366	(304)	-45.37%
8	553	601	563	(38)	-6.32%
High School	1,857	2,218	1,897	(321)	-14.47%
Total Student Capacity	6,708	6,651	6,235	(416)	-6.25%

Overall capacity for the 2012-2013 school year declined by 6.25% (416 students) from the previous year's capacity estimates. Capacity also declined from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 but by only 57 students (less than 1%). Individual grade level capacity for the 2012-2013 school year ranges from a low of 366 students in seventh grade to a high of 631 in fourth grade. At the high school level, capacity declined by 321 students, but it was slightly higher than in the 2010-2011 school year.

To understand the reasons for the declines and increases in capacity at each grade level would require collecting considerable additional information from school districts, but the capacity worksheets provide some additional relevant information. Districts report the number of elementary classrooms (representing the number of classroom teachers) and the number of middle school teams (representing groups of teachers) on the capacity worksheets. [5] Decreases and increases in the number of classrooms at a grade level can explain some of the changes in capacity. Districts reported nine fewer planned kindergarten classrooms in 2012-2013 than in 2011-2012 and 21 more classrooms in fifth grade, explaining, at least to some degree, the capacity changes at those grade levels. In seventh grade, where capacity decreased by 300 students, there was a decrease of one team. This would account for some decline in capacity, but likely not to this degree. Other grades that had dramatic differences between the two years are not explained by changes in the number of teachers or classrooms.

Another explanation for the changes in capacity could be related to differences in the enrollment numbers across grade levels. For example, in 2010-2011, according the Department

---

[5] The number of classrooms reported, in February, on the capacity worksheets reflect the number of classrooms that are anticipated for the next school year. The actual number may change as enrollment can be predicted with greater accuracy.

of Education State of the Schools Report, there were 8,376 fifth grade students in Learning Community schools and only 7,889 seventh graders. The 2010-2011 fifth graders are in seventh grade in 2012 -13. Anticipating such an increase in enrollment would certainly affect capacity for Open Enrollment students at seventh grade.

Monitoring capacity trends across years is important, but the fact that school districts must make their capacity predictions in February, approximately six months before the start of the next school year makes these numbers only an estimate. A building's capacity for the following year is based on existing enrollment, at that point in time, and any projected increases or decreases in current enrollment. For most school districts, these predictions are very difficult, particularly for kindergarten. The actual number of classrooms and, therefore, capacity may change considerably between March 1st and the start of the school year.

Table II.11 presents projected student capacity for the 2012-2013 school year in relation to the quintile distribution of schools' FRL concentrations in 2011-2012. This table tells us where the capacity exists relative to socioeconomic composition of the school. Figure II.2 (page 26) graphically illustrates relative differences across the quintile ranges for grades K through 8 and high school. Available student capacity in the three new schools is not included in this table because their percent of FRL was not established.

Table II.11 Additional Student Capacity for 2012-2013 by Grade by FRL Concentration of the School Presented in Quintile Ranges

Grade	Total number of students for whom capacity exists	Student capacity within in the following ranges:				
		0% up to and including 20%	over 20% up to and including 40%	over 40% up to and including 60%	over 60% up to and including 80%	over 80% up to and including 100%
K	495	294	38	106	14	34
1	385	182	22	44	32	89
2	445	123	77	68	56	105
3	385	122	55	59	40	87
4	631	165	161	137	74	80
5	625	186	84	178	109	68
6	443	119	89	87	55	84
7	366	48	81	122	45	70
8	563	116	159	125	80	83
High School	1,897	168	553	33	1,143	0
Total Student Capacity	**6,235**	**1,523**	**1,319**	**959**	**1,648**	**700**

Figure II.2: Additional Student Capacity by Level by Quintile

Chart legend:
- 0% up to and including 20%
- over 20% up to and including 40%
- over 40% up to and including 60%
- over 60% up to and including 80%
- over 80% up to and including 100%

Values shown in chart:

	K-6	7-8	High School	Total
0% up to and including 20%	1191	164	168	1523
over 20% up to and including 40%	526	240	553	1319
over 40% up to and including 60%	679	247	33	959
over 60% up to and including 80%	380	125	1143	1648
over 80% up to and including 100%	547	153	0	700

Table II.11 (page 25) and Figure II.2 present numerous points of interest. For example:

- Additional capacity is available for 2,842 students in schools with relatively lower percentages of students eligible for FRL (≤40%) and for 3,307 in schools with relatively higher FRL proportions (>40%). [6]

- The proportion of total available capacity in schools with relatively lower and relatively higher percentages of students who are eligible for FRL varies across levels.

- In grades K through 6, the greatest capacity is in schools with 20% or less FRL eligible students.

- In grades 7 and 8, there is relatively less capacity in each of the FRL concentration ranges, but there is slightly greater capacity in the middle ranges (20% to 60%) than the others.

- In high school it appears that, by far, the greatest availability of additional capacity is in the 60% to 80% range where three high schools (see Table II.8, page 22) have capacity for over 1,000 students.

Considerable capacity exists for increasing socioeconomic diversity in elementary schools that currently have very low percentages of students who qualify for FRL. There is less space for diversity to increase in the other direction; that is, for students who do not qualify for FRL to transfer to schools with high proportions of FRL. As shown in the previous section, there is much greater movement of FRL students to low FRL schools than movement of students who do not qualify for FRL to schools with high percentages of FRL. Not only do fewer students apply for and enroll in those schools, there is also less capacity to accept open enrollment students in such schools.

---

[6] For analyses of the quintile range distribution, 40% was used as the break point to divide high and low FRL schools because, within the Learning Community, 43.48% of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunch. At precisely 43.48%, there are 89 above that percentage with capacity available for 3,005 additional students and 90 schools below that percentage with capacity for 3,144 students.

To further explore capacity, as it relates to FRL distributions, Table II.12 compares the number and percentages of students for whom there was capacity in schools with < 40% and > 40% FRL for the 2011-2012 school year and the 2012-2013 school year based on the previous years' official counts.

Table II.12 Comparisons of Available Capacity in Schools with Lower and Higher Concentrations of FRL for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

Level	Total Available Capacity		% of Total Available Capacity in Schools < 40% FRL		% of Total Available Capacity in Schools > 40% FRL	
	2011-12	2012-13	2011-12	2012-13	2011-12	2012-13
Elementary	3,162	3,323	52.62%	51.67%	47.38%	48.33%
Middle School	1,271	929	60.19%	43.49%	39.81%	56.51%
High School	2,218	1,897	64.25%	38.01%	35.75%	61.99%
Total	**6,651**	**6,149**	**57.95%**	**46.22%**	**42.05%**	**53.78%**

The proportion of total available capacity in relatively lower and relatively higher FRL schools varies across levels. For example:

- In grades K through 6 slightly more than half the available capacity, in both years, is in schools with FRL percentages < 40%.

- In grades 7 and 8 for the 2012-2013 school year, only 43.5% of the capacity was in schools with FRL percentages < 40%, down from 60% in the previous year.

- In high school only 38% of the capacity for 2012-2013 is in schools with FRL percentages <40% down from 64.2% in 2011-2012.

Some of this difference may be attributable to the fact that there were six fewer schools in the below 40% range in 2012-2013 (based on 2011-2012 FRL percentages) than in 2011-2012 and six more above 40% (See Table II.9 page 23).

2012 – 2013 Open Enrollment Applications

This section presents data concerning the number of applications school districts received and approved. The data apply only to applications *received and approved.* It does not reflect the number of students who actually enrolled in the school in which they were accepted. That information for the 2011-2012 school year was reported earlier in Section II and, for the 2012-2013 school year, will be included in the 2013 report. As required by Nebraska Statute, data for this section of the report were submitted to the Learning Community by member school districts.

As described earlier in Section II, some districts use the Open Enrollment process for transfers from one school to another within the same district, while other districts have different

procedures for transfers within the district. Districts may give school transfer priority to resident students if they request the transfer before February 15. Some districts have their own internal procedures for this type of transfer, while other districts use the Learning Community Open Enrollment application procedures for transfers within the district as well as from other Learning Community School Districts. Districts were asked to supply both the number of applications received from students who resided outside their district boundaries and the number of resident students who used the Open Enrollment process as the means of requesting a transfer. Table II.13 shows both categories of applicants and the number and percent approved.

Table II.13: Open Enrollment Applications Received and Approved by Each District

School District	Applications Received			Applications Approved	
	Applicants from Another District	Resident Applicants	Total Applicants	Number Approved	Percent Approved
Bellevue	432	0	432	354	81.94%
Bennington	60	0	60	11	18.33%
DC West	43	0	43	43	100.00%
Elkhorn	96	2	98	32	32.65%
Gretna	16	0	16	8	50.00%
Millard	817	185	1,002	756	75.45%
OPS	266	149	415	390	93.98%
Papillion-LaVista	511	23	534	466	87.27%
Ralston	248	0	248	223	89.92%
Springfield-Platteview	38	2	40	40	100.00%
Westside	651	0	651	475	72.96%
Total	3,178	361	3,539	2,798	79.06%

The 11 districts received a total of 3,539 applications – 3,178 from applicants who were not residents of the requested district and 361 from applicants who used the Open Enrollment process as the vehicle for requesting another school within their resident district. Districts reported that they approved 79% of the applications. Districts' approval of applications is based solely on the availability of space at the student's grade level in one of the schools requested on the application. Some districts are able to accept all applicants; while others are able to accept a relatively small percentage of the applications they receive. Although Learning Community districts approved 2,798 applicants, it is important to remember that it does not represent the number of students who actually enrolled in the schools to which they were accepted. It is also important to note that the total number of applications received and approved is greater than the actual number of applicants, since a student may apply to more than one school district.

As described in the beginning of Section II (page 12) districts must approved application in a specified order:

1) Siblings of students who will be enrolled as continuing students in a school for the next school year.

2) Students who contribute to the socioeconomic diversity of the school.

3) All other Open Enrollment applications

4) Option Enrollment applications

Table II.14 reports the number and the percentage of approved applications that have the potential to contribute to a more balanced socioeconomic diversity among Learning Community schools. (i.e., FRL-eligible students in schools with < 43% FRL and non-FRL students in schools with >43% FRL).

Table II.14: Approved Open Enrollment Applications with Potential to Contribute to Socioeconomic Diversity

School District	Total Applicants	Total Number Approved	Total Approved Applicants Potentially Contributing to Diversity	Percent Approved Applicants Potentially Contributing to Diversity
Bellevue	432	354	174	49.15%
Bennington	60	11	*	*
DC West	43	43	*	*
Elkhorn	98	32	10	31.25%
Gretna	16	8	*	*
Millard	1,002	756	211	27.91%
OPS	415	390	220	56.41%
Papillion-LaVista	534	466	193	41.42%
Ralston	248	223	73	32.74%
Springfield-Platteview	40	40	10	25.00%
Westside	651	475	217	45.68%
Total	**3,539**	**2,798**	**1,120**	**40.03%**

*Following NDE procedures for protecting student identity, cells containing fewer than 10 students are not shown

As shown in Table II.14, 1,120 of the 2,798 approved applications, (40%) have the potential to contribute to the socioeconomic diversity of the school. Of the 1,120 approved applications, 780 students who qualify for FRL were approved to attend schools with a FRL percentage less than 43%, and 340 students who do not qualify for FRL were accepted in schools with more than 43% for FRL.

It is important to understand that a district, even though it follows the prescribed sequence, may not accept applications that result in greater diversity. A district may not receive applications requesting schools that would result in increased diversity or requested schools may be at capacity. To improve socioeconomic diversity, a greater proportion of FRL-eligible students must apply to open enroll in a low concentration FRL school than the current proportion of FRL-eligible students. Students who do not qualify for FRL may be as likely to request transfer to schools with lower percentages of FRL as students who do qualify. As

described above, schools with FRL concentrations lower than the Learning Community, as a whole, must first accept siblings, then students who qualify for FRL, and then all other applicants. It is quite possible, that the number of applicants who qualify for FRL will not be adequate to improve the diversity of the school. In addition, if a greater proportion of non-FRL students leave a high FRL concentration school to open-enroll in a lower concentration school, that school's diversity, too, may decline rather than improve. Socioeconomic diversity in schools with high proportions of students who quality for FRL will improve only if a greater proportion of non-FRL students open-enroll into that school or a greater proportion of FRL students leave the school. Monitoring the degree to which socioeconomic diversity is improving as a result of Open Enrollment is complex and dependent on the factors described here, as well as changes in the socioeconomic composition of a school's resident population.

It is important to remember that the numbers in Table II.14 (page 29) represent only the *potential* for improved diversity. They do not represent the number who actually enrolled in the school in which they were accepted. Some applicants' plans or circumstances may change between the time they were accepted and the start of the school year. In addition, families can apply to multiple school districts and may be approved by multiple districts. Actual enrollment and its effects on socioeconomic diversity in the 2011-2012 school year was reported in the first part of Section II of this report. Those data for the current school year will be available for the 2013 Report.

SECTION III – STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Nebraska Writing, Reading, Mathematics, and Science Assessments are the only common assessments administered in all schools in the Learning Community and the State and, therefore, the only consistent measures of student academic performance available for this report. All other tests, including nationally standardized norm-referenced tests, vary among the districts making it impossible to conduct comparative analyses or interpretation. In the 2011-12 school year, the Reading and Mathematics assessments were administered in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11. Students in grades 4, 8, and 11 took the State Writing Assessment and students in grades 5, 8, and 11 took the Science Assessment. On each of the assessments, students are described as proficient or not proficient based on a test score that is set through established statistical standard-setting processes.

Nebraska State Assessments

The Writing Assessment has been administered for approximately 10 years, and individual student data have been collected by NDE (Nebraska Department of Education) since the 2007-2008 school year. The Writing Assessment was administered between January 21 and February 8, 2012. Students responded to a writing prompt developed by NDE to measure composition of writing, as specified in the Writing Content Standards. In grades 8 and 11 the format and scoring of the assessment changed in 2012. The Nebraska Department of Education provides the following information about the change on its website:

> In 2012 the State Board of Education "raised the bar." A new, more rigorous writing process was introduced to students in grades 8 and 11. Student scale scores for writing range from 0 to 70. In addition to the newly revised writing standards, the writing process became more "college and career ready." Students were asked to complete their compositions on the computer in an "on demand" writing session, and a more rigorous scoring process was applied. The new scoring rubric included higher expectations in four areas of writing: ideas/content, organization, voice/word choice, and sentence fluency/conventions. For the first time districts will receive specific feedback in the areas where writing instruction and student performance need improvement. http://www.education.ne.gov/nesainitial/

Technical information for the Writing Assessment can be found at: http://www.education.ne.gov/assessment/pdfs/2012_NeSA_W_Technical_Report_FINAL.pdf

NeSA (Nebraska Student Assessment) Reading, Mathematics and Science are multiple-choice tests administered in a six-week window beginning in late March and ending in early May. The 2011-

2012 school year was the third year of the Reading test, the second year for Mathematics, and the first year for administration of the Science. Technical information can be found at: http://www.education.ne.gov/assessment/pdfs/Complete_NeSA_2012_Technical_Report.pdf

Additional information about NeSA can be found on the Department of Education website at: http://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment/Index.html

Test results for all schools and school districts, as well as the Learning Community as a whole, are available to the public in the State of the Schools report published on the NDE website. Results for all schools and school districts are disaggregated by multiple subgroups including, gender, race, FRL status and ELL.

This document provides test data analyses that are not included in the NDE State of the Schools Report and that may be relevant to the Learning Community goal of closing the achievement gap. Analyses related to the following questions are provided:

1. How does the proficiency rate in the Learning Community compare to the State?

2. How does performance in 2012 compare to performance in 2011?

3. What is the difference in the proficiency rate of students who do and do not qualify for FRL ("the performance gap") and how does the gap between the two groups in 2012 compare to 2011?

4. How does the gap in the Learning Community compare to the State, as a whole?

5. How does the proficiency rate of Open Enrollment students compare to students who do not open enroll?

Questions 1 through 4 are addressed relative to each of the State required assessments described above. Reading and Mathematics assessments at grades 3 through 8 are used to address question 5.

The data presented on the tables and graphs in this section of the report provide opportunity for multiple comparisons on each of the State Assessments, but all comparisons should be made with caution. In some cases the sizes of the groups being compared are quite different. It is also important to be aware that Learning Community students make up approximately 38% of the total enrollment in the State in each of the groups (all students, FRL, and Non-FRL). The total K-12 enrollment in Nebraska in the 2012 Fall Membership report was 288,048, with 110,908 of those students enrolled in Learning Community Schools. When the performance of Learning Community students and all students in the State is compared, we are comparing a subgroup of the total population to the total population, which includes that subgroup (Learning Community students). If the results of Learning Community students were removed from the State groups, observed differences between State and Learning Community proficiency rates would be greater.

We should be particularly cautious about comparing the performance of Learning Community students who qualify for FRL with the performance of all students in the State who qualify for FRL. Although the State and Learning Community have similar proportions of students who qualify for FRL (43.76% in the State and 43.48% in the Learning Community), the students in the Learning Community FRL group and those in the State may be quite different. Certainly, most students who qualify for FRL are at a disadvantage, but the degree of disadvantage can vary greatly. There is a large difference in the income levels of students who are eligible for free lunch and those who are eligible for reduced-price lunch. It is quite possible that the proportion of students who qualify for *free*, rather than reduced price, is greater in the Learning Community than the proportion of *free* lunch students the State. Some research has found that free lunch eligibility, not free *and* reduced lunch combined, is the best predictor of low student achievement. In addition, the home and community environment of the two groups may also be quite different. The Learning Community FRL group is composed almost totally of students living in urban areas, while the State group includes many rural students. Urban and rural students of poverty live in vastly different environments.

Performance data and analyses are presented for each State assessment, separately, in the tables, graphs, and text that follow. However, in the analyses of all data on all assessments, the following general commonalities were found:

- The proficiency rates of all students in the State and those of all students in the Learning Community are very similar.

- The proficiency rate of Learning Community students who qualify for FRL is frequently lower than the proficiency rate of all FRL students in the state, particularly in the secondary grades (7, 8, and 11)

- In most cases the proficiency rate of Learning Community students who do not qualify for FRL, is somewhat higher than the proficiency rate of the State non-FRL group.

- In both the Learning Community and the State, there is a gap, frequently a very large gap, between students who do, and do not, qualify for FRL. The gaps tend to be somewhat wider in the Learning Community than in the State.

- In almost all cases, on assessments that have been administered for two consecutive years, the gap narrowed in the second year.

NeSA Writing

Table III.1 and Figure III.1 present the Writing Assessment proficiency rates of the State and the Learning Community for all students and those who do and do not qualify for free or reduced price lunch.

Table III.1: *State and Learning Community 2012 NeSA Writing Grades 4, 8, and 11 Percent Proficient*

	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
State Total Assessed	22,024	20,852	21,034
State Total % Proficient	92.16%	64.01%	62.57%
LC Total Assessed	8,700	7,836	7,742
LC Total % Proficient	91.36%	64.52%	63.81%
State FRL Assessed	10,358	9,016	7,813
State FRL % Proficient	88.19%	49.59%	45.89%
LC FRL Assessed	4,089	3,422	2,986
LC FRL % Proficient	85.82%	45.00%	42.63%
State Non-FRL Assessed	11,666	11,836	13,221
State Non-FRL % Proficient	95.68%	75.00%	72.44%
LC Non-FRL Assessed	4,611	4,414	4,756
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	96.27%	79.66%	77.10%

Figure III.1 has three sets of bars, reporting grade 4, 8, and 11. The first two bars in each set compare the performance of all students in the State with Learning Community students. The second two compare performance of students who qualify for FRL, and the last two bars in each set compare the performance of students who do not qualify for FRL.

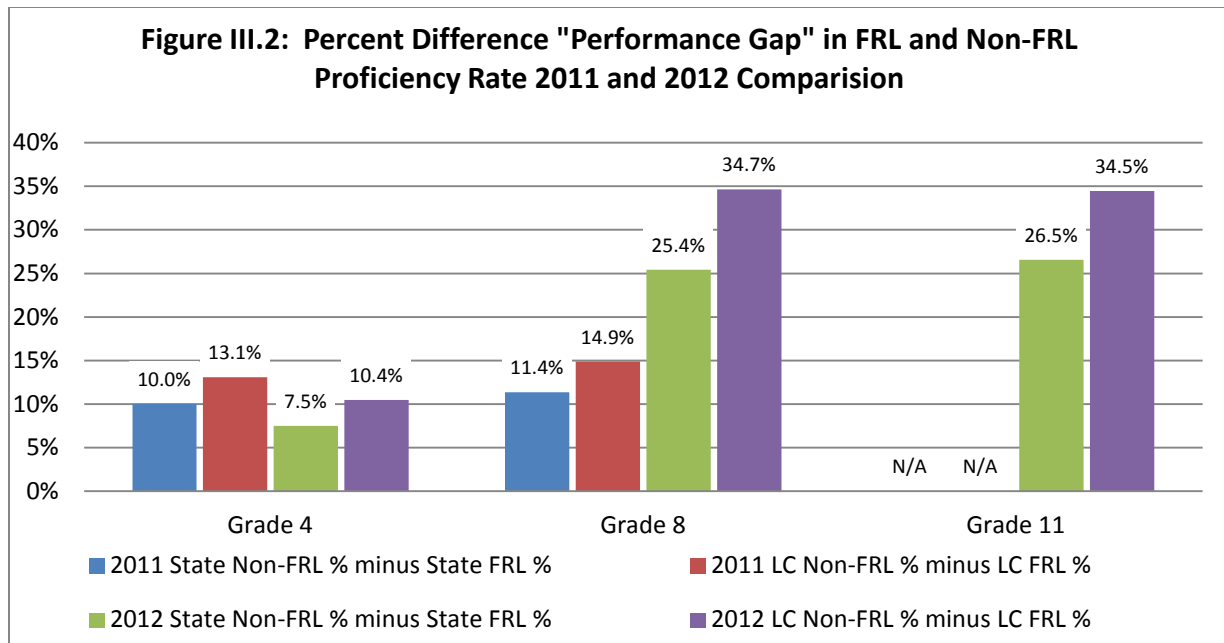Figure III.1: 2012 NeSA Writing Percent Proficient
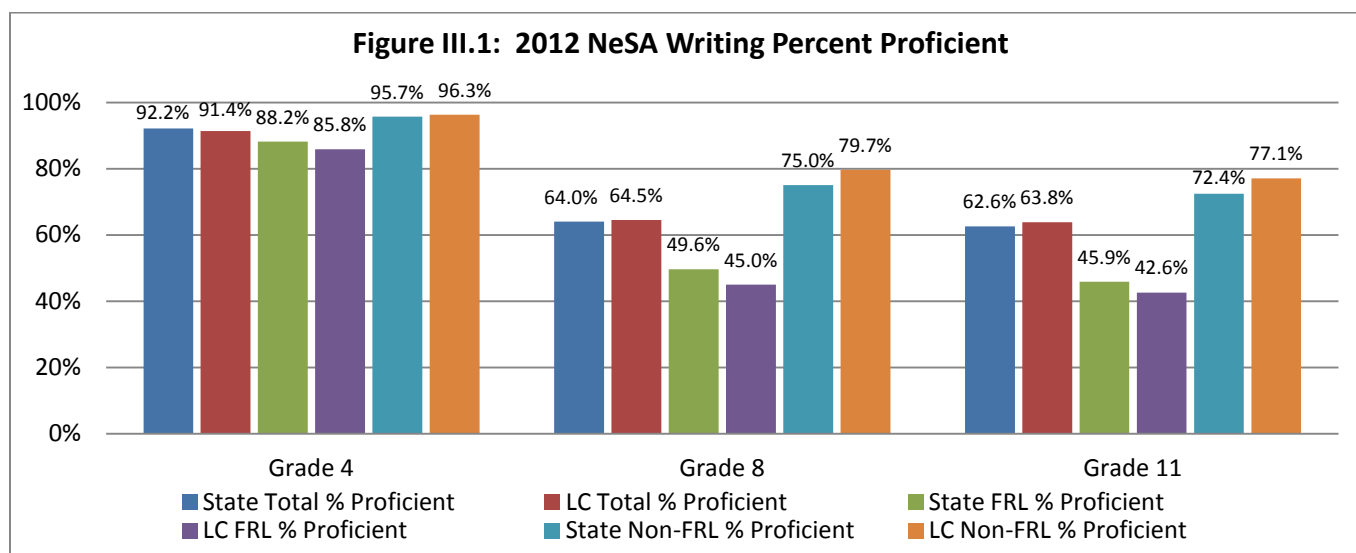
The data in the Table and Figure III.1 present a number of interesting points, including the following:

- At each grade the percent proficient for the Learning Community and the State are very similar. There is less than 1% difference in grades 4 and 8 and just slightly over 1% at grade 11.
- The proficiency rate of Learning Community students who qualify for FRL is slightly lower than the State rate in all three grades: 2.4% in grade 4, 4.6% in grade 8, and 3.3% in grade 11.
- The performance of Learning Community students who do not qualify for FRL is virtually the same as the State in grade 4, but the Learning Community rate is 4.7% higher at grades 8 and 11.
- Performance of FRL-eligible students on the new computer-based, analytically scored writing assessment in grades 8 and 11 is very low. In the State and the Learning Community, fewer than 50% of the students performed at the proficient level. As the next table and graph will illustrate, performance in these grades is much lower in 2012 than in 2011 suggesting that the low performance is related to the changes in the assessment, which were described earlier.

Table III.2 and Figure III.2 (page 36) show State and Learning Community Writing proficiency rates for FRL-eligible students and students who are not eligible in both 2011 and 2012. The difference in the pass rates (non-FRL% minus FRL %) represents what is often referred to as the "performance gap."

Table III.2: *State and Learning Community 2011 and 2012 NeSA Writing Proficiency Percentages for FRL and Non-FRL*

	2011			2012		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
State FRL % Proficient	83.65%	83.16%	N/A	88.19%	49.59%	45.89%
State Non-FRL % Proficient	93.66%	94.51%	N/A	95.68%	75.00%	72.44%
State Non-FRL % minus State FRL %	10.01%	11.35%	N/A	7.49%	25.41%	26.55%
LC FRL % Proficient	80.64%	79.96%	N/A	85.82%	45.00%	42.63%
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	93.71%	94.85%	N/A	96.27%	79.66%	77.10%
LC Non-FRL % minus LC FRL %	13.07%	14.89%	N/A	10.45%	34.66%	34.47%

Figure III.2: Percent Difference "Performance Gap" in FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rate 2011 and 2012 Comparision

Again, the drop in 8th grade performance, and the relatively low performance of 11th grade students, is most likely related to changes in the test. Because of this major change in the testing methodology, it is inappropriate to compare performance of 8th grade students in 2011 and 2012. The percent proficient in 2012 for both 8th and 11th grade should be considered baseline.

The following points summarize some of the data presented in Table III.2 (page 35) and Figure III.2:

- Differences between FRL and non-FRL proficiency rates are much greater on the new Writing Assessments at grades 8 and 11 than on the 4th grade assessment and the 2011 grade 8 Writing Assessment.
- In both the State and the Learning Community, the 4th grade gap decreased in 2012. In the Learning Community the difference in the performance of FRL and non-FRL went from 13% in 2011 to 10.5% in 2012.
- In 8th grade the gap is greater on the new computer-based, analytically scored Writing Assessment than on the previous year's handwritten, holistically scored assessment.
- The performance gap between Learning Community FRL and non-FRL 8th and 11th grade students is over 34%. In grade 8 only 45% of the FRL-eligible students were proficient, while approximately 80% of the non-FRL students performed at the proficient level. In grade 11 the proficiency rate was approximately 43% proficient for the FRL group and 77% for non-FRL.

NeSA Reading

The Reading Assessments were administered at seven grade levels (3-8 and 11) in spring of 2010, 2011 and 2012.

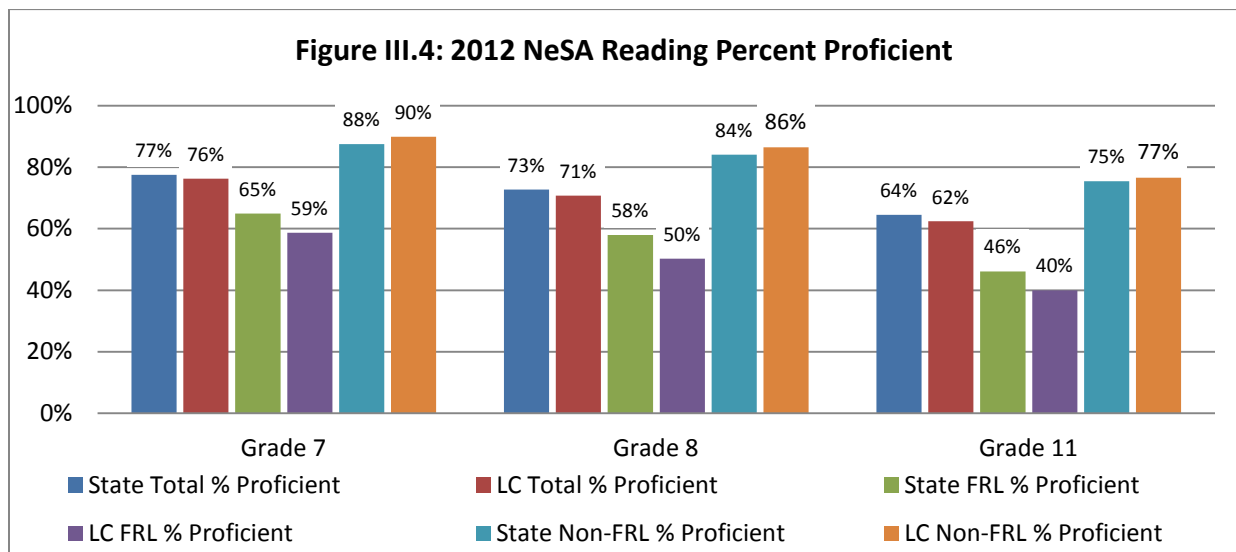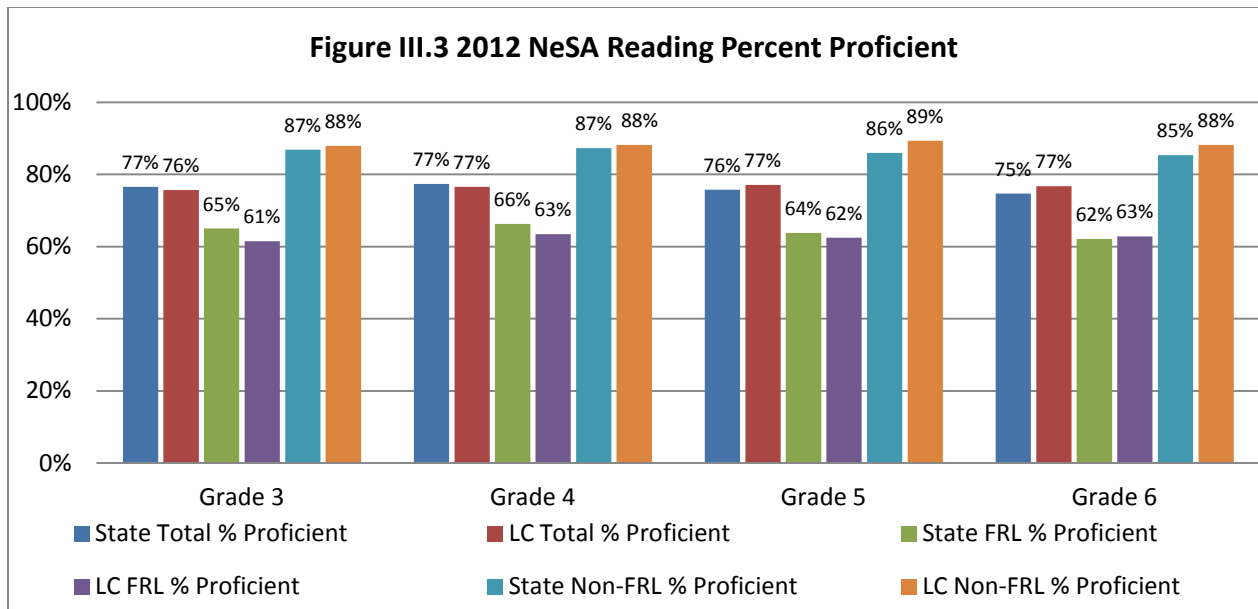**2012 State and Learning Community Proficiency Rate Comparisons**

Tables III.3 and III.4, and Figures III.3 (page 38) and III.4 (page 38) report Reading Assessment proficiency rates for the State and the Learning Community. The percent proficient for all students, FRL, and Non-FRL students are presented in the same manner as the Writing proficiency rates were presented in Table III.1 (page 34) and Figure III.1 (page 34). For better readability, grades 3 through 6 and 7 through 11 are presented separately on the tables and graphs that follow.

Table III.3: *2012 State and Learning Community NeSA Reading Grades 3 through 6 Percent Proficient*

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
State Total Assessed	22,435	22,260	21,951	21,689
State Total % Proficient	76.54%	77.37%	75.73%	74.73%
LC Total Assessed	8,813	8,786	8,507	8,439
LC Total % Proficient	75.69%	76.55%	77.08%	76.74%
State FRL Assessed	10,578	10,490	10,128	9,887
State FRL % Proficient	65.02%	66.26%	63.77%	62.07%
LC FRL Assessed	4,069	4,116	3,873	3,797
LC FRL % Proficient	61.44%	63.41%	62.43%	62.81%
State Non-FRL Assessed	11,857	11,770	11,823	11,802
State Non-FRL % Proficient	86.81%	87.26%	85.97%	85.34%
LC Non-FRL Assessed	4,744	4,670	4,634	4,642
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	87.92%	88.14%	89.32%	88.13%

Table III.4: 2012 *State and Learning Community NeSA Reading Grades 7, 8, 11 Percent Proficient*

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
State Total Assessed	21,273	21,093	21,208
State Total % Proficient	77.48%	72.75%	64.49%
LC Total Assessed	8,036	7,942	7,838
LC Total % Proficient	76.32%	70.76%	62.40%
State FRL Assessed	9,451	9,136	7,944
State FRL % Proficient	64.93%	57.96%	46.16%
LC FRL Assessed	3,495	3,444	3,032
LC FRL % Proficient	58.68%	50.32%	40.01%
State Non-FRL Assessed	11,822	11,957	13,264
State Non-FRL % Proficient	87.51%	84.05%	75.47%
LC Non-FRL Assessed	4,541	4,498	4,806
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	89.89%	86.42%	76.53%

Figure III.3 2012 NeSA Reading Percent Proficient

Grade 3: State Total 77%, LC Total 76%, State FRL 65%, LC FRL 61%, State Non-FRL 87%, LC Non-FRL 88%
Grade 4: State Total 77%, LC Total 77%, State FRL 66%, LC FRL 63%, State Non-FRL 87%, LC Non-FRL 88%
Grade 5: State Total 76%, LC Total 77%, State FRL 64%, LC FRL 62%, State Non-FRL 86%, LC Non-FRL 89%
Grade 6: State Total 75%, LC Total 77%, State FRL 62%, LC FRL 63%, State Non-FRL 85%, LC Non-FRL 88%

Legend: State Total % Proficient, LC Total % Proficient, State FRL % Proficient, LC FRL % Proficient, State Non-FRL % Proficient, LC Non-FRL % Proficient

Figure III.4: 2012 NeSA Reading Percent Proficient

Grade 7: State Total 77%, LC Total 76%, State FRL 65%, LC FRL 59%, State Non-FRL 88%, LC Non-FRL 90%
Grade 8: State Total 73%, LC Total 71%, State FRL 58%, LC FRL 50%, State Non-FRL 84%, LC Non-FRL 86%
Grade 11: State Total 64%, LC Total 62%, State FRL 46%, LC FRL 40%, State Non-FRL 75%, LC Non-FRL 77%

Legend: State Total % Proficient, LC Total % Proficient, State FRL % Proficient, LC FRL % Proficient, State Non-FRL % Proficient, LC Non-FRL % Proficient

Seven grades and six groups provide the opportunity for many comparisons between the State and Learning Community. The results follow a similar pattern to those seen in the Writing Assessment.

- The performance of all students in the State and the Learning Community is very similar. There is approximately 2% or less difference at all grades.

- Proficiency rates for FRL-eligible students in both the State and the Learning Community are considerably lower than the performance of all students and are somewhat lower for the Learning Community than Statewide.

- Proficiency rates for Learning Community students who qualify for FRL range from a low of approximately 40% in grade 11 to 63% in grade 4. Proficiency rates for the State range from approximately 46% to 66% in grades 11 and 4, respectively.

- The differences between Learning Community and State proficiency rates of students who are eligible for FRL are relatively small in grades 3 through 6, but greater at grades 7, 8, and 11. There is a difference of approximately 8% in grade 8 and 6% in grades 7 and 11.

- The difference in the proficiency rate of State and Learning Community Non-FRL students is small, but performance is slightly higher in the Learning Community than the State.

FRL and Non-FRL Comparisons: The Performance Gap

Tables III.5 and III.6 show 2011 and 2012 State and the Learning Community proficiency rates for students who qualify for FRL and those who do not (Non-FRL), including the difference ("performance gap") in the proficiency rate of the two groups (Non-FRL% minus FRL%).

Table III.5: *State and Learning Community 2011 and 2012 NeSA Reading Grades 3 through 6 Percent Difference Between FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rates: "The Performance Gap"*

	2011				2012			
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
State FRL % Proficient	58.30%	63.07%	56.82%	61.19%	65.02%	66.26%	63.77%	62.07%
State Non-FRL % Proficient	82.45%	86.18%	81.18%	84.01%	86.81%	87.26%	85.97%	85.34%
State Non-FRL % minus State FRL %	24.15%	23.11%	24.36%	22.82%	21.79%	21.00%	22.20%	23.27%
LC FRL % Proficient	54.58%	57.96%	53.48%	59.19%	61.44%	63.41%	62.43%	62.81%
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	82.90%	87.43%	82.92%	87.00%	87.92%	88.14%	89.32%	88.13%
LC Non-FRL % minus LC FRL %	28.32%	29.47%	29.44%	27.81%	26.48%	24.73%	26.89%	25.32%

Table III.6: *State and Learning Community 2011 and 2012 NeSA Reading Grades 7, 8, 11 Percent Difference Between FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rates: "The Performance Gap"*

	2011			2012		
	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
State FRL % Proficient	59.84%	55.71%	50.77%	64.93%	57.96%	46.16%
State Non-FRL % Proficient	84.96%	83.14%	76.32%	87.51%	84.05%	75.47%
State Non-FRL % minus State FRL %	25.12%	27.43%	25.55%	22.58%	26.09%	29.31%
LC FRL % Proficient	52.76%	45.33%	41.03%	58.68%	50.32%	40.01%
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	86.84%	84.12%	76.29%	89.89%	86.42%	76.53%
LC Non-FRL % minus LC FRL %	34.08%	38.79%	35.26%	31.21%	36.10%	36.52%

The difference in proficiency rates is graphically displayed in Figures III.5 (page 40) and III.6 (page 40). The first and second bars in each group represent the State and Learning Community "performance gap" in 2011 and the third and fourth bars are for 2012.

Figure III.5 Percent Difference in FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rate 2011-2012 Comparision

Figure III.6: Percent Difference in FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rate 2011-2012 Comparision
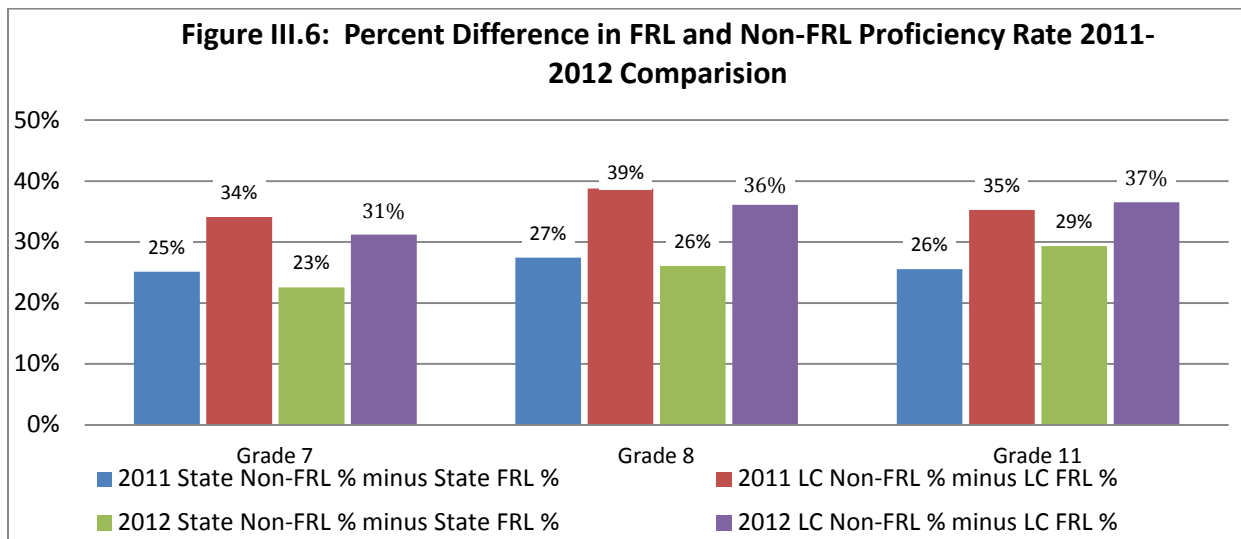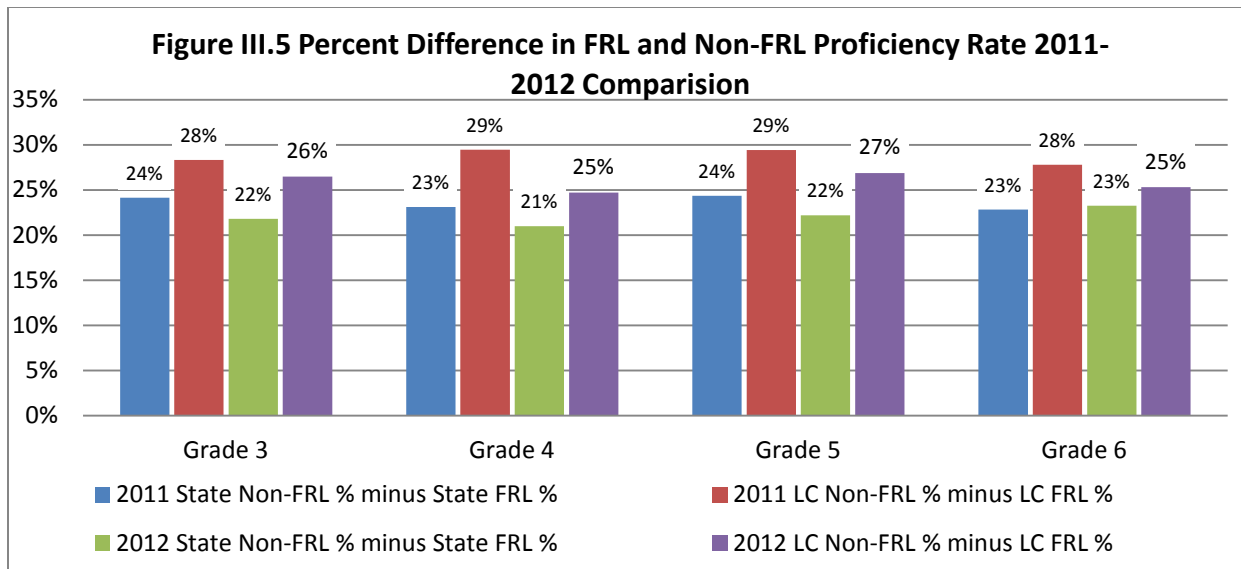
The following are some observations from Tables III.5 (page 39) and III.6 (page 39) and the corresponding bar graphs (Figures III.5 and III. 6):

- The State and the Learning Community "performance gap" were over 20% at all grades in both 2011 and 2012 and were considerably larger in secondary grades than elementary.

- In 2012 the gap between the performance of Learning Community FRL and Non-FRL students ranged from approximately 25% in grades 4 and 6 to slightly more than 36% in grades 8 and 11.

- At every grade, in both years, the gap is greater in the Learning Community than the State.

- Except in Grade 11, "performance gaps" were smaller in 2012 than in 2011. In that grade the gap increased, but less so in the Learning Community (1.3%) than in the State (3.8%).

- Looking only at the performance gap in the Learning Community, the following results are particularly noteworthy:
  - Although the gaps were smaller in 2012 than in 2011, the proficiency rate at all grades was still less than 65%.
  - In grades 8 and 11 the proficiency rate was under 50%.
  - In grades 7, 8, and 11 the "proficiency gap" between FRL and Non-FRL is greater than 30% in both 2011 and 2012.

NeSA Mathematics

The Mathematics Assessments were administered in 2011 and 2012 in the same grades as the Reading Assessment (3-8 and 11). Mathematics Assessments were not administered in 2010.

2012 State and Learning Community Proficiency Rate Comparisons

Tables III.7 and III.8 (page 42) and Figures III.7 (page 42) and III.8 (page 43) show Mathematics Assessment proficiency rates for the State and the Learning Community. The percent proficient for all students, FRL, and Non-FRL, are presented in the same manner as the Writing and Reading proficiency rates were presented in previous tables and graphs.

Table III.7: *State and Learning Community NeSA Mathematics Grades 3 through 6 Percent Proficient*

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
State Total Assessed	22,490	22,314	21,999	21,735
State Total % Proficient	71.88%	71.76%	74.88%	67.55%
LC Total Assessed	8,840	8,819	8,534	8,455
LC Total % Proficient	71.56%	69.07%	73.21%	65.49%
State FRL Assessed	10,623	10,535	10,169	9,939
State FRL % Proficient	58.94%	58.66%	62.48%	54.55%
LC FRL Assessed	4,089	4,143	3,896	3,813
LC FRL % Proficient	56.22%	52.26%	57.91%	50.07%
State Non-FRL Assessed	11,867	11,779	11,830	11,796
State Non-FRL % Proficient	83.46%	83.48%	85.54%	78.51%
LC Non-FRL Assessed	4,751	4,676	4,638	4,642
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	84.76%	83.96%	86.07%	78.16%

Table III.8: *State and Learning Community NeSA Mathematics Grades 7, 8, 11 Percent Proficient*

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
State Total Assessed	21,303	21,134	21,204
State Total % Proficient	67.57%	61.72%	55.58%
LC Total Assessed	8,052	7,955	7,838
LC Total % Proficient	63.57%	56.86%	50.51%
State FRL Assessed	9,484	9,174	7,939
State FRL % Proficient	51.75%	44.57%	36.47%
LC FRL Assessed	3,510	3,456	3,033
LC FRL % Proficient	41.99%	33.02%	26.94%
State Non-FRL Assessed	11,819	11,960	13,265
State Non-FRL % Proficient	80.26%	74.87%	67.02%
LC Non-FRL Assessed	4,542	4,499	4,805
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	80.25%	75.17%	65.39%

Figure III. 7: 2012 NeSA Mathematics Percent Proficient

Figure III.8: 2012 NeSA Mathematics Percent Proficient

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
State Total % Proficient	68%	62%	56%
LC Total % Proficient	64%	57%	51%
State FRL % Proficient	52%	45%	36%
LC FRL % Proficient	42%	33%	27%
State Non-FRL % Proficient	80%	75%	67%
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	80%	75%	65%
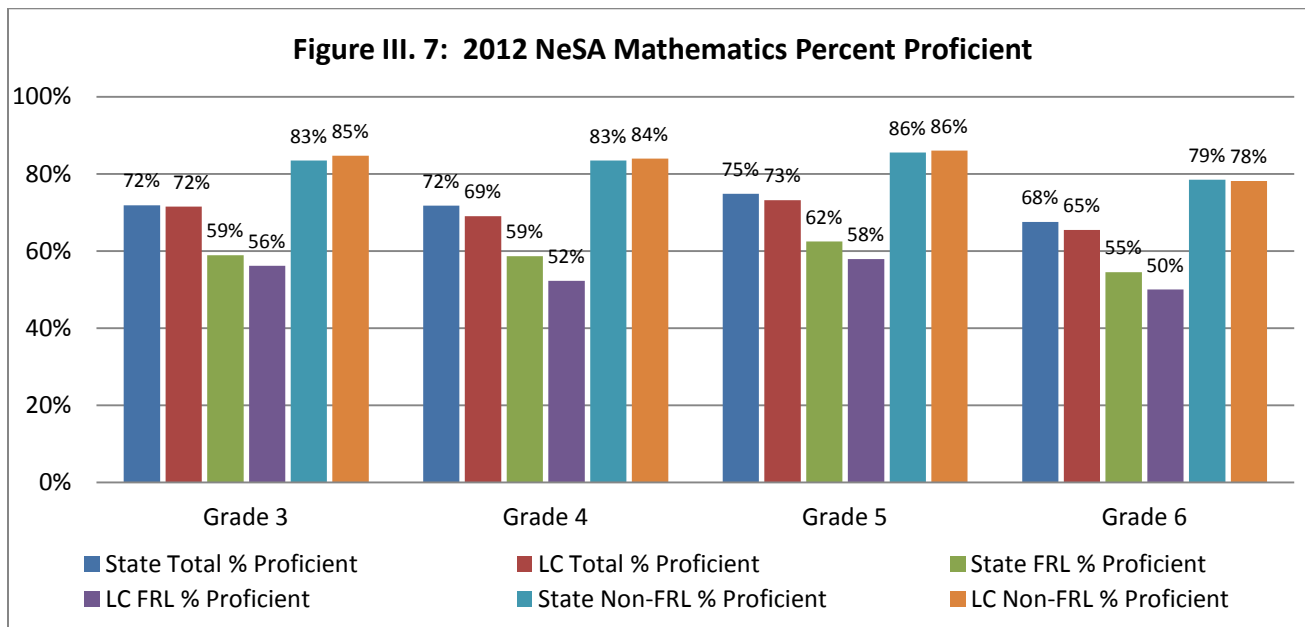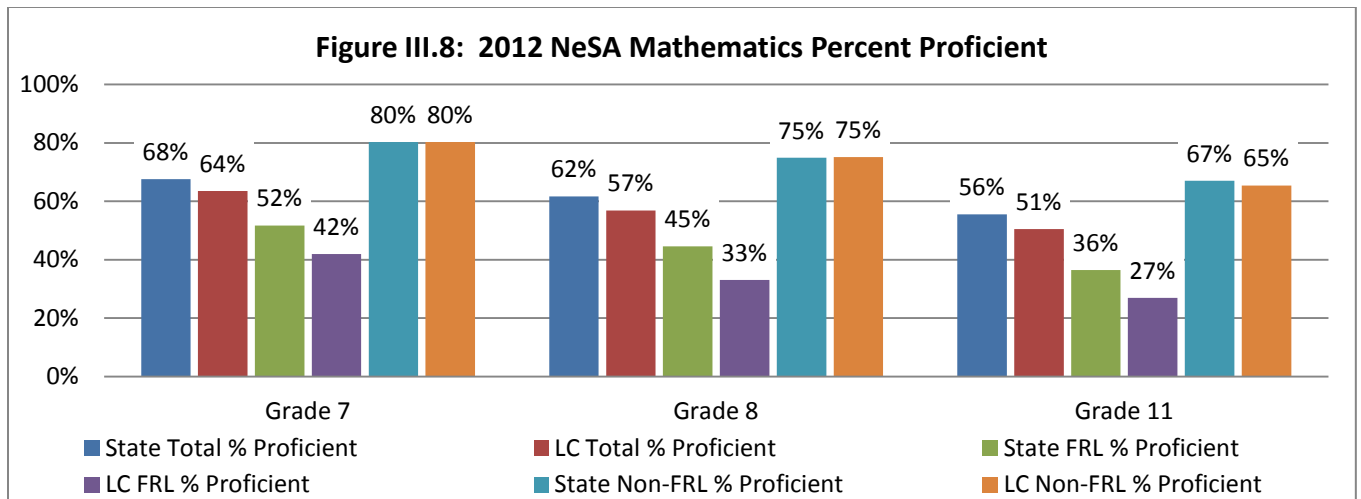
As in Reading, by examining the data in the Mathematics tables and graphs, we could make many comparisons among groups and between the State and the Learning Community.

Descriptions of some of those comparisons follow:

- Differences in the proficiency rates of the Learning Community and State are relatively small in the all students and non-FRL groups, but in the FRL groups the State out-performed the Learning Community at all grades. The differences between the State and Learning Community FRL groups are greater in grades 7, 8, and 11. (9.8%, 11.5% and 9.5%, respectively) than at the elementary grades.

- Performance of students who qualify for FRL is low at all levels in both the State and the Learning Community, ranging from approximately 27% in the Learning Community at grade 11 to 62.5% in the State at grade 5.

- At all grades, less than 60% of the Learning Community FRL-eligible students demonstrated proficiency.

- Beginning in grade 5, FRL proficiency declines as the grade levels go up. In the Learning Community proficiency goes from a high of 57.9% in grade 5 to a low of 26.9% in grade 11. In the State, in the same grades, the rate declines from 62.5% to 32.5%.

- There is also a decline in proficiency rates of non-FRL groups beginning at grade 7, ranging from 80% in grade 7 to 65% in grade 11. The State non-FRL group shows a similar decline.

FRL – Non-FRL comparisons

Tables III.9 (page 44) and III.10 (page 44) show the percent proficient for FRL and Non-FRL and the percent of difference in the proficiency rates of the two groups in 2011 and 2012. The performance gap is graphically displayed in Figures III.9 (page 44) and III.10 (page 45).

Table III.9: *State and Learning Community 2011 and 2012 NeSA Mathematics Grades 3 through 6 Percent Difference Between FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rates "The Performance Gap"*

	2011				2012			
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
State FRL % Proficient	53.80%	54.34%	52.93%	48.24%	58.94%	58.66%	62.48%	54.55%
State Non-FRL % Proficient	79.83%	79.16%	77.06%	74.57%	83.46%	83.48%	85.54%	78.51%
State Non-FRL % minus State FRL %	26.03%	24.82%	24.13%	26.33%	24.52%	24.82%	23.06%	23.96%
LC FRL % Proficient	48.08%	44.97%	43.51%	40.61%	56.22%	52.26%	57.91%	50.07%
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	79.54%	77.58%	74.69%	72.27%	84.76%	83.96%	86.07%	78.16%
LC Non-FRL % minus LC FRL %	31.46%	32.61%	31.18%	31.66%	28.54%	31.70%	28.16%	28.09%

Table III.10: *State and Learning Community 2011 and 2012 NeSA Mathematics Grades 7, 8, 11 Percent Difference Between FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rates "The Performance Gap"*

	2011			2012		
	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
State FRL % Proficient	44.96%	43.49%	34.39%	51.75%	44.57%	36.47%
State Non-FRL % Proficient	74.57%	73.37%	64.47%	80.26%	74.87%	67.02%
State Non-FRL % minus State FRL %	29.61%	29.88%	30.08%	28.51%	30.30%	30.55%
LC FRL % Proficient	32.03%	30.30%	22.42%	41.99%	33.02%	26.94%
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	73.20%	71.32%	62.47%	80.25%	75.17%	65.39%
LC Non-FRL % minus LC FRL %	41.17%	41.02%	40.05%	38.26%	42.15%	38.45%

Figure III.9: Percent Difference in FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rate 2011-2012 Comparision

Figure III.10: Percent Difference in FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rate 2011-2012 Comparision
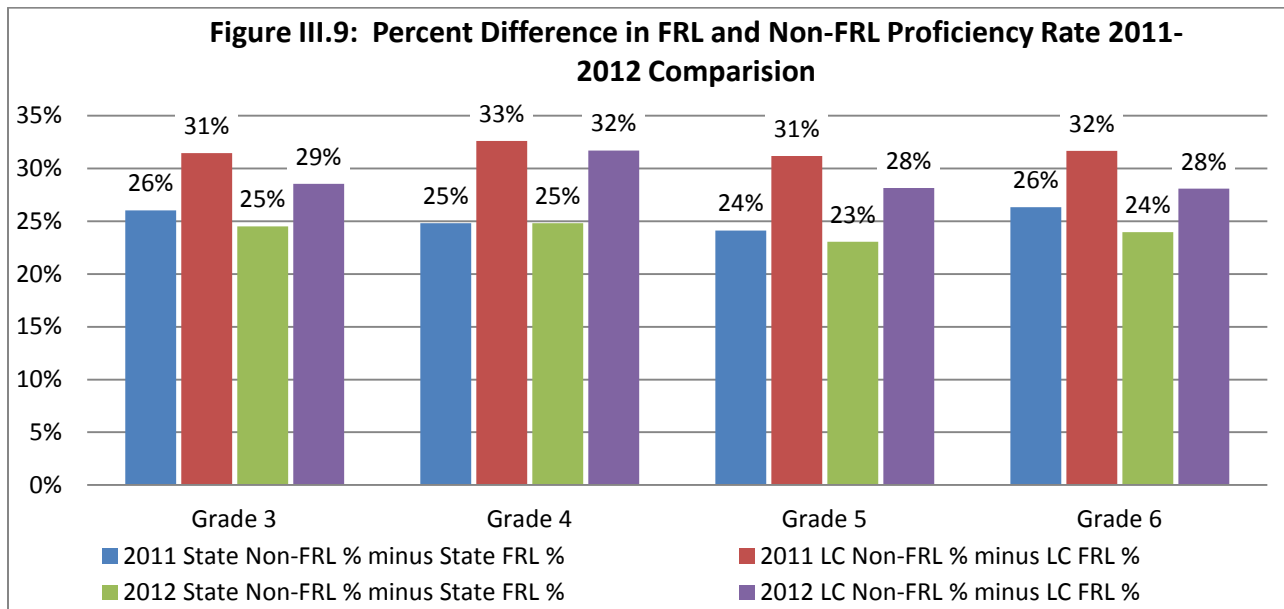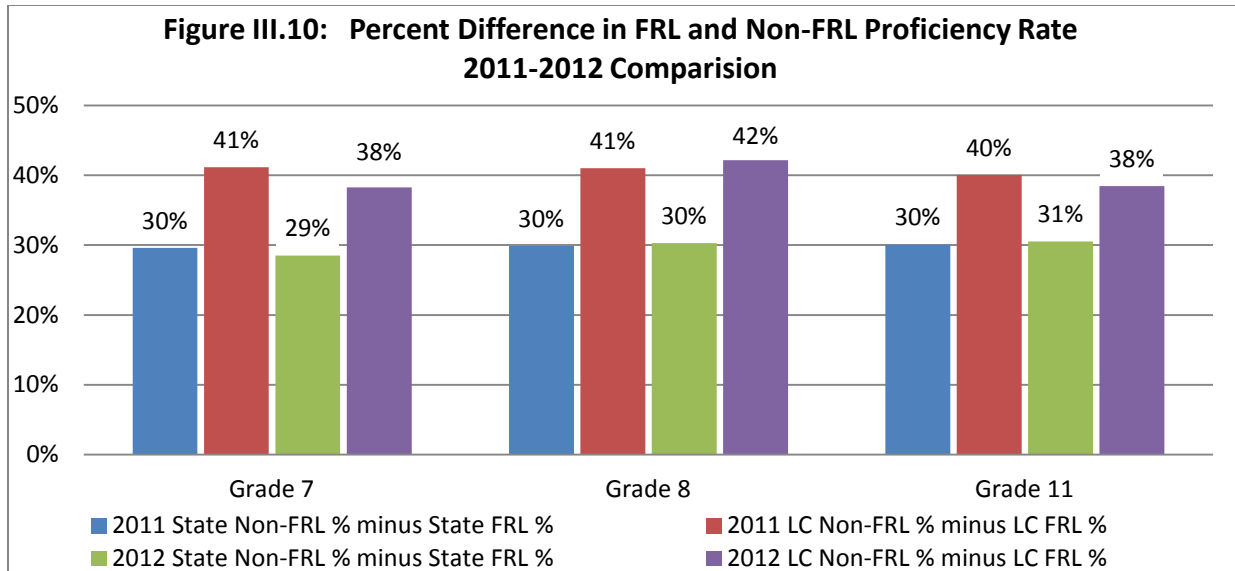
The performance gap in Mathematics is somewhat larger than in Reading, but the fact that 2012 was just the second year for the administration of the Mathematics Assessment and the third year for Reading could be a relevant factor. The following are some observations from Table III.9 (page 44) and III.10 (page 44) and Figures III.9 (page 44) and III.10.

- Proficiency rates on the Mathematics Assessments improved in 2012, particularly among Learning Community students who qualify for FRL. In that group gains ranged from approximately 3% in grade 8 to more than 14% in grade 5.

- The gaps in both the Learning Community and the State are large, although somewhat greater in the Learning Community. However, in the Learning Community, at all grades except grade 8, the gap was less in 2012 than it was in 2011. This improvement was more pronounced in the Learning Community than the State.

- The gaps between FRL and non-FRL are greater at the secondary level than in grades 3 through 6. In the Learning Community in 2012, the gap ranged from approximately 28% in grades 5 and 6 to 42% in grade 8. In the State the difference ranged from approximately 23% in grade 5 to 31% in grade 11.

- There is a dramatic increase in the proficiency gap between 6th and 7th grade. In the Learning Community the gap is approximately 10% greater in grade 7 than in grade 6 in both 2011 and 2010.

NeSA Science

The Nebraska Science Assessments were administered for the first time in 2012 in grades 5, 8, and 11. The data that follow will serve as baseline in Science. The data in the tables and graphs follow the same format as the other assessments without the comparisons to previous years.

2012 State and Learning Community Proficiency Rate Comparisons

Table III.11: *State and Learning Community NeSA Science Grades 5, 8, and 11 Percent Proficient*

	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
State Total Assessed	22,001	21,132	21,191
State Total % Proficient	66.51%	67.56%	66.74%
LC Total Assessed	8,536	7,951	7,839
LC Total % Proficient	64.81%	65.11%	62.02%
State FRL Assessed	10,171	9,172	7,940
State FRL % Proficient	50.57%	50.68%	47.88%
LC FRL Assessed	3,897	3,455	3,035
LC FRL % Proficient	43.21%	40.72%	37.83%
State Non-FRL Assessed	11,830	11,960	13,251
State Non-FRL % Proficient	80.21%	80.51%	78.03%
LC Non-FRL Assessed	4,639	4,496	4,804
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	82.95%	83.85%	77.31%

Figure III.11: 2012 NeSA Science Percent Proficient
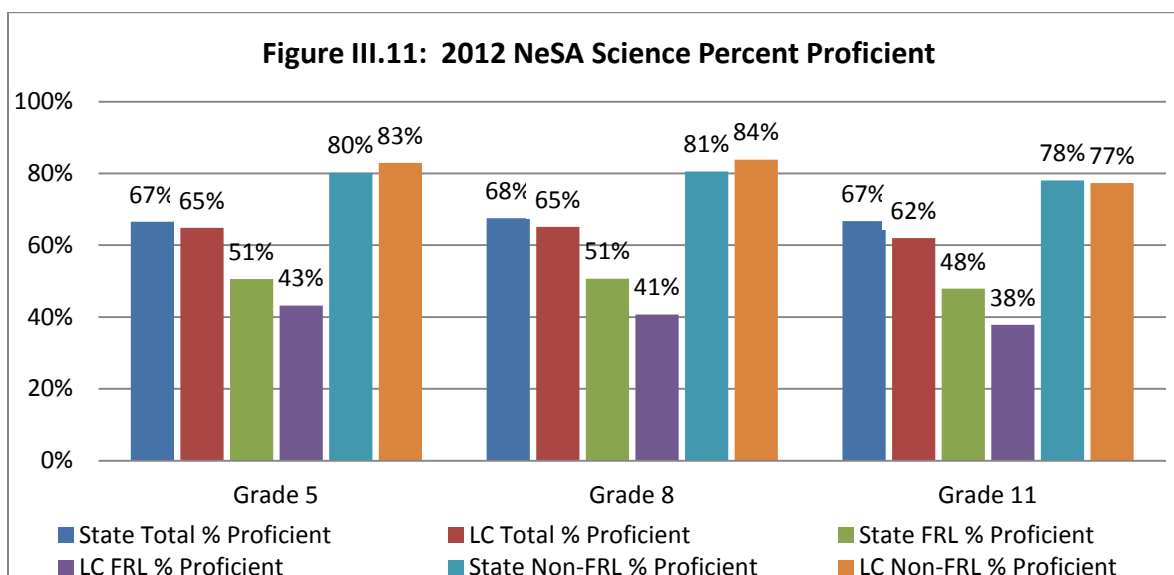
The pattern seen in the Science tables and graphs is similar to that seen in Reading and Mathematics. The State and Learning Community Mathematics proficiency rates of all students and non-FRL

students are very similar, while the State and Learning Community proficiency rates for FRL groups differ more. Descriptions of some of the State and Learning Community comparisons follow:

- State proficiency rates are slightly higher for all students, and Learning Community proficiency rates are slightly higher for non-FRL students, except at grade 11 where the performance of the State is less than one percentage point higher than the Learning Community.

- Performance of students who qualify for FRL is quite low in both the State and the Learning Community, ranging from approximately 38% in Learning Community in grade 11 to just over 50% for the State in grades 5 and 8.

- Again, there is a greater difference between the State and Learning Community in the FRL groups. The State proficiency rate for FRL is 7.4% higher than the Learning Community in grade 5 and approximately 10% higher in grades 8 and 10.

FRL – Non-FRL Comparisons

Tables III.12 and Figure III.12 (page 48) show the percent proficient for FRL and Non-FRL and the percent of difference in the proficiency (performance gap) of the two groups.

Table III.12: *State and Learning Community 2012 NeSA Science Grades 5, 8, and 11 Percent Difference Between FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rates "The Performance Gap"*

	2012		
	Grade 5	**Grade 8**	**Grade 11**
State FRL % Proficient	50.57%	50.68%	47.88%
State Non-FRL % Proficient	80.21%	80.51%	78.03%
State Non-FRL % minus State FRL %	29.64%	29.83%	30.15%
LC FRL % Proficient	43.21%	40.72%	37.83%
LC Non-FRL % Proficient	82.95%	83.85%	77.31%
LC Non-FRL % minus LC FRL %	39.74%	43.13%	39.48%

Figure III.12

Figure III.12: Percent Difference in FRL and Non-FRL Proficiency Rate 2012
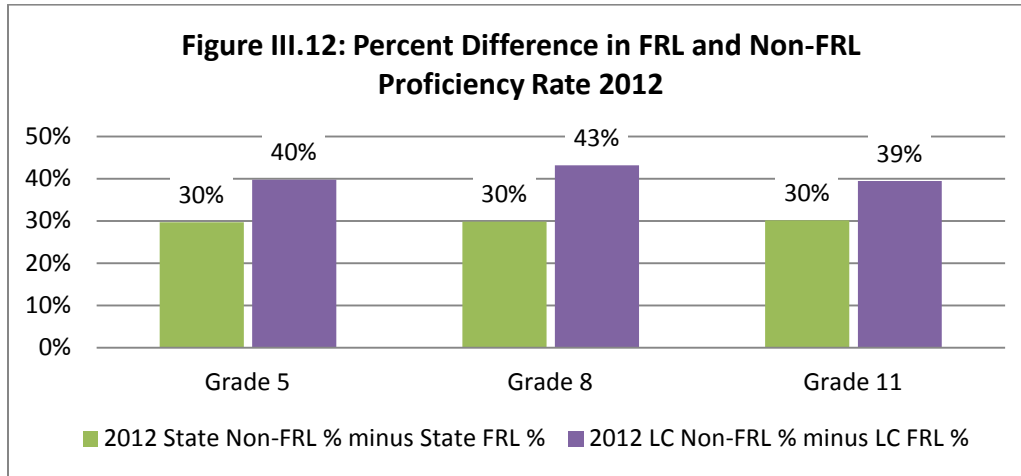
The "performance gaps" in science are relatively large and similar to those of Mathematics. The following are some observations from Table III.12 (page 47) and Figure III.12.

- The gap in both the Learning Community and the State are large, although somewhat greater in the Learning Community.

- In the Learning Community differences between the proficiency rates of the FRL group and non-FRL range from 39% in grade 11 to 43% in grade 8. In the State the difference at all three grades is approximately 30%.

- The difference in the magnitude of the gaps between the State and the Learning Community are 9%, 10% and 13% in grades 11, 5, and 8, respectively.

Comparing Performance of Resident and Open Enrollment Students

A primary purpose of the Learning Community is closing the achievement gap by creating a more balanced socioeconomic diversity in all schools. As stated throughout this report, a school's diversity can be increased, through Open Enrollment, in two ways:

1) Students who qualify for FRL open-enroll in a school with a FRL percentage less than the Learning Community, as a whole (43%)

2) Students who do not qualify for FRL open-enroll in a school with a FRL percentage greater than that of the Learning Community.

The performance comparisons of these two groups of Open Enrollment students with students who are not open-enrolled is highly relevant to the goals of the Learning Community. Questions

to the following are critically important to the goals of Open Enrollment but very difficult to answer with any degree of confidence:

- Is the performance of FRL-eligible Open Enrollment students, who transfer to schools with lower proportions of FRL, different than their resident counterparts?

- Is the performance of Non-FRL Open Enrollment students, who transfer to schools with higher proportions of FRL, different than their resident counterparts?

In 2012, for the first time, and with a degree of hesitancy, we examined the differences in the NeSA Reading and Mathematics performance of resident [8] and Open Enrollment students in grades 3 through 8, also examining differences associated with FRL status and the percentage of FRL-qualifying students in the school. The question of whether Open Enrollment has a direct effect on the performance of any group of students in either direction cannot be answered by these data. There are a multitude of variables that cannot be isolated or eliminated. For example, families who choose to open-enroll, particularly those who transfer from a high FRL school to a school with a relatively low percentage of FRL, may have different home environments and be highly motivated to seek out the best possible educational environment.

It is also important to remember, that the proficiency percentages apply only to the 2012 administration of the test. The proficiency rates shown in the tables and graphs that follow are based on an entire population of students who took the test, rather than a sample, so statistical tests of significance are not necessary. However, the observed differences are true only for this particular administration of the tests. We cannot say whether the same differences will be present next year or even on another administration of the tests at any point in time. In addition, the proficiency percentages are likely to be less stable; that is, they are more likely to change from year to year because of the relatively low number of students in those groups. There are less than 300 students in each of the Open Enrollment groups being compared. The number of students in the group designated as non-FRL, open-enrolled students in schools with more than 43% FRL is particularly small (84 in grades 3, 4, and 5 and 64 in grades 6, 7, and 8). Comparisons including these groups must be made with great caution. The difference in these groups' proficiency rate and higher performing groups represents very few students.

In addition, we do not know whether the proficiency percentages for Open Enrollment students represent a change in their performance from past years. The performance of the students in the Open Enrollment groups may not be better than their performance in past years in the resident school they came from.

---

[8] The resident group includes all students in the NDE Fall Membership count who were not designated by Learning Community School Districts as Open Enrollment, including Option Enrollment students.

It is also important to remember, that the Open Enrollment students in these groups had all been in their new schools for less than two years when the tests were administered. Approximately 2,500 of them had been in their new schools for just seven to eight months. It is unlikely that such a short time in a new school would be the *cause* of improved or declining performance on the test. Several years of schooling in their previous schools would likely also affect performance.

The data included in the tables and graphs that follow were provided by the Nebraska Department of Education. The graphs show the proficiency rates on the NeSA Mathematics and Reading Assessments. Based on the Nebraska Department of Education recommendation, grade levels are combined into two groups: Grades 3, 4, and 5 and Grades 6, 7, and 8. Each graph displays the performance of eight groups of students in schools with FRL concentrations greater than the Learning Community total and less than the Learning Community total (43%). Another caution is related to this dichotomous grouping of schools by FRL concentration. Within the group of schools that have less than 43% FRL, there is obviously a wide range of FRL concentration, from less than 10% to slightly more than 40% and, likewise, the range is broad in the group of high concentration FRL schools (> 43%) from approximately 45% to more than 90%. There are a number of schools in each group in the middle range (40% to 60%) whose percentages of FRL students differ very little.

NeSA Proficiency Rate Group Comparisons

With the above cautions in mind, proficiency rates on State Reading and Mathematics Assessments of the following groups are compared for students who qualify for FRL and those who do not:

- Open Enrollment students enrolled in schools with <43% FRL

- Open Enrollment students enrolled in schools with >43% FRL

- Resident students enrolled in schools with <43% FRL

- Resident students enrolled in schools with >43% FRL

Comparisons are made using the data found in the tables and graphs that follow. Tables III.13, III.14, III.15 and III.16 compare the proficiency rates of each of the eight groups of students identified above and the number of students in each group. Figures III.13, III.14, III.15, and III.16 graphically display the proficiency rates of each group. Tables and Figures III.13 (page 51) and III.14 (pages 51 and 52) contain the data pertaining to grades 3, 4, and 5 NeSA Reading and NeSA Mathematics and Tables and Figures III.15 (pages 52 and 53) and III.16 (pages 53 and 54) show the same data for grades 6, 7, and 8.
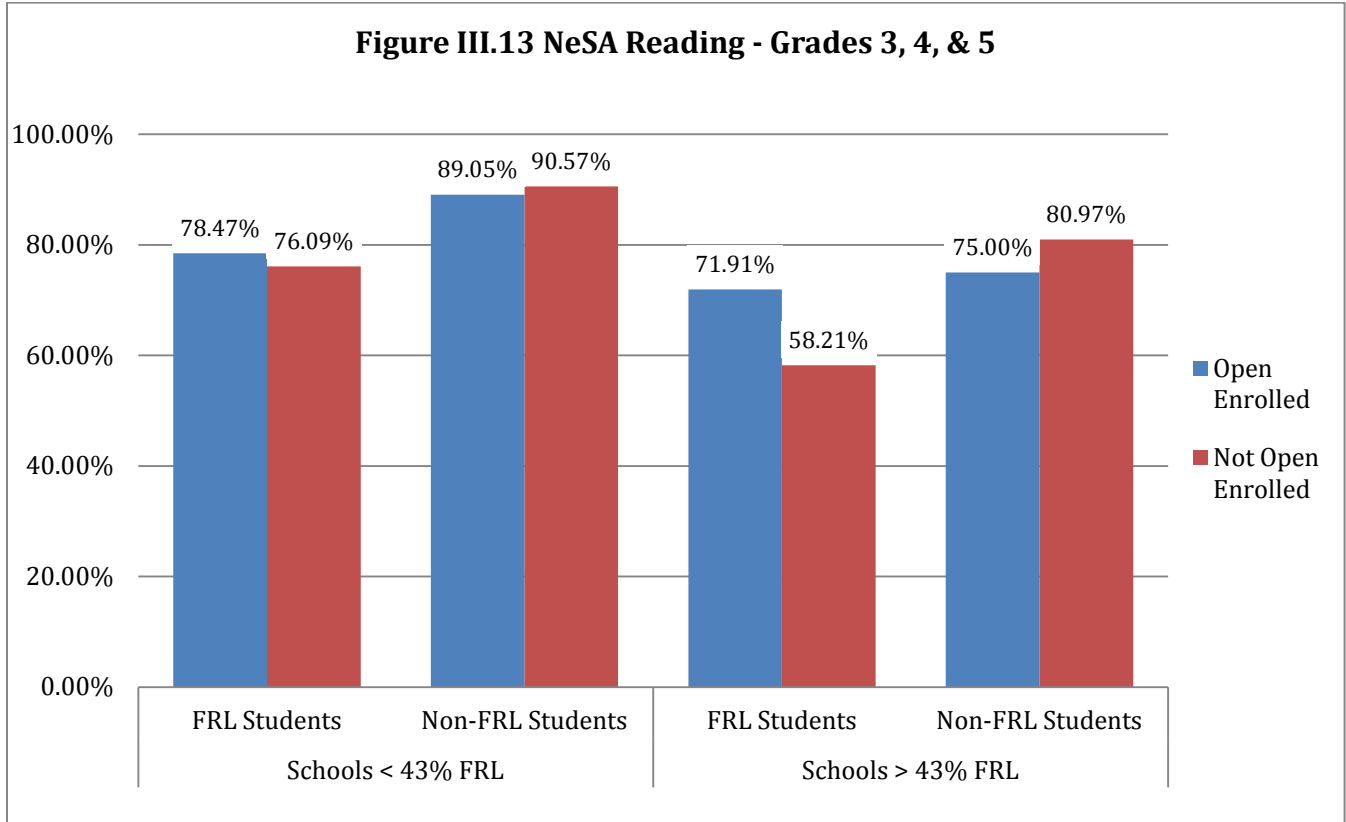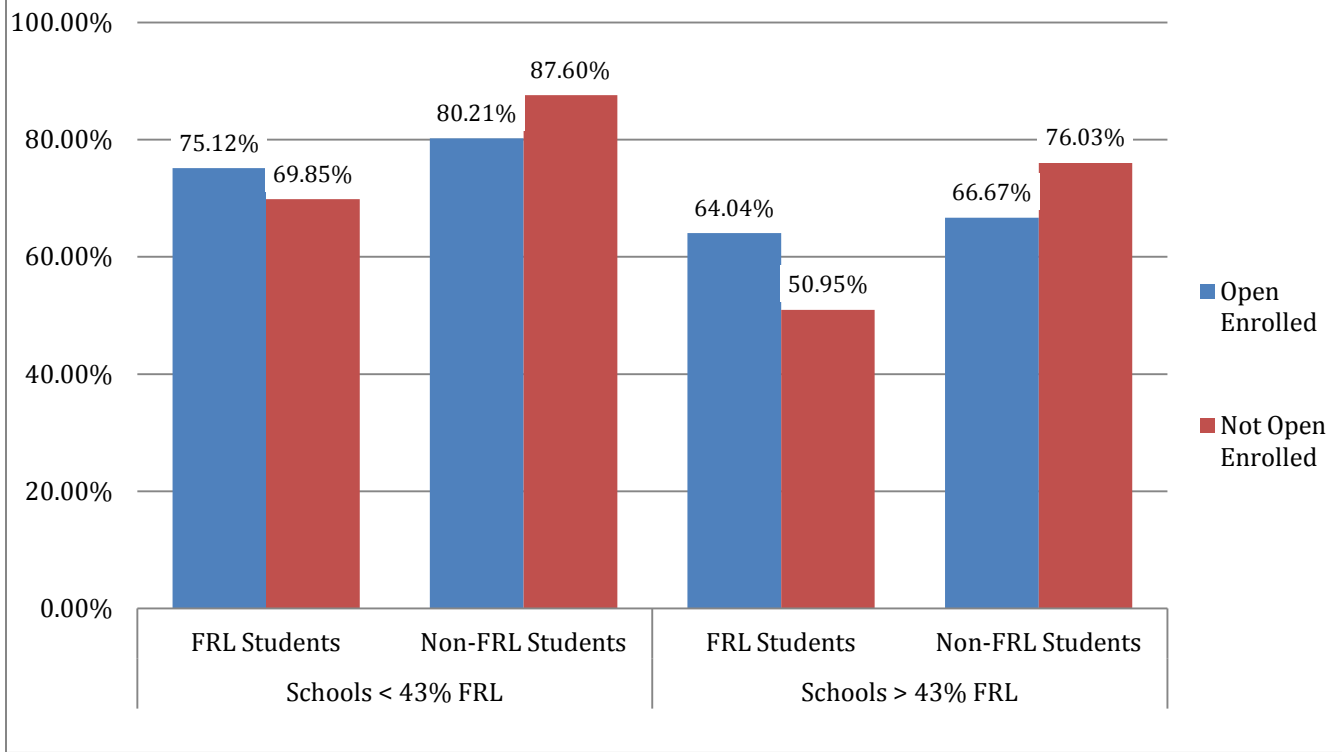
Table III.13: Open Enrollment and Resident Students Grades 3, 4, and 5 Reading Proficiency Rates

		Open Enrolled		Not Open Enrolled	
		Students	% Proficient	Students	% Proficient
Schools < 43% FRL	FRL Students	209	78.47%	2,463	76.09%
	Non-FRL Students	283	89.05%	10,769	90.57%
Schools > 43% FRL	FRL Students	178	71.91%	9,221	58.21%
	Non-FRL Students	84	75.00%	2,916	80.97%

Figure III.13 NeSA Reading - Grades 3, 4, & 5

Table III.14: Open Enrollment and Resident Students Grades 3, 4, and 5 Mathematics Proficiency Rates

		Open Enrolled		Not Open Enrolled	
		Students	% Proficient	Students	% Proficient
Schools < 43% FRL	FRL Students	209	75.12%	2,468	69.85%
	Non-FRL Students	283	80.21%	10,778	87.60%
Schools > 43% FRL	FRL Students	178	64.04%	9,286	50.95%
	Non-FRL Students	84	66.67%	2,924	76.03%

Figure III.14 NeSA Math - Grades 3, 4, & 5

Table III.15: Open Enrollment and Resident Students Grades 6, 7, and 8 Reading Proficiency Rates

		Open Enrolled		Not Open Enrolled	
		Students	% Proficient	Students	% Proficient
Schools < 43% FRL	FRL Students	292	71.58%	2,810	74.91%
	Non-FRL Students	342	86.26%	10,706	90.50%
Schools > 43% FRL	FRL Students	113	67.26%	7,529	50.22%
	Non-FRL Students	64	79.69%	2,572	78.85%

Figure III.15 NeSA Reading - Grades 6, 7, & 8
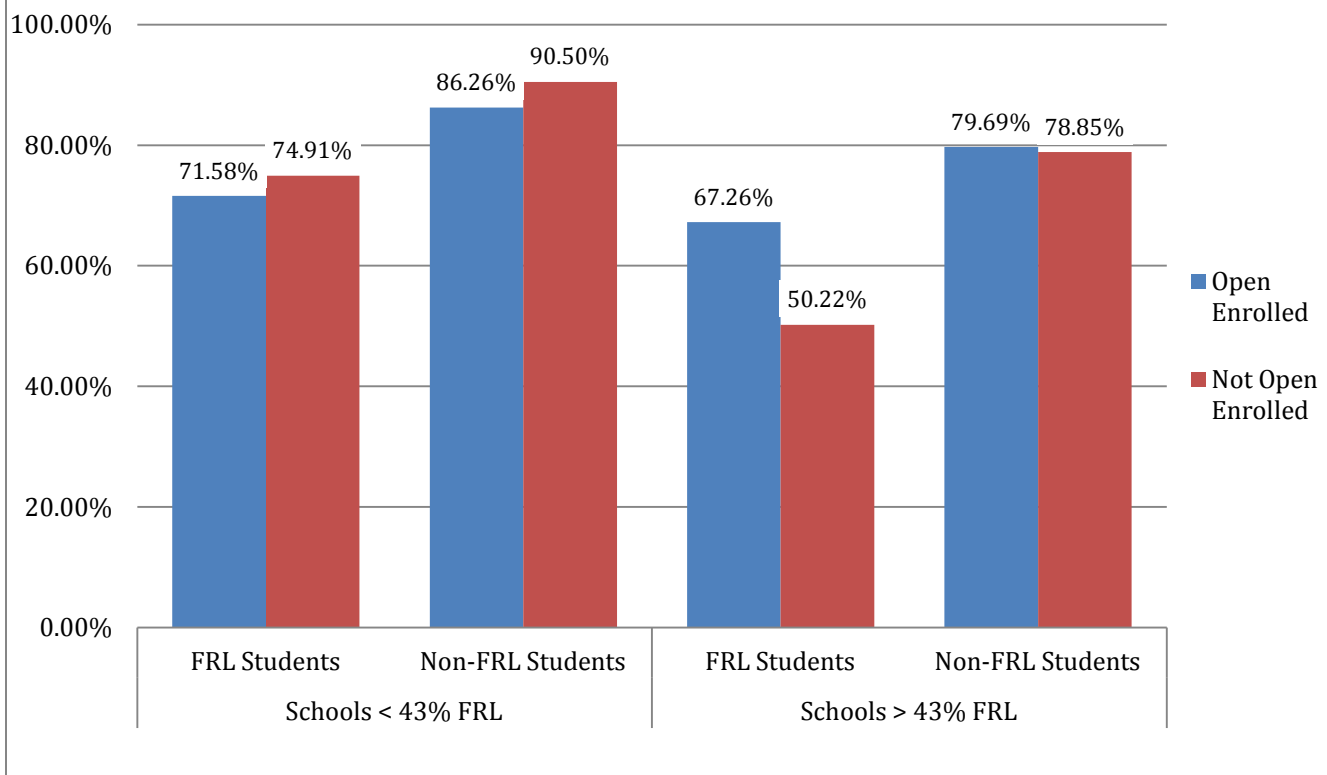
Table III.16: Open Enrollment and Resident Students Grades 6, 7, and 8 Mathematics Proficiency Rates

		Open Enrolled		Not Open Enrolled	
		Students	% Proficient	Students	% Proficient
Schools < 43% FRL	FRL Students	293	56.31%	2,803	58.90%
	Non-FRL Students	342	77.19%	10,705	81.92%
Schools > 43% FRL	FRL Students	113	49.56%	7,578	35.00%
	Non-FRL Students	64	67.19%	2,575	61.36%

Figure III.16 NeSA Math - Grades 6, 7, & 8
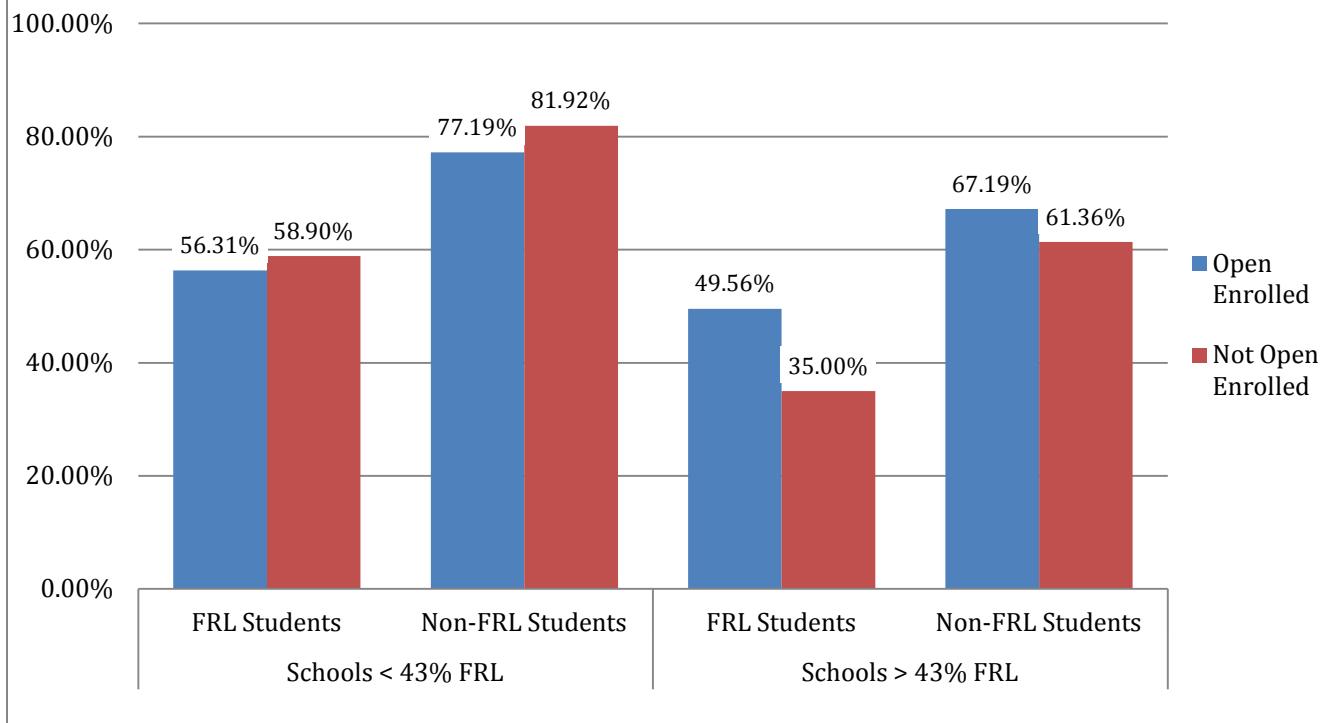
Eight groups of students, in two grade level groupings, on two assessments, present a multitude of possible comparisons. For this Report, comparisons are limited to Open Enrollment students who are enrolled in schools to which they contribute to the socioeconomic diversity, comparing proficiency rates of those two groups to their counterparts who are not open enrolled. The results of these comparisons are summarized below:

- How do the NeSA proficiency rates of FRL-eligible students who are open-enrolled in schools with low concentrations of FRL (<43%) compare to resident FRL students?

  o In the grade 3-5 group, on both assessments, the proficiency rate of this group of Open Enrollment students is slightly higher than the proficiency rates of resident FRL students in the same low FRL schools (78% vs. 76% in Reading and 75% vs. 70% in Math). On the other hand, in the grade 6-8, the proficiency rate of the resident group is slightly higher than the Open Enrollment group (75% vs. 72% in Reading and 59% vs. 56% in Math).

  o In both grade groupings, on both assessments, the proficiency rates of FRL-eligible students who are open-enrolled in low concentration FRL schools are considerably higher than resident or Open Enrollment FRL-eligible students in high FRL schools.

- How do the NeSA proficiency rates of Non-FRL students who open-enroll in schools with high concentrations of FRL (>43%) compare to resident non-FRL students?

  - In grades 3-5, on both assessments, the proficiency rate of this group of Open Enrollment students is lower than Non-FRL resident students in the same high FRL schools (75% vs. 81% in Reading and 67% vs. 76% in Math). In the grade 6-8 group in Reading, the proficiency rates of the Non- FRL Open Enrolled and resident students in the high FRL schools are almost identical (79.7% and 78.9%). In Math the proficiency rate of the Open Enrollment group is slightly higher than the resident group (67% vs. 61%).

  - In both grade groupings, on both assessments, the proficiency rates of Non-FRL groups who are open-enrolled in high concentration FRL schools are considerably lower than resident or Open Enrollment non-FRL students in low FRL schools.

  - In grades 3-5, the proficiency rate of this group of Open Enrollment students is lower than all other groups except FRL-eligible students in high FRL schools.

It will be important to continue to make comparisons among these groups, monitoring trends across years. If differences in the same directions continue, we can become more confident that true differences exist. However, even then, we cannot attribute the cause of the differences only to Open Enrollment or any other single variable.

SECTION IV – EVALUATION OF ELEMENTARY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Background

Because the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (LC) was formed reduce the achievement gap, Elementary Learning support was established to fund innovative programs to impact the achievement of elementary students who face challenges in the educational environment due to poverty, limited English skills, or mobility.

Evaluation Approach and Rationale

Generally based upon a Utilization-Focused evaluation design (Patton, 2012), the evaluation plan utilized multiple methods to describe and measure the quality of implementation, the nature of programming, and to report outcomes demonstrated by the elementary learning programs funded by the LC. These programs included Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten, Extended Learning (including Literacy Coaching), and Family Support focused programs. The overarching evaluation questions were:

1. *Implementation*: What was the nature and quality of implementation? Who accessed and participated in the program? Was there variation in implementation and if so, what factors contributed?
   a. What happened?
   b. For whom?
   c. What was the quality of implementation?
2. *Academic focus*: What were short and long term outcomes related to academic achievement?
   a. Did students' perceptions related to learning or engagement change?
   b. Did other stakeholders report improvement in student learning or engagement (parents, school day teachers)?
   c. Was there improvement in communication skills (literacy)?
   d. Was there improvement in quantitative thinking skills (numeracy)?
3. *Family support focus*: What did the program or school provide to families/parents that will allow greater student success in school and also allow regular school staff to focus on teaching and learning?
   a. What processes did the program or school use to support the needs of families?
   b. What processes did the program or school use to develop resources for helping to meet those needs?

Program Descriptions

Subsection IV.1   **Extended Learning Time (ELT) Programs**

IV.1.1. Comprehensive: These programs provide after school and out-of-school time programming throughout the school year. Students would be offered programming greater than one hour per day. This design would typically target academic and social/behavioral supports, and in some cases, family engagement services.

IV.1.2. Tutoring: Tutoring ELT programs provide after school tutoring targeted to students at greatest risk for academic failure during the school year. This is typically offered in one hour sessions, one or two times per week.

IV.1.3. Summer: Summer extended learning programs provide summer programming which targets academic and social/behavioral supports typically to students who have been identified as needing additional supports, and in some cases also includes recreation, health/wellness, and family engagement services.

Subsection IV.2   **Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten Summer Programs**

IV.2   Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten programs offer programming to support pre-kindergarten students in the summer prior to entry into kindergarten.

Subsection IV.3   **Family and Student Support Programs**

IV.3.1 Learning Community of South Omaha (LCCSO): This program provides family literacy and parenting education to families in South Omaha, with a predominant focus on serving high poverty parents who are learning English.

IV.3.2. Family Support Liaison program by Lutheran Family Services: The Family Support Liaison Model was established to reduce barriers to learning by providing services to students and families that address underlying issues affecting the family and child. The program's multi-pronged approach to service delivery address a variety of factors that impact the child's ability to learn.

IV.3.3 Communities In Schools (CIS): CIS uses an evidence-based approach to assess student and school-wide needs that are then addressed by brokering in an array of services and monitoring their impact. The CIS model uses integrated student services to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Subsection IV.1: Extended Learning Time Programs

Lead: Michelle Simpson, Ph.D.

Introduction

The Learning Community funded a number of Extended Learning Time programs that included comprehensive afterschool and out-of-school time programs throughout the school year, before-school and after-school tutoring sessions with targeted academic support, and summer learning programs to students. Below is a description of the programs that served students during 2011-2012.

School Year Program Descriptions

Bellevue Extended Learning. This program featured extended learning time in the subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics during the school year to target students at risk for falling behind academically.   It was implemented in six elementary schools across the district. Students targeted for this program were in grades 3-6. The program incorporated collaboration time for teachers to design lessons specifically targeted for individual student areas in need of improvement. A Lead Teacher was hired to organize the programs and improve their flow and consistency.   A Literacy Coach and English Language Learner Teacher were

<div style="background-color:#C0504D; padding:1em;">

Extended Learning Key Findings

- **5,857 students were served**
  - **School Year-3,492 students were served an average of 95 hours Literacy Coaching-695 students**
  - **Summer-1,670 students were served an average of 244 hours**
- **80% of students were eligible for free/reduced lunch**
- **Measures of student achievement ranged from showing no improvements, slight improvements, to significant improvements for participating students**

</div>

incorporated to intensely focus on literacy and offer pull-out services for direct reading instruction to targeted students. In addition literacy bags were provided for families in English as well as Spanish to encourage reading at home. This program operated two nights per week during the school year.

Completely Kids. This program focused on academic proficiency, youth development, food/nutrition, and family engagement. Completely Kid's academic programming (mathematics, reading, writing, and science) was designed by licensed educators to align with Nebraska State Educational Standards and to supplement classroom learning in the core areas. Many lessons were molded to the individual learning needs of each student. The program also provided students with the

opportunity to participate in educational enrichment activities, family engagement, and coordinators worked closely with the Family Support Liaison to identify additional support for families. Students from Pre-Kindergarten through fourth grade were targeted for this program at three schools. The program ran Monday through Friday for three hours a day after school, for 34 weeks during the school year.

Girls Inc. This program featured an out-of-school setting literacy program to promote phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehensive. It was sponsored by a community agency and the program complements the local school district's reading curriculum, utilizing the same phonics program and sequence of instruction. Certified teachers were included in the program staff to enhance the expertise, as well as to design specific interventions in response to individual needs. The overall focus of the program was to improve the percentage of students reading at grade level. This program ran Monday through Friday, for three hours per day during the school year at two sites.

Omaha Area Health Education Center (OAHEC) at Lothrop Elementary. This school year program featured a Science and Math Enrichment Camp designed to increase competencies among underserved students at Lothrop Magnet Center utilizing programming from Carolina's Inquiry-Based Science and Math Curriculums developed in partnership with the National Academies and the Smithsonian Institution. Students involved in this program participated in substantive afterschool classroom learning including hands-on activities and presentations, designed to prepare students for academic and career opportunities. Students participated in science and math programming in areas such as the life cycle of organisms, concepts in algebra and geometry (collecting and sorting, plotting on graphs, etc.) and taking measurements of all sorts. In addition to science and math programming, students in grades 3 and 4 and some members of their immediate family were trained on providing life-saving first aid care to friends and family. This program operated for 10 weeks, three days per week, for two hours per session. All students at Lothrop from grades K-4 were targeted for participation in this program.

Omaha Public Schools Extended Learning Time (Tutoring). This school year program featured Extended Learning Time (ELT) provided to select students with academic needs designed to help them master content. The program design created a cohort of students with a common teacher to establish long term relationships and in-depth learning opportunities with an ideal ratio of no more than 10 students per teacher. The teacher from the ELT program and the regular classroom teacher worked together to customize instruction for each student and incorporated planned instruction time for students. The program goals included students having better school attendance and higher average test scores than comparable students not in the program. The program ran for 20 weeks, two days per week, for one hour per day during

the school year for students in grades K-6. This ELT program was designed by the school district and was implemented in 37 schools. A district support team was established to assist schools in the implementation of programs and for coordination of resources that included a district level contact for administration, a lead teacher in each school to ensure individualized instruction was planned for every student, as well as incorporated an internal evaluation.

Westside Community Schools Literacy Coaches. This program, while included in the Extended Learning section, was different from other programs featured in this section. This program was implemented in two Title I schools. The program was targeted to 38 teachers in grades K-6. It focused on providing literacy coaches to classroom teachers during the school day, rather than after school or in the summer. The goal of the program was to expand and build upon the literacy coaching model begun in the previous year. The district utilized literacy coaches, selected from qualified staff working in each building, to provide coaching services to classroom teachers based upon those teachers needs as well as on student needs, as indicated by reading proficiency data. The general intent was to utilize coaching to maximize K-6 classroom teachers' effectiveness in teaching reading to students who were not proficient in reading for the express purpose of moving them closer to proficiency. Coaches participated in ongoing training, co-planned, co-taught, headed study groups, conducted demonstration lessons, peer coached, and/or devised, implemented, and tracked the results of quality classroom-based reading assessments during the 2011-2012 school year. A total of 695 students were served through the literacy coaching program.

Benefits of the program reported by teachers were overwhelmingly positive. These included assistance with implementing curriculum, strategies, and gaining knowledge in differentiated instruction and book selection for guided reading. Additional benefits included developing a common language, having "a peer with whom to problem solve," and this also helped to ensure that "teachers taught the indicators and that they aligned with the district scope and sequence" (district report for 2011/12, Literacy Coaching Program Evaluation).   Challenges encountered were primarily related to timing and scheduling, with teachers expressing they would like more time to work with the coach.

Results: The number of K-2 students needing Response to Intervention (RtI) services decreased in both buildings from fall to spring. One building decreased from 13 to 3 students needing daily reading intervention, and the other building decreased from 18 to 7 students. In grades 3-6, results were less clear. There was no overall increase in proficiency, and variation in gains and decreases in individual classrooms and on different measures.

Recommendation: Because the literacy coaching model focuses on improving teacher effectiveness, it would be helpful to measure teacher effectiveness pre and post to better understand how coaching is impacting teachers, and perhaps it could better explain changes in

student performance in some grade levels or in some classrooms. It will be recommended that the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta) be added to the evaluation design for all classroom teachers.

Summer Program Descriptions

Bellevue Summer School. This summer program featured intense instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics, and targeted students at risk for falling behind academically. Lessons were designed with English Language Learners in mind and students experienced additional direct instruction in English. A Summer Reading Incentive Program to improve literacy skills was included and students were offered educational opportunities by attending two designated field trips to correlate with lessons. The program operated for two weeks during the summer for approximately six and a half hours per day, five days per week. Students in grades 1-3 were targeted for this program. Although the summer program sessions were held in one elementary building, it was a collaborative effort and students from multiple schools in the district participated.

Catholic Charities Summer. This program provided academically focused summer enrichment, as well as physical and experiential activities to low income students. Goals were structured to support participants in increasing their communication skills in reading and writing along with their quantitative thinking skills in mathematics. A certified teacher structured the lessons and coached the staff to work with staff from local schools to ensure summer offerings complemented and enhanced the school curriculum. The program also provided students with the opportunity to participate in fine arts activities such as music class, swimming skills in partnership with the Red Cross, health and proper nutrition promotion activities, computer lessons, and field trips. Students aged 5-13 were targeted for this program. The program was implemented for 10 weeks during the summer, 9.5 hours per day, Monday through Friday, and also allowed for early/late pick up.

Completely Kids Summer. This program focused on academic proficiency, youth development, food/nutrition, and family engagement. Completely Kid's academic programming (mathematics, reading, writing, and science) was designed by licensed educators to align with Nebraska State Educational Standards and to supplement classroom learning. Many lessons were molded to the individual learning needs of each student. The program also provided students with the opportunity to participate in educational enrichment activities, family engagement, and coordinators worked closely with the Family Support Liaison to identify additional support for families. Students from Pre-Kindergarten through fourth grade were

targeted for this program at three schools. The program ran for 10 weeks during the summer, nine and a half hours per day, Monday through Friday.

Douglas County West/Twin Rivers YMCA Summer. This summer enrichment program featured a partnership between the school district and the YMCA designed to foster overall development of each student, with a focus on academic achievement and wellness. They provided a summer enrichment program targeting children in poverty, English language learners, and/or students who had high mobility. Academic support was provided from several teachers in the district to maintain or to improve student academic performance. In addition to academic instruction, nutritionally healthy lunch and snacks, and instruction in promoting a life-long healthy life style was provided. Through this funding, scholarships were provided to students with need to cover the cost of participation in the program. The program operated for 11 weeks during the summer with three hours per day being devoted to instruction, and the remainder of the day focused on recreation, health, wellness, and other imbedded learning activities. Students targeted for this program were in grades K-6.

Girls Inc. Summer. This summer literacy program was designed to promote phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and reading comprehensive. It was designed to complement the local school district's reading curriculum, utilizing the same phonics program and sequence of instruction. Certified teachers were included in the program staff to design specific interventions in response to individual needs and to help the program improve the percentage of students reading at grade level. Girls aged 5 through 9 were targeted for participation. The program operated Monday through Friday for nine hours per day throughout the summer.

Kroc Center/Salvation Army Summer. Camp Kroc provided increased opportunities for underserved youth to develop skills and talents and utilize a curriculum that provides educational programming, arts enrichment and positive social interaction. Elements of the program included education, enrichment, interaction and involvement, literacy and English learning and resources for immigrants. Students targeted for this program were in grades 1-6 and the program was implemented Monday through Friday for eight hours a day all summer long.

Millard Public Schools Summer. This program featured summer school learning targeted to students who are economically disadvantaged and/or limited in English proficiency and have academic deficiencies in an effort to prevent summer learning loss. Instruction was provided to students with deficiencies in writing, reading, and mathematics. In addition, the district provided informational, instructional, and community services in areas such as successful strategies to support student learning, health and wellness, personal finance, assessing social services, child care, and English language classes. Transportation, meals, and books were

provided to students, along with a bilingual liaison and licensed social worker to help families who could benefit from those services. The program was implemented for three weeks, three hours per day, during the summer in two elementary schools in the district. Students targeted for this program were in grades K-2. Younger siblings were also eligible to attend the program (students entering kindergarten).

Westside Community Schools Paying It Forward Summer. This program featured summer school learning tailored to meet the developmental and academic needs of students in reading and mathematics. Summer school teachers were selected from among qualified staff working at each building, along with educational assistants, to ensure the student to teacher ratio did not exceed 10:1. Each school's media center was open for two hours on one day each week to provide literacy activities and to support for independent reading. In addition, incentives were offered to motivate student participation and performance. This program was implemented in two Title I schools. The program operated for five weeks, 3 hours per day, during the summer. Students in grades K-5 were targeted for this program.

Students Served

Who did these programs serve? Participation data were collected on 5,857 elementary students who attended the programs.

- School Year
    - Extended learning programs (comprehensive) – 1,716
    - Tutoring programs – 1,776
    - Literacy Coaching programs – 695

- Summer programs – 1,670

Demographic data provided on these students indicated that 80% of the students served were eligible for free/reduced lunch.

Generally, the population being served by the extended learning time programs appeared to fall within the target of the population identified to benefit from the resources of the Learning Community—those most at risk for academic failure due to socio-economic status.

Evaluation Data Collection

Quality. Quality programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term positive academic performance (Beckett, Capizzano, Parsley, Ross, Schirm, & Taylor, 2009); Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, and Clifford, 2000).   Measurement of the

quality of programs is central to a program evaluation. This section reports on the external observations completed by the UNMC evaluation team with extended learning programs funded through the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties (LC).

The observation processes was conducted using the *Observations of Quality Afterschool and Summer Programming (adapted for the Learning Community Evaluation).* This tool was developed by the lead evaluator for use with the 21st Century Community Learning Centers evaluation and has been used for the past eight years. It was adapted for the Learning Community evaluation. The observation tool measures outcomes in overall administration of the program, interactions among students and staff, support for family involvement and engagement, linkages between the school and community, general environment of the program, and observed program content (e.g., homework, language, mathematics, science, fine and dramatic arts, recreational activities). During a scheduled visit, an interview and direct observation are conducted and scored. The tool is set up a on a 5-point scale, with 5 representing that the criteria established per domain is consistently evident. The Nebraska Department of Education has established a quality indicator of 3.50 or greater for each domain of the tool.

Members of the evaluation team who achieved annual inter-rater reliability were used to complete observations at sites during the school year and at schools and programs during the summer. Overall, ratings have generally improved on the *Observations for Quality After School and Summer Programming (OQASP)* findings. Table IV.1.1 summarizes the average external program observation ratings obtained in the previous school years and summers dating back from the summer of 2010 through the summer of 2012.

Extended Learning Programs

Table IV.1.1: External Program Observation Ratings

Period	# of sites	Overall	Administration	Relationships	Family Partnerships	School-Community Collaboration	Environment, Safety & Wellness	Programming
Summer 2012	14	**4.85**	4.94	4.88	4.81	4.87	4.84	4.87
SY 2011-12	13	**4.87**	4.91	4.87	4.78	4.82	4.89	4.90
Summer 2011	11	**4.60**	4.82	4.68	4.36	4.57	4.60	4.50
SY 2010-11	13	**4.87**	4.87	4.86	4.95	4.92	4.89	4.76

Period	# of sites	Overall	Administration	Relationships	Family Partnerships	School-Community Collaboration	Environment, Safety & Wellness	Programming
Summer 2010	8	**4.09**	N/A	4.23	4.10	4.01	4.23	3.96

Scale rates best practices from 1 (not evident) to 5 (consistently evident)

The extended learning school year programs were of high quality. All sites observed exceeded the Nebraska Department of Education Indicator of Quality (rating of 3.50 or greater on every domain and overall). In fact, no site scored below 4.00 in any domain. The Overall ratings ranged from 4.55 to 4.99 (average of 4.85) for the 2012 summer. This was an increase of .25 points from the summer of 2011 and held steady compared to the prior school year.

Extended Learning Time Tutoring Results

The University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) evaluation team and the district's Education Curriculum Consultants (ECC) conducted observations in a sample of classrooms participating in the district's Extended Learning Time Tutoring (ELT) program. The ELT Observation Tool was developed by the district, in collaboration with the UNMC evaluation team, in part to provide important feedback for improving the tutoring programs. The ELT observation rated Classroom Instruction Expectations and Staff/Student Relationships.

The Classroom Instruction Expectations were rated on a three-point scale from 1 (not observed) to 3 (observed at a proficient level). The components of the observation included: (1) Warm-Up Activity, (2) Modeled/Shared, (3) Guided, (4) Independent, (5) Student Engagement, (6) Communication, (7) Closing Activity, and (8) Bell-to-Bell Instruction.

The Staff/Student Relationships were rated on a five-point scale from 1 (not evident) to 5 (consistently evident). The relationships portion was adapted from the Observations for Quality After-School Programming, (St. Clair, 2008). The five relationships items rated were: (1) Teacher interactions with students are characterized by warmth, caring, and appreciation of their efforts, (2) Teacher used positive behavior management strategies, (3) Teacher is actively engaged with the students, (4) Students interact positively with teachers, and (5) Students interact positively with each other.

Table IV.1.2: Classroom Instruction Expectations Observation Ratings

Timeframe	# of classrooms	Overall Rating	Warm-Up	Modeled/ Shared	Guided	Independent	Student Engagement	Communication	Closing Activity	Bell to Bell Instruction
SY 2011-12	59	**2.75**	2.90	2.85	2.71	2.64	2.93	2.93	2.08	2.95

Scale rates best practices from 1 (not observed) to 3 (observed at a proficient level).
The data represented is comprised of the observation ratings conducted by the UNMC team in a sample of classrooms. Observation data collected by ECCs will be reflected in the final report.

Table IV.1.3: Staff/Student Relationship Observation Ratings

Timeframe	# of classrooms	Overall Rating	Teacher Student Interactions	Positive Behavior Management Strategies	Teacher Actively Engaged	Students Interact Positive w/Teacher	Students interact Positive w/Students
SY 2011-12	59	**4.82**	4.80	4.85	4.75	4.92	4.78

Scale rates best practices from 1 (not evident) to 5 (consistently evident).
The data represented is comprised of the observation ratings conducted by the UNMC team in a sample of classrooms. Observation data collected by ECCs will be reflected in the final report.

The ELT programs aligned with the tutoring model set forth by the district. All programs were observed and rated by observers who were reliable on the observation tool. The total number of tutoring sessions observed was 59.

This program was implemented in 37 schools across the district and served students in grades K-6. Each classroom had one teacher and the number of students per classroom ranged from 1 to 14 (average 6).

All tutoring classrooms observed by both the UNMC and ECC evaluation team met the minimum requirements of the tutoring program. The Overall ratings ranged from 2.00 to 3.00 (average 2.73) for Classroom Instruction Expectations.

Ratings of the Staff/Student Relationships exceeded the Nebraska Department of Education Indicator of Quality (rating of 3.50 or greater on every domain and overall). The Overall ratings ranged from 3.80 to 5.00 (average of 4.82) for the 2011-12 school year. Relationship ratings are important because for the past nine years in the statewide 21st Century Community Learning

Center evaluations, the Relationships domain has most strongly associated with student academic achievement (r>0.40).

Students in the tutoring program significantly improved. Because the goals of the ELT program were related to increased student engagement, the district's Research Office provided additional information on whether there was an association between program participation and improved student achievement as measured by the district's K-2 Assessments for Reading and Mathematics, NeSA state tests in the subject areas of reading and mathematics in grades 3-6, and NeSA Writing at grade four. The results of the NeSA-R and NeSA-M revealed that there were statistically significant improvements in scores based on participation in the ELT program although the effect size change was small. Standardized beta coefficients were reported as this statistic answers the question of which independent variables have the greatest effect on the dependent variable (student achievement). For the ELT program, attendance, controlling for demographic characteristics (free-reduced lunch status, English as a second language, and special education) was shown to have a statistically significant improvement on NeSA-R and NeSA-M scores. For 1,236 students, the NeSA-M Beta coefficient was .07, p< .05 with an effect size of .08. The NeSA-R Beta coefficient was .07, p< .01 with an effect size of .07. In secondary analyses, the data were divided into subgroups by grade level. Participation in the ELT program was associated with higher average NeSA-R and NeSA-M scores at a statistically significant level for 5th graders only (n=238). Both NeSA-R and NeSA-M results were Beta = .26, p< .001 with an effect size of .16. At grades 3, 4 and 6, statistically significant results were not found. Effect sizes smaller than .40, according to Hattie (2009) are below the zone of desired effects, or said another way, are considered small.

Surveys were also used to measure satisfaction and changes in perceptions (e.g., in students' sense of self related to academic skills). Perception surveys were sent out to teachers, parents and students. In general, teachers, parents and students were pleased with the ELT program. Teachers felt the program was well planned and over 85% believe the ELT program was effective in improving students' skills. Teachers (80%) also felt there was good communication between teachers and lead teachers during the program and the majority of teachers (88%) believed students were engaged in the ELT program. Parents' perceptions of the ELT program were exceedingly positive. Over 92% of parents believe the program helped their child to do better in school and nearly 85% of parents would like for their child to participate in the ELT program in the 2012-2013 school year. Although only 49% of students reported that they would like to be in the program in the 2012-2013 school year, nearly 80% of students report that they felt more confident in their ability in the subjects of reading and math. Most students (77%) enjoyed the one-on-one help from their teacher during the program.

Across programs, did students demonstrative changes in academic achievement? The answer, to put it simply, is it depends. There was variation in results for student performance.

Extended learning (comprehensive) student results: School day teachers were asked to rate students on the following student behaviors by reporting their level of change (if any) from fall to spring. Results were limited to students with unique Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS) numbers. Teachers were also allowed to note if a student was already excellent in a particular area in the fall or if an area was not applicable, such as homework in some kindergarten classrooms. The survey instrument used was developed by Learning Point Associates in 2006 and is widely used for 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Teacher survey report data of elementary student behaviors served during the 2011-2012 school year were as follows. A total of 730 surveys were reported for students served in extended learning (comprehensive) programs (representing 43% of students served).

Table IV.1.4: Teacher Survey Ratings

Certificated teacher ratings of student performance	Change Fall to Spring
Homework on time	+0.46
Homework quality	+0.56
Participation	+0.75
Volunteerism	+0.53
Attendance	+0.35
Attention in class	+0.40
Behavior in class	+0.34
Academic performance	+0.75
Motivation to learn	+0.48
Peer interactions	+0.47
Family support of student learning	+0.48
Overall Change	+0.51

Scale ranges from +3 (significant improvement) to -3 (significant decline)

Students slightly improved from fall to spring. A gain of 3.00 is considered a significant improvement, a gain of 2.00 is moderate, and 1.00 is considered slight. While results of these teacher reports closely mirrored those of the previous program year in that according to teacher report—with student improvement found in academic performance and class participation—new observation evaluation tools will need to be employed in order to measure the quality of programming. Little variance has been found in site observation scores and, therefore, are not useful in correlation to student achievement. The Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta) will be recommended to better measure teaching and learning interactions with a stronger lens. With more variation in observation results, the evaluation will

be able to measure the correlation between quality measures of implementation and student performance data by the end of the year.

Teachers were also asked to rate each student's performance on district objectives/standards on a 3-point scale with 3 being exceeded standards, 2 being met standards, and 1 being below standards. Domains included reading (including reading, speaking, and listening), writing, and mathematics. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in the spring of 2012 in the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics are depicted in Figures IV.1.5.

Figure IV.1.5: Teacher Ratings of Student Performance in Spring of 2012
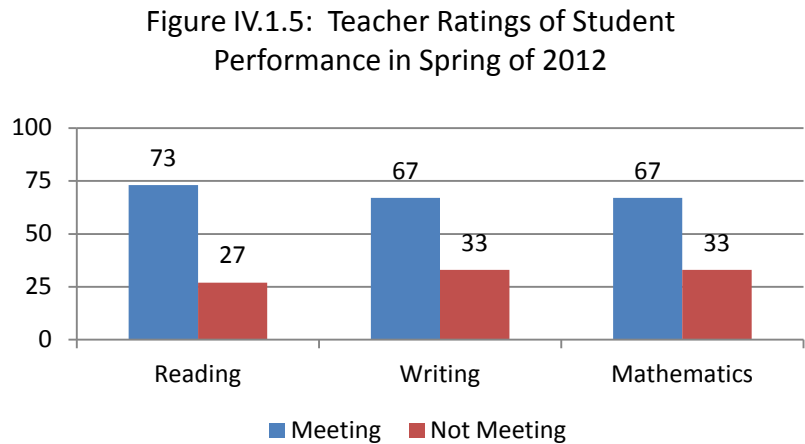
Students were generally rated as meeting or exceeding standards in the spring (67 to 73%).

Other achievement measures. Districts and programs also utilized their own evaluation strategies to measure academic performance change. Because each of these strategies varied across programs and districts, it was difficult to aggregate the results together into a meaningful whole for analysis and reporting. The validity and reliability of individual assessments varied. Some were simple counts, some were norm referenced, and some were criterion referenced. Programs submitted individual reports to the Learning Community and they were briefly summarized for this report without identifiable program information.

In the programs funded by the Learning Community, some of them measured reading, writing and mathematics ability through methods other than the teacher survey data reported previously. Reading ability was evaluated by various activities such as measures of letter fluency, letter recognition, nonsense word fluency, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, other reading-curriculum based measurements and determining the number of students with a discontinued need of additional services. Writing ability was evaluated by examining student writing samples and computer based test and mathematics skills were assessed using quantitative measures and multiple computer based programs. Figure IV.1.6 shows the reading, writing and mathematics ability change based on the information compiled from the assorted programs.

Figure IV.1.6. Reading, Writing and Mathematics Ability Change

| Reading Ability Improved | Writing Ability Improved | Mathematics Ability Varied |
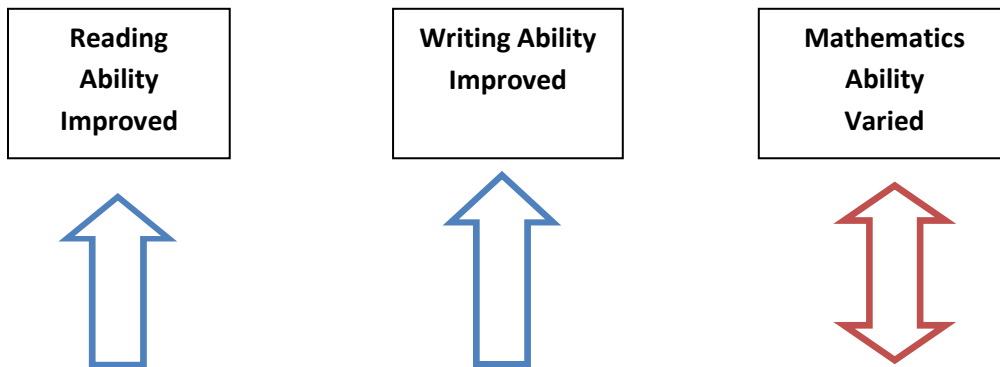
All programs that submitted alternative data showed evidence of improvement in the subject of reading. Analysis of student reading abilities prior to the program and after the program ended indicates that students positively benefited from the additional instruction. Growth in writing ability was also displayed by students participating in programs. Overall, students improved on independent measures of writing skills which indicates program effectiveness. In the area of mathematics, there were mixed results where some improvements were shown in programs but it was not as consistent as with the other subjects.

Table IV.1.7: Effect Sizes in Local Achievement Data Results

Content Area Measured	Significant Growth at Post Test	Effect Size[1]
Reading	Yes and No	d=.07 to .72
Writing	Yes and No	d=.05 to .60
Mathematics	Yes and No	d=.08 to 1.01

[1]Effect size calculated only if significant differences are found.

Family support focus. Parent surveys were collected for students enrolled in the extended learning programs. Parent comments revealed areas of strength and recommendations for improvements that were similar to comments in program years of the past.

Table IV.1.9: Parent Comments

Helped My Child	Suggestions for Improvement
93% of parents reported that the program helped their child in was such as: "It helped her get over her fear of moving to the next grade" "…social and reading skills improved" "Feels more confident now" "Expanded his vocabulary" "Improved independence" "She started to speak and read English	5% of parents offered suggestions for improvement: - Communication with parents "I never received feedback, but my son enjoyed it very much" and "We didn't receive any communication about how our child was doing." - Longer or more programming

Helped My Child	Suggestions for Improvement
better"	• Focus on child's weakest area

Extended Learning Conclusions and Implications for Program Improvement

Extended learning programs served 5,857 students and included four major types of programs: tutoring programs (1,776), broader extended learning programs during the school year that served students greater than one hour daily and all/most days of the week (1,716), summer extended learning programs (1,670), and literacy coaching programs (695). Eighty percent (80%) of students were eligible for free/reduced lunch. A total of 4,187 students were served an average 95 hours in school year programs and 1,545 students were served an average of 244 hours in summer programs. Effect sizes were most consistent in the area of reading and showed small to modest effects. External measures of program quality demonstrated that best practices were mostly to consistently evident across sites. Because schools and sites are achieving the ceiling of the current quality measure, and are showing little variation in scores, it is recommended that the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta) observation tool become a mandatory continuous improvement measure and be expanded to all types of extended learning programs in the next funding year. In this way, results can be used to refine and continuously improve each program, as well as to guide the general continuous improvement process for programs funded by the Learning Community. Further, the connection can then be measured between quality changes at the site level to student outcomes. Student achievement results were provided by some, but not all, programs and varied in their types.

Sub-Section IV.2: Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten Programs

Lead: Abbey Siebler, M.A.

Pre-kindergarten children from low income families benefit most from high quality classrooms with high quality teacher-child interactions along with high quality instruction by demonstrating higher social competence and academic outcomes (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, Mashburn, 2010). Jump Start programming is designed to provide academic and other supports to pre-kindergarten children in the summer prior to entry into kindergarten.

Who was served in these programs?

Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten programs were funded in three districts and two community agencies. All subcouncils were represented with programs. The programs ranged from three weeks to a full school year program, with varying hours and days per week. All programs utilized certified teachers for part or all of their staffing.

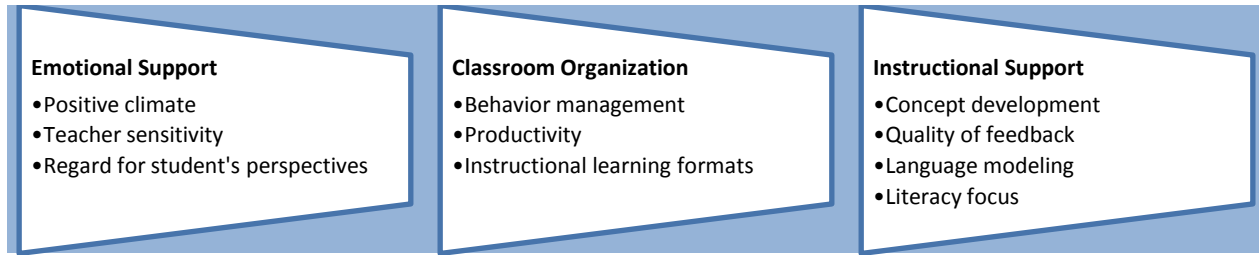**Jump Start Pre-K Key Findings**

- **891 Pre-Kindergarten students were served an average of 96 hours in the summer**
- **58% were eligible for free/reduced lunch**
- **Jump Start Pre-K students were significantly more prepared for kindergarten by the end of the program**
- **96% of parents reported their child would be more successful in kindergarten as a result of the program**

There were a total of 891 pre-kindergarten students served by the Jump Start programs. They were served an average of 96 hours total. Pre-post student achievement data were collected data on 800 students. Some brief demographic data follow:

- 53% male
- 47% female
- 58% eligible for free reduced lunch

What was the quality of implementation for the Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten Programs?

As a pilot for the past two summers, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was used to measure classroom quality in pre-kindergarten programs. Developed by Bob Pianta and others at the University of Virginia Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, this external observation tool measures classroom quality across multiple domains including: emotional support, organization, and instructional delivery. According to its authors,

the CLASS "*is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning.*" It has three domains:

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
•Positive climate	•Behavior management	•Concept development
•Teacher sensitivity	•Productivity	•Quality of feedback
•Regard for student's perspectives	•Instructional learning formats	•Language modeling
		•Literacy focus

In addition to these domains, interactions are further considered relative to dimensions. These dimensions include aspects such as: positive climate (focuses on how teachers interact with children to develop warm relationships that promote student's enjoyment of the classroom community) and concept development (focuses on how teachers interact with students to promote higher-order thinking and cognition). The domain of Instruction Support includes many of the strategies found by Hattie in Visible Learning (2009) to significantly impact student achievement in the strategy of 'Reciprocal Teaching' (*d*=0.74).

For these reasons, the evaluation team has identified the CLASS observation tool as the single best way to gather an externally rated measure of quality, and one with the added benefit of it having the potential to drive continuous improvement because of the specificity of the feedback from the observation.

CLASS

Classroom Assessment Scoring System

Author: Pianta, LaParo & Hamre, 2008

Scale:

1-2 = Low quality

3-5 = Moderate quality

6-7 = High quality

However, partly because the CLASS was a pilot tool (and optional) and because there was some reluctance to participate in CLASS observations, there was only limited exploration or piloting of the CLASS on the part of the districts and programs. A total of only 15 CLASS observations were completed of the 76 classrooms funded through the Learning Community, representing approximately 20% of the funded classrooms. These pilot classrooms were drawn from two districts and two community agencies.

The CLASS was collected at time 1 (pre) and will be collected in December of 2012, time 2 (post). Table IV.2.1 summarizes the average CLASS domain scores.

Table IV.2.1: CLASS Domain Averages in 2011 and 2012

Summer	# of classrooms observed	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2012	15	6.15	6.08	2.78
2011	7	6.41	5.80	3.14

Research on the CLASS demonstrates that ratings of 5 or greater within the domains of emotional support and classroom organization, and 2 or greater within the domain of instructional support are necessary in order to have impacts on student achievement (Hamre, et al, 2009).

Programs and classrooms that participated in the pilot CLASS observations were debriefed on the CLASS results by the evaluator immediately following the observation. The debriefing process included oral and written feedback. Feedback from teachers who participated in the CLASS observations was overwhelmingly positive, with comments such as "This is the best feedback I've ever received on my teaching" and "I wish I had known about this tool sooner."

It will be recommended that the CLASS be added to the evaluation plan as mandatory observation with future Jump Start pre-kindergarten programs and that programs continue to explore professional development training with a focus on elements included within the CLASS observation domain of "Instructional Support."

Student Academic Achievement

The importance of concept development, particularly for student from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in numerous research articles (Neuman, 2006; Panter and Bracken, 2009). Some researchers have found that basic concepts are a better means of predicting both reading and mathematics than are traditional vocabulary tests such as the PPVT-IV (Larrabee, 2007). The norm-referenced assessment selected to measure pre-kindergarten student's school readiness is the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (SRA). The mean of the Bracken SRA is 100, with 85 to 115 falling within the average range (one standard deviation above and below the mean).

The Bracken SRA is used to measure the school readiness skills of young children in the areas of colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, comparisons and shapes. It has been used in numerous studies, including the Joint Center for Poverty Research, NICHD study of early child care and youth development, Harlem Project, and the national implementation study of Educare, to name but a few.

Bracken SRAs were completed pre and post in 43 programs. A total of 800 students were assessed pre and post. Bracken SRA standard scores are displayed in Figure IV.2.2. The blue bar displays average pre standard scores and the yellow bar displays average post standard scores with the number describing the increase.

Figure IV.2.2: Bracken School Readiness Assessment Outcomes (BSRA Standard Scores)
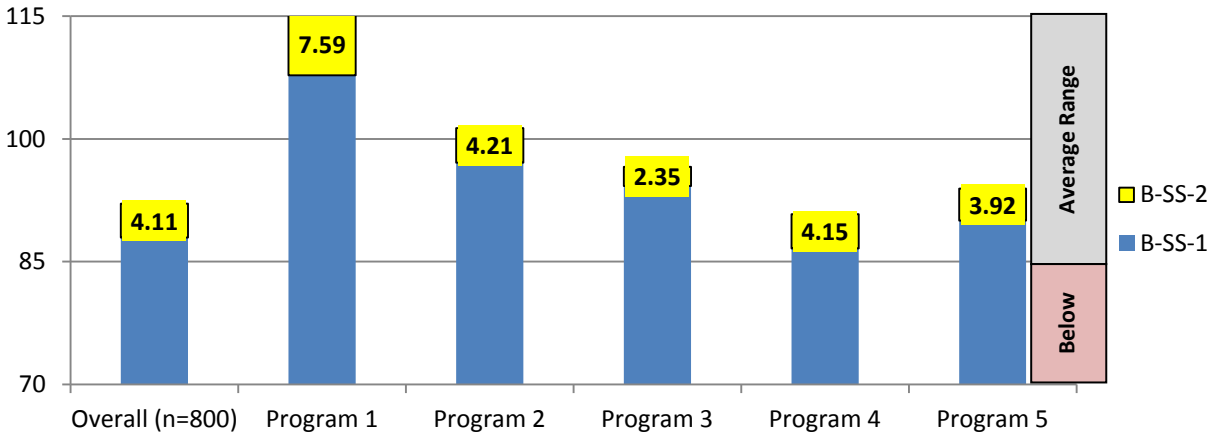
Student significantly improved overall for the program and within each of the individual programs. Significant improvement was not always found at the school or site level, as there were significant variations in change from pre to post at the individual school or site level, ranging from a gain of 7.82 to a decrease of 1.18 in Bracken SRA standard score (SS), as demonstrated in Figure IV.2.3.

Figure IV.2.3: Bracken SRA SS Change by School/Site
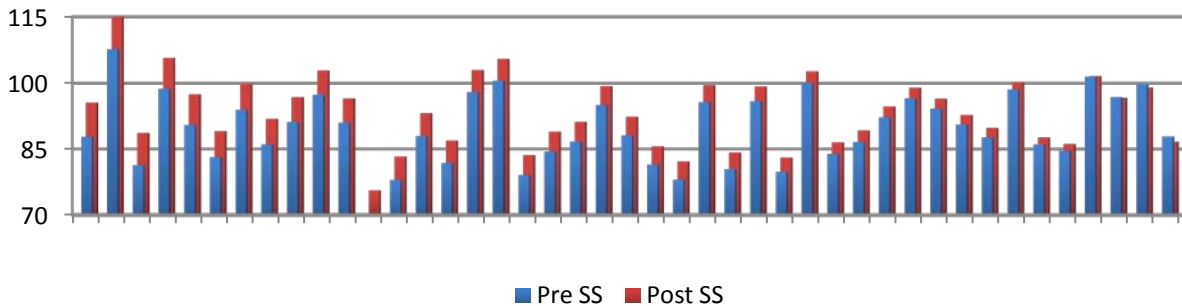
Overall, the group of 800 students significantly improved in their readiness for kindergarten ($p<.001$). Mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 87.97 to 92.08, which indicate that the group moved up 4.11 points from just the beginning of the average range closer to the desired mean of 100. Of the 800 students assessed pre and post, more than a third (36%) were above a standard score of 100. Medium to large effect sizes were found. Table IV.2.4 summarizes student outcome information by program. This includes the percent of students

eligible for free/reduced lunch served by the program, the program duration, average pre and post Bracken School Readiness Assessment Standard Scores, statistical significance using a paired samples test (or T-test), and the effect size of the significance if change was found to be significant. The effect size test used was Cohen's d (Cohen, 1988). To understand effect size and to place it in context, Cohen suggests using d=0.20 to be small, d=0.50 to be medium, and d=.80 to be a large effect. Outcomes across programs ranged from approaching medium (0.45) to approaching large (0.76) effect sizes. The effect size for the overall Jump Start Pre-K program in 2012 was 0.63, a medium effect. To describe this another way, John Hattie in Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement, uses a concept called "Zone of desired effects" that starts at a medium effect size, 0.40 (Hattie, 2009). One of the strongest effect sizes reported in Hattie's research was for Reciprocal Teaching methods, with an overall effect size of 0.74.

Table IV.2.4: Bracken School Readiness Standard Scores - Summer 2012

Program	% F/R Lunch	Programming Duration	Average PRE Standard Scores	Average POST Standard Scores	Statistical significance using T-Test analysis	Effect Size
	58%	Overall	87.97	92.08	p<.001*	d=0.63
Program 1	86%	17.5 hrs/wk (36 wks)	107.76	115.35	p<.001*	d=0.76
Program 2	31%	4 weeks, 12 hrs/wk	97.11	101.32	p<.001*	d=0.65
Program 3	100%	5 weeks, 25 hrs/wk	94.25	96.60	p<.001*	d=0.45
Program 4	56%	4 weeks, 25 hrs/wk	86.64	90.79	p<.001*	d=0.64
Program 5	60%	3 weeks, 20 hrs/wk	90.02	93.93	p<.001*	d=0.62

*Significant improvement

The next table compares Bracken SRA scores from 2012 to those from 2011. While overall gains were larger in 2011, gains continued to be significant in 2012 and the effect size was larger.

Table IV.2.5: Bracken School Readiness Overall Standard Scores - 2011 compared to 2012

Year	# of students	Average Pre Standard Scores	Average Post Standard Scores	Average Bracken SRA Standard Scores Change	Statistical significance using T-Test analysis	Effect Size
2011	156	85.85	90.13	4.28	p<.001*	d=0.58
2012	800	87.97	92.08	4.11	p<.001*	d=0.63

*Significant improvement

Utilization of Results with Schools and Programs: Teachers and schools were debriefed on the Bracken SRA results of each of their students, as well as their group of students, by a member of the evaluation team following both pre and post Bracken administration. The results were delivered to the teachers and schools one to three days after pre-assessment so that the results could be used by the teaching teams to inform and individualize instruction. Post results were also delivered to teachers and schools one to three days after Bracken administration was completed to inform them of the progress their students made.

Student Achievement Summary: The Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten Program was piloted in the summer of 2011 with 156 students participating across seven schools. The program was implemented on a larger scale the summer of 2012 with 891 students participating across 43 schools. For the 2011 year, there was an average standard score gain of 4.28 with an effect size of *d*=0.58. In 2012, there was an average standard score gain of 4.11 with an effect size of *d*=0.63. In conclusion, average standard score gains remained consistent even though the program was more widely implemented.

The Jump Start Pre-K outcomes on the Bracken suggest that an area of strength for these students was color naming (94% mastery).   An area for improvement would be Sizes/Comparisons (55% mastery).   Therefore, it may be helpful to focus professional development on strategies for identifying concepts such as big, small, long, little, alike, exactly, other than, equal, shallow.

What did parents report about the Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten Programs?

A parent survey was created for the 2012 Summer Jump Start program. Input was given from each district and districts were then able to choose which sections they wanted to use for their program. Parent survey data has been received from each of the programs. Parent feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start programs was overwhelmingly positive.

Parents were surveyed about their overall opinions of the Jump Start program (see Table IV.2.6)

Table IV.2.6: Parent Satisfaction and Ratings of Impact

	Average Score	% Agree or Strongly Agree
a. I was satisfied with the hours of the program.	4.69	97%
b. I was satisfied with the length of the program.	4.65	97%
c. I was satisfied with the program as a whole.	4.71	97%
d. The staff were excellent (caring, reliable, skilled).	4.74	96%
e. My child enjoyed attending the program.	4.79	98%
f. I was able to communicate with my child's teacher.	4.56	93%

	Average Score	% Agree or Strongly Agree
g. I was informed about my child's progress.	4.30	83%
h. I believe that my child will be more successful in Kindergarten as a result of the program.	4.69	96%
i. I feel more prepared to be the parent of a Kindergartener as a result of the program.	4.54	93%
j. My child believes that school will be a fun place to learn.	4.70	97%
k. If my child begins to struggle in Kindergarten I feel comfortable approaching his/her teacher or principal.	4.67	97%

n=405

Results: Families reported high overall satisfaction with the structure and environment of the program. They also reported high levels of impact on such items as believing their child is more ready for kindergarten as a result of the program and feeling comfortable to talk with their child's teacher if a problem emerges.

Parents were also surveyed about the frequency of communications with their child's teacher (see Table IV.2.7).

Table IV.2.7: Parent Report of Communication

	Average Score	% That Met Almost Every Week
a. Your child's teacher talked to you about your child's development.	3.47	57%
b. Your child's teacher talked to you about your child's behavior.	3.24	52%
c. You visited your child's classroom for more than just dropping off/picking up your child.	3.38	55%

n=367

Results: Roughly half of parents reported talking to their child's teacher about their behavior and/or development almost every week.

Parents were also surveyed about whether or not they felt that their children improved in certain areas (see Table IV.2.8).

Table IV.2.8: Parent Report of Child Changes as a Result of Program

Percentage parents agreed or disagreed that their child made improvements in each of the following areas (if necessary):	Average Score	% Agree or Strongly Agree
a. Willingness to separate from parents	4.51	93%
b. Likes to listen to stories	4.51	94%
c. Recognizes letters of the alphabet	4.36	88%
d. Knows different colors and shapes	4.55	95%
e. Plays well with other children	4.39	89%
f. Willingness to share with other children	4.34	87%
g. Interest in sharing what they have learned	4.51	94%
h. Attentiveness when read to	4.37	89%
i. Attention span for tasks	4.27	81%
j. Eagerness to attend school	4.60	96%

n=363

Results: The majority of parents agreed that their children improved in each area. The highest area in which parents saw improvement was eagerness to attend school, with 96% of parents agreeing that their child showed improvement. The lowest area for improvement was attention span for tasks, with 81% of parent agreeing that their child improved.

Pre-Kindergarten Program Conclusions and Implications for Program Improvement

Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten programs were provided in four districts and two community agencies. A total of 891 pre-kindergarten students were served an average 96 hours total over the summer. Students significantly improved on the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (Bracken 2009, $p<.001$, d=0.63). Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with and impact by the Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten programs. The only challenge found in the evaluation was the lack of a consistent externally rated quality measure of the learning environment. Therefore, it is recommended that the CLASS observation tool continue to be used and even expanded from a pilot measure (optional) to a mandatory continuous improvement measure and be expanded to all Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten classrooms in the next funding year. In this way, results can be used to refine and continuously improve each program, as well as to guide the general continuous improvement process for programs funded by the Learning Community.

Section IV.3 Family Support Focused Programs

There are three family support focused programs. These include the Family Support Liaison Program, Communities in Schools, and the Learning Community Center of South Omaha.

IV.3.1   Learning Community of South Omaha (LCCSO): This program provides family literacy and parenting education to families in South Omaha, with a predominant focus on serving high poverty parents who are learning English.

IV.3.2. Family Support Liaison program by Lutheran Family Services: The Family Support Liaison Model was established to reduce barriers to learning by providing services to students and families that address underlying issues affecting the family and child. The program's multi-pronged approach to service delivery address a variety of factors that impact the child's ability to learn.

Grantees: Omaha Public Schools – 9 Elementary Schools including: Bancroft, Castelar, Druid Hill, Gomez-Heritage, Howard-Kennedy, Jackson, King, Skinner and Franklin.

Bellevue Public Schools – 6 Elementary Schools including: Belleaire, Bertha Barber, Betz, Birchcrest, Central and Twin Ridge.

IV.3.3   Communities In Schools (CIS): CIS uses an evidence-based approach to assess student and school-wide needs that are then addressed by brokering in an array of services and monitoring their impact. The CIS model uses integrated student services to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Grantees: Omaha Public Schools – 4 Elementary Schools including: Howard-Kennedy, King, Skinner and Franklin.

Section IV.3.1   Learning Community Center of South Omaha

This baseline evaluation report is intended to provide information on the implementation of the Learning Community Center Program in South Omaha (LCCSO). This report will summarize initial data for LCCSO program activities from June 2012 to present. These data are intended to support program planning and continuous improvement of the services provided to students and families.

Who did LCCSO Serve? LCCSO was implemented in order to be a resource for students with the greatest educational needs. LCCSO served families from Subcouncil Five of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties, specifically parents and children in the South Omaha area. Since its inception, the program has enrolled sixty-six adult participants and their respective children under the age of 18 still living at home and attending school (165 students). Adult

> **LCCSO Key Findings**
>
> - **66 adults and 165 students have enrolled in the program**
> - **100% were Hispanic/Latino English language learners and 100% were eligible for free/reduced lunch**
> - **100% were "mostly satisfied" to "very satisfied" with program services**
> - **As a group at baseline, parents assessed at the High Beginning ESL level in language testing**
> - **As a group at baseline, students averaged 72 and 78 in English language and school readiness assessments (below average), and 89 in Spanish language assessments (average range) using standard scores**

participants had children attending one of the following Omaha Public Schools elementary buildings: Indian Hill, Gomez Heritage, Ashland Park-Robbins, Spring Lake, Highland, and Castelar. A total of six parents have exited the program; reasons for exiting were predominantly due to health concerns (three); however, both economic distresses (two) and a high level of English language proficiency (one) have also influenced retention rates.

All participants served were Hispanic-Latino families living below poverty. All were English language learners.

What was the Quality of Services Implemented?

LCCSO was formed in 2012 as a collaborative effort of *The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy County*, *OneWorld Community Health Centers,* and *Boys Town.* LCCSO began providing services to parents and their children in its current, temporary location across the street from

the Public Library in South Omaha. Parents participating in the program met at the center to attend classes and access services. While parents participated in educational activities, on-site child care was provided for their children eight years old and under.

To help children from low-income families succeed in school, LCCSO collaborated with member

school districts and community partners to activate long term strategies to support parents in their efforts to promote their children's education by teaching them the skills they need. LCCSO participants received a wide range of interrelated services, including, but not limited to:

- Parenting Education
- Navigator Services
- Adult Education

Because this is a baseline evaluation report, short and long term outcomes cannot yet be reported. These would be available after the next data collection point (e.g., post testing, post surveying). Parent and child outcomes were measured using a variety of assessments in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the various dimensions of intervention. The following sections will address what is being measured and present initial, baseline results, beginning with parents/adults and followed by their children.

Given its developmental stage in implementation, the quality of implementation of this program was measured more through qualitative evaluation methods than quantitative. Focus groups were held with participants. Surveys were used with parents. Another way to measure the quality of a program is to examine its attendance and participation data. The program reports very high attendance and engagement on the part of its families. In fact, the challenge is fitting everyone in and developing wait lists for future offerings. Overall, high levels of satisfaction with the programming offered and with the caliber of staff were reported.

Parenting Education

Group Parenting Workshops: Parenting workshops engaged participants in activities that trained parents on how to partner with education systems and how to support their children's educational success. Parents were taught how to: work with teachers, help their children with homework, prepare for teacher conferences, read a report card, set high expectations

> "The most important is to learn how to educate my kids because one comes with customs from Mexico and they are missing that. We don't know how to talk to our kids so that they pay attention."
>
> ~LCCSO Parent

for school work, support learning at home, etc. Workshops were held every other week for three hours and were tailored to the needs of the participants, as identified by the Navigators and support staff. Examples of the areas of need that emerged were: Nutrition, Scholarship resources, Car Seat Safety, and Child Abuse Awareness. LCCSO collaborates with various organizations to deliver diverse workshops (Education Quest, Project Harmony, etc.). A further example of this is the programs alliance with *Boys Town* which integrated *Common Sense Parenting*® (CSP) into LCCSO group workshops. CSP was a practical, skill-based six week parenting program which involved classroom instruction, videotape modeling, roleplaying, feedback and review. Professional parent trainers provided instruction, consultation and support to LCCSO participants, addressing issues of communication, discipline, decision making, relationships, self-control and school success. Parents were taught proactive skills and techniques to help create healthy family relationships that fostered safety and well-being.

In focus groups, parents described their parenting as "calmer." Parents said that they learned more efficient, positive ways to parent. They reported having learned to praise and motivate their children in school.

Effective parent-child assessment can guide family intervention, offer opportunities for reflective supervision, and strengthen program outcomes. A structured observation tool of parent-child interaction, Keys to Interactive Parenting Skills (KIPS), has been completed with nearly half of the participants. With help from the navigator, participants submitted a video of their parent-child interactions. Baseline data have been gathered. This information could be used to identify specific parenting strengths and needs, tailor services to individual families, track family progress, and evaluate parenting outcomes. Navigators could promote healthy child and family development by using KIPS results to open a strength-based conversation with participants about their parenting.

> "The main objective for us in this program and for us as parents is to motivate our children until they are graduates and have a professional career" ~LCCSO Parent

Parent Education Findings: Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents reported attending five or more Parenting Education classes. One hundred percent were "mostly satisfied" or "very satisfied" with parenting education services.

Navigator Services

LCCSO employed navigators that served as personal parent advocates, helping parents gain better understanding of the public school system, community resources and adult education programs.

> "The navigator sees what needs the families have and helps connect us to resources in the community and to the school". ~LCCSO Parent

Navigators built strong relationships with participants to ensure individualized education and support.

Parents And Children Time (PACT) Events: All participants and their children were invited to attend social interaction events where parents and children interact together with other families. Navigators modeled positive parent-child interaction in these group socialization events. These events were intended to give parents opportunities to engage in positive parent-child interactions; parents were encouraged to practice proactive problem solving and decision making.

Home Visitations: Navigators visited participants' homes to communicate with parents, conduct informal needs assessments, connect parents with resources, model supportive learning activities, coach parenting skills, and attend to specific needs. Navigators completed home visitations as necessary, but on average once a month. Each participant worked with their navigator to design a Family Literacy Plan (FLP) and set personal and familial goals.

Navigator Services Key Findings: One hundred percent (100%) of respondents described their level of satisfaction with their navigator as "mostly satisfied" to "very satisfied. All respondents reported having toured their children's school and met their teacher (100%); 93% percent reported plans to attend the next parent teacher conference.

Adult Education/Literacy

English as a Second Language (ESL): Adult participants attended English language classes two days a week. Each class was comprised of eight to twelve students and met for three hours/day. ESL classes taught functional English skills and communication, with specific focus on parents' needs to support their children in school and collaborate with their teachers. Parents' homework was often expected to be done together with their children. The English skills parents learned were often useful for both participants and their children.

Computer Training: Computer training was provided to impart information technology skills to parents in order to strengthen communication with their children's schools. Topics covered included: basic computer skills (sending emails, accessing school parent portals**)**. Limited aspects of this component have been implemented due to time constraints, a lack of resources and insufficient space.

BEST Plus English language testing was used to measure adult learning progress. It is too soon to tell if participants' English language scores have improved. Baseline data have been gathered. A total of forty participants have completed the BEST Plus Oral English Proficiency Test for Adults. BEST Plus measured speaking and listening skills to assess interpersonal communication in everyday language used in practical situations. Test items were centered on

themes of home, work, and leisure. Adult students are assessed after every sixty hours of English language class time has been completed.

Adult Education Key Findings: Parents' BEST Plus scores averaged 423.4, which equates to a Student Performance Level (SPL) of three out of ten which is considered *High Beginning English as a Second Language (ESL).* This means that, on average, parents function with some difficulty in situations related to immediate needs. Parents use simple learned phrases and understand simple learned phrases when spoken slowly with frequent repetitions.

> *"In the beginning, I didn't know how to communicate. Now, with my little English, I can now ask how my child is doing. I always had to have an interpreter but with what Sara has taught us I can now approach the teacher."*
>
> *~LCCSO Parent*

Parents English is sufficient to handle an entry level job that involves only the most basic oral communication, and in which all tasks can be demonstrated. A native English speaker would have great difficulty communicating with a person at this level (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2005).

Student performance level scores ranged from zero to eight. A score of seven establishes ESL exit criteria, according to the National Reporting System (NRS) ESL Functioning Levels Descriptors. Focus group participants from one cohort expressed some frustration with the varying levels of English proficiency in the ESL class as there was a broad range in this particular cohort. They recommended that the cohorts be put together in like or similar skill levels. They also asked for more opportunities for informal practice at the center.

Student Achievement

School readiness is an essential concern for students entering the educational system. Preparation to perform in an educational setting is a significant benefit for students, especially those who are from diverse backgrounds with a greater number of risk factors, and have typically poorer school performance compared to their economically advantaged counterparts (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Different tools were used with participants' children to comprehensively measure development in areas associated with school readiness. For younger children, the evaluation is focusing on language development. As students prepare to enter kindergarten, a school readiness measure is added to the assessment battery.

Language. Infants, Toddlers, and Preschool students' English and Spanish language development skills were assessed using the Preschool Language Scales-Fifth Edition (PLS-V). The PLS-V measures receptive or auditory comprehension and expressive language skills. It was administered among English language learners to inform the following evaluation questions: (1) Do these students make gains in English? (2) Do they make gains in Spanish? Students were assessed at the beginning of the program year and will be assessed every six months thereafter.

Figure IV.3.1.1-Student Achievement Standard Scores
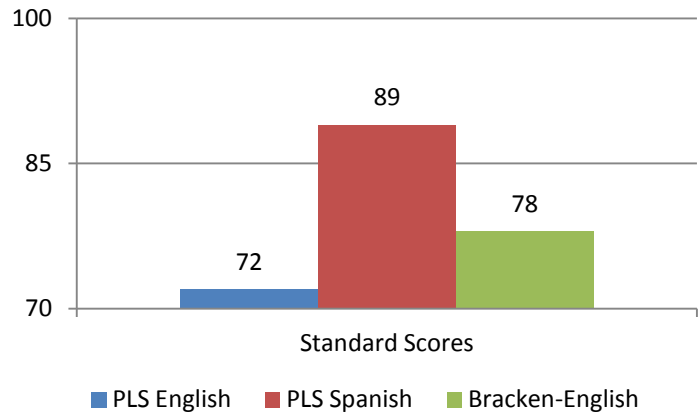
A total of 40 students were assessed upon entry into the program to establish a baseline language measure. The baseline standard scores for children assessed with the PLS-V in English and Spanish are demonstrated in figure IV.3.1.1. Because this is a norm referenced assessment, the mean standard score is 100 and plus or minus one standard deviation (+/- 15) falls within the average range (85-115). For the students assessed at LCCSO, their overall average in English standard scores was 72, with a range in scores from 50 to 94. A total of 16% of students scored within the average range in English. Their overall average for Spanish standard scores was 89, with a range in scores from 55 to 118. A total of 55% of students scored within the average range; 5% scored above average.

School Readiness. The importance of concept development, particularly for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in numerous academic publications (Neuman, 2006; Panter and Bracken, 2009). Preschool students' school readiness was, thus, further assessed using the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (SRA). The Bracken SRA evaluated children's development of basic school-related concepts including: knowledge of colors, letters, numbers, sizes, directions, textures and social and emotional awareness.

Bracken SRAs were completed for a total of 16 Kindergarten bound students that transitioned into elementary school in August, 2012. This is a norm referenced assessment with a mean

standard score of 100; plus or minus one standard deviation (+/- 15) falls within the average range (85-115). The overall standard score was 78, with a range in scores from 51 to 104. A total of 44% of students scored within the average range. The percent of mastery score presented in Table IV.3.1.2 below shows the percentage of correct responses out of total responses, on average, for students assessed with the Bracken.

Table IV.3.1.2: Bracken School Readiness Percent of Mastery by Domain

Subtest	Percent Mastery
Colors	80%
Letters	47%
Numbers and Counting	45%
Sizes and Comparisons	40%
Shapes	42%
School Readiness Composite	48%

It is worth noting that the Bracken SRA is administered only in English and the majority of students at LCCSO were Dual-Language Learners. These scores reflect the students' general ability to be successful in kindergarten in predominantly English classrooms.

LCCSO Conclusions and Implications for Program Improvement

LCCSO programs were provided for parents with children attending six elementary schools within Subcouncil Five. A total of 66 parents and 165 students were served by LCCSO. Because the program is in its beginning stage of implementation, pre to post analysis of results is not yet possible. These will be reported in the next evaluation report. Initial progress can best be measured through examination of the quality of implementation and parents' responsiveness to the program.

Parents reported tremendously high levels of satisfaction with the program (100% in both parent education and navigator services). Focus groups identified a number of strengths in quality of programs and staffing. One of the strengths most commented upon by parents was the provision of child care during parent education time, which served to familiarize parents with positive learning environments and to create opportunities for parents to practice communicating with their children's teachers. The navigators' strong relationships with the participants facilitated a great synergy among the Navigator Services, Parent Education and Adult Education (ESL) components of the program which resulted in high participant attendance rates and high retention rates. That being stated, participants recommended that the program consider setting up learning cohorts with adults at similar skill levels in English language learning in order to avoid broad range of skills. They also asked for more

opportunities to informally practice conversational English skills at the center. In addition, more computer training was encouraged. Another area for the program to examine for continuous improvement is to further develop its approach to computer training, as it has only been offered in very modest levels.

Overall, parents reported that LCCSO has helped them develop their parenting and language skills, as well as to utilize more resources in the community. Parents also reported learning more strategies to ensure their child is successful in school. These baseline results can be used to refine and continuously improve each area of service within the LCCSO program to support parents in
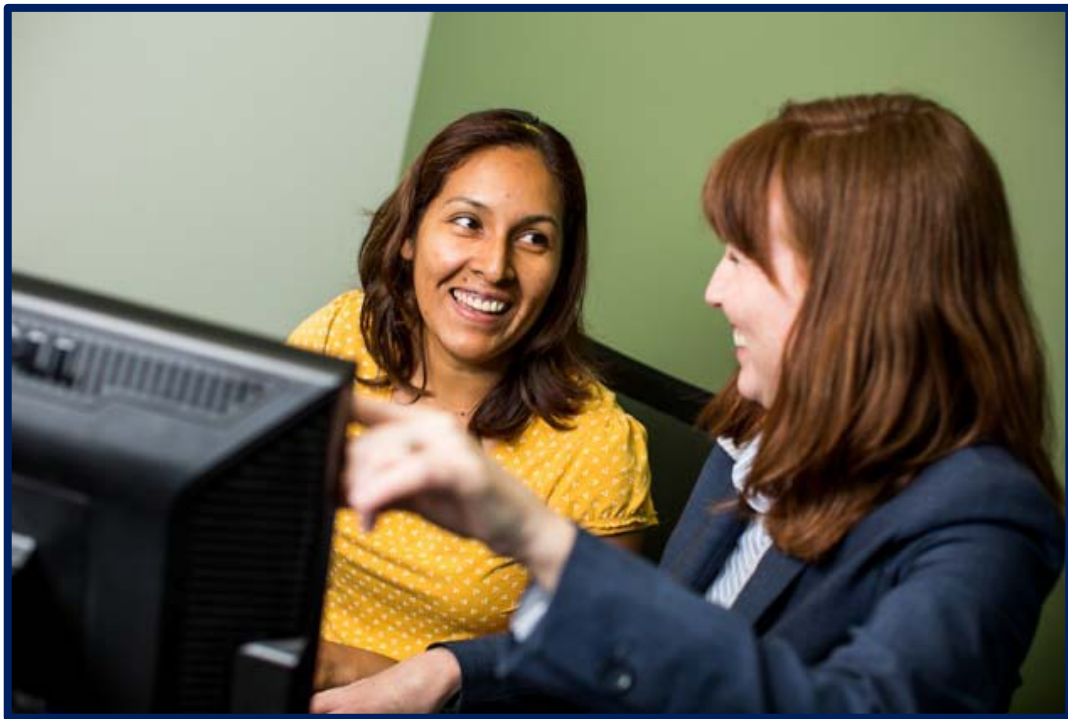
Subsection IV.3.2 Family Support Liaison Program

Lead: Kate Golden, M.A.

Introduction and Background

The Family Support Liaison Model was established to reduce barriers to learning by providing services to address the underlying issues affecting the family and child that impact the child's ability to learn. The stressors affecting both family and child may include financial, physical, psychological, logistical or other factors. Service provision occurred primarily via the Family Support Liaison (FSL) who was housed in the school to provide targeted services to individual students and their families and additional support to the school community.[1]

The program placed Family Support Liaisons (FSLs) in 15 elementary schools across two school districts in the Omaha Metro area. Schools were located in achievement subcouncils two and five. The program employed 13 staff including one program director and 12 Family Support Liaisons. [2] The FSLs were provided office space in the schools in which they were assigned.

> **Family Support Key Findings**
>
> - **Served approximately 256 students and their families in 15 schools across two districts (200 at Phase 3)**
> - **The model evolved over time and the program's implementation varied by school and student/family's need**
> - **Student reading, writing and mathematics improved from intake to discharge (medium effect sizes found)**
> - **Parent stress ratings significantly decreased from intake to discharge**

Services occurred in different phases as follows:

Phase 1: School-wide Support services targeted the school community as a whole. It included meaningful, intentional activities to engage the FSL in the work of the school to establish a relationship with the school community such as greeting students, tracking attendance, or staffing parent-teacher conferences.

Phase 2: Student-Focused Support services included as needed support focused on individual students (not requiring parental consent). This typically occurred when a school staff asked the

---

[1] The Learning Community signed a contract with Lutheran Family Services to begin services in April, 2011. Program activities during this time and over the summer were primarily focused on training and preparing Family Support Liaisons (FSLs) to deliver the intended program for the 2011-2012 school year. The first day of school, August 15th 2011, marks the date when the program began serving students.

[2] Completely Kids (CK), partnered with Lutheran Family Services to provide this program. Lutheran Family Services felt it advantageous to utilize the three CK staff already employed in a similar role in three schools targeted for this program. A partnership was established resulting in a team that includes three Completely Kids employees who are jointly overseen by both agencies.

FSL to provide targeted, short-term support to an individual student. This may have resulted in a referral.

Phase 3: Student/Family 90 Day Intervention services were implemented when a referral had been placed to the Family Support Liaison program and the family consented to begin services. This intervention included the use of assessments to pinpoint student/family need and the creation and monitoring of a service plan to develop a custom-made intervention emphasizing academics. FSLs set a caseload goal of 20 students but this number varied as a result of factors relating to program implementation and severity of each individual case.

Phase 4: Aftercare services were provided as needed for referred students after the completion of the *Student/Family 90 day Intervention* and could last the duration of a full school year. Aftercare included two opportunities for the FSL to check in with the family and assess the need for additional services.

Evaluation approach and data collection

The evaluation's approach was two-fold. The evaluation first explored how the program was implemented to examine what it did and how it was done (process evaluation). Secondly, the evaluation examined the program's impact on youth and families with a primary focus on academics and attendance (outcomes evaluation). The evaluation model used draws from a Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework (Patton, 2011) which emphasizes the importance of evaluation's role in facilitating improvement. Therefore, the evaluation produced real-time results used by the program to inform improvements to better support those served.

The method used to guide data collection and analysis is termed a multi-level convergent mixed methods case study approach (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011; Stake, 1995). This involved examining narrative and numerical information from multiple groups (e.g. Lutheran Family Services staff, school staff, youth, parents) to understand and describe the program and its effects.[3] The evaluation questions were:

1. How is the Family Support Liaison Model being implemented across schools in the Omaha Metro area?

- How does the referral process work?

- Who is receiving services?

- What do services look like?

- How are services provided?

---

[3] The selection of the evaluation's model and method was the result of an agreement between Lutheran Family Services management team and the University of Nebraska Medical Center's evaluation team lead from March 2011.

2. How is the Family Support Liaison Model positioned to or affecting student achievement?

- How are services targeting achievement?

- How do services affect achievement?

3. How is the Family Support Liaison Model positioned to or affecting student attendance?

- How are services targeting attendance?

- How do services affect attendance?

4. How might the Family Support Liaison Model be amended to better achieve its outcomes?

Findings

It is critical to examine how the program was implemented in order to understand the program's effect on youth and families. The evaluation's findings are therefore divided into two categories: Program Implementation and Program Effectiveness.

Program Implementation Findings[4] articulate what program actually did across a number of domains including referral into the program, population targeted/served, service provision, and case management. Program Effectiveness Findings[5] describe the program's effect across areas including progress toward goals, satisfaction with the program, academic successes, etc.

Program Implementation Finding. The Family Support Liaison Program model has evolved to include four different strategies for service provision.

The Family Support Liaison Program's primary intent was to support at-risk students who struggled academically and experienced significant challenges in the home, often due to stress within the family. This primary objective has remained consistent since the program's inception and is referred to as the Student/Family 90 Day Intervention (Phase 3). Additional opportunities to serve students and the school have arisen and become part of the program model. See

---

[4] Program Implementation Findings directly respond to evaluation question #1: *How is the Family Support Liaison Model being implemented across schools in the Omaha Metro area?*

[5] Program Effectiveness Findings respond to evaluation questions #1: *How is the Family Support Liaison Model positioned to or affecting student achievement?* and #2: *How is the Family Support Liaison Model positioned to or affecting student attendance?*

Figure IV.3.2.1: The Family Support Liaison Program Model (amended 12.12.11)

	Input\n*Who/what's involved*	Activities\n*What occurs*	Output\n*First effects*	Outcome\n*Second effects*	Impact\n*Over time effects*
1: School-Wide Support	**Persons involved include**: School staff and Family Support Liaisons **Location**: Primarily at school, also includes school events off site (e.g. at local library, parks, etc.) **Time**: Up to 1 school-year, variable	**Under direction of school staff, FSLs provide school-wide support connected to attendance/academics**: • FSLs staff/support school-wide events and activities (e.g. open house, greeting students.) • FSLs coordinate attendance logs **Target**: School population	• FSL engages in a variety of academic/attendance based school-wide activities • FSL has knowledge of tardy/absent students	• FSL increases his/her knowledge of school processes and culture • FSL is viewed as a part of the school community • FSL works to reduce attendance issues	• School-wide attendance issues decrease and/or are positively impacted • FSL is treated as a valued resource within the school
2: Student-Focused Support	**Persons involved include**: School staff and Family Support Liaisons **Location**: Primarily at school, also includes school events off site (e.g. at local library, parks, etc.) **Time**: As needed throughout a school year, variable	**Under direction of school staff, FSLs provide student-focused, as needed support**: • FSLs engage with students short-term to reduce negative behaviors (e.g. address tardiness, outbursts in class, etc.) **Target**: Individual students as needed	• FSL works with individual students • FSL assists classroom teachers	• FSL develops protective relationships with targeted students • FSL is viewed as a resource to support classroom teachers and preserve instructional time	• Outbursts that impact youth's ability to engage in class are decreased • Time that teachers can devote to classroom instruction increases
3: Student/Family 90 Day Intervention	**Persons involved include**: School staff, Family Support Liaisons, family, professionals, community resources **Location**: At school, at the family's home and in the community (accessing resources as needed) **Time**: 90 Days	**FSLs provide intensive student and family support for 90 days via**: • Targeted service planning to meet individualized goals • Family/student assessments to identify academic/family need • Team meetings to monitor progress and revise service plan as needed **Target**: Individual students and families who provide consent	• FSL partners with family and other stakeholders to create tailored service plan for youth/family using SMART goals • Family/child are assessed across academic and behavioral/mental health domains • Student's academic needs are targeted	• Parental stress is reduced and/or positively impacted • Student and stakeholders implement service plan which addresses need • 90% of goals (per student) will be met at the end of the 90 day period	• Parents are empowered, develop knowledge and/or ability to manage stress • Student's academic success indicators increase and/or are positively impacted
4: Aftercare	**Persons involved include**: Family Support Liaisons, family (as needed: professionals, community resources, school staff) **Location**: At school, at the family's home and in the community (accessing resources as needed) **Time**: Two scheduled check-ups after discharge	**FSLs engage with family at 3 weeks and 7-9 weeks after discharge to**: • Assess unmet need and identify strategies for addressing it • Consider re-enrolling the case for 90 days if the unmet need is significant **Target**: Individual students and families who completed the 90 day intervention	• Family/student unmet need is identified and reviewed	• Unmet need is addressed via intensive support by re-enrolling in the 90 day intervention • Unmet need is addressed via non-intensive support by working with the family to identify strategies for addressing need, this may involve community or school resources	• Parents are empowered, develop knowledge and/or ability to manage stress • Student's academic success indicators increase and/or are positively impacted

Phase One Services – School Wide Support: In the early Fall, Family Support Liaisons, under the guidance of school personnel (e.g. principals, guidance counselors, teachers, bilingual liaisons, etc.), integrated themselves into the fabric of the school. The activities they undertook included supporting attendance record keeping, greeting students and families, and providing support during events like student-teacher conferences or Safe Walk to School nights. The goal of this work was to establish relationships, build trust within the school community and participate in activities reflective of the academic focus of their work. By increasing their presence within the building and establishing themselves as part of the team, FSLs would be better positioned to serve highly at-risk students, their targeted population. This became known as Phase 1 services. A key benefit to naming these services was the opportunity to help inform school personnel of the new role of the FSL thereby reducing requests that they participate in activities that do not directly support students, such as lunch or recess duty.

Phase Two Services – Student Focused Support: FSLs were also called upon to provide as needed support for students who may be having a difficult day in the classroom. In these cases, a school staff (e.g. teacher) might call upon the FSL to address a student's misbehavior which

would allow the student to return more readily to his/her classwork and decrease the potential for disruption within the classroom.

Phase Three Services – Student/Family 90 Day Intervention: Socio-emotional assessments, a family history and service plan are used to tailor the program to the student and family's need. The family's progress is monitored over this 90 day period and adjustments are made as necessary before the family is considered to have "completed" the program.

Phase Four Services – Aftercare: Finally, as students and families enrolled in the program were nearing the end of the 90 day Intervention period, it became apparent that in certain cases, families' needs could not be met within this time frame. Aftercare evolved to include two opportunities for follow up with the option of re-opening the case if/when circumstances required it.

Program Implementation Finding. Context directly influenced how the program was implemented.

Multiple data sources indicated that context played a key role in the operation of this program. Findings show that factors relating to the school, the school district, the families served, Lutheran Family Services, individuals involved (school staff, agency staff), and outside factors impacted program implementation.[6]

---

[6] Although this evaluation was not designed to analyze context per se, its focus on implementation clearly demonstrates the existence of this phenomenon.

Case Example: Have schools readily adopted the FSL program?

In short, it depends. Data from surveys targeted to school staff that work with FSLs and reflection sessions with FSLs show that program implementation is varied:

Program model is likely to be adopted stringently (all four phases of the model are implemented as intended) when:
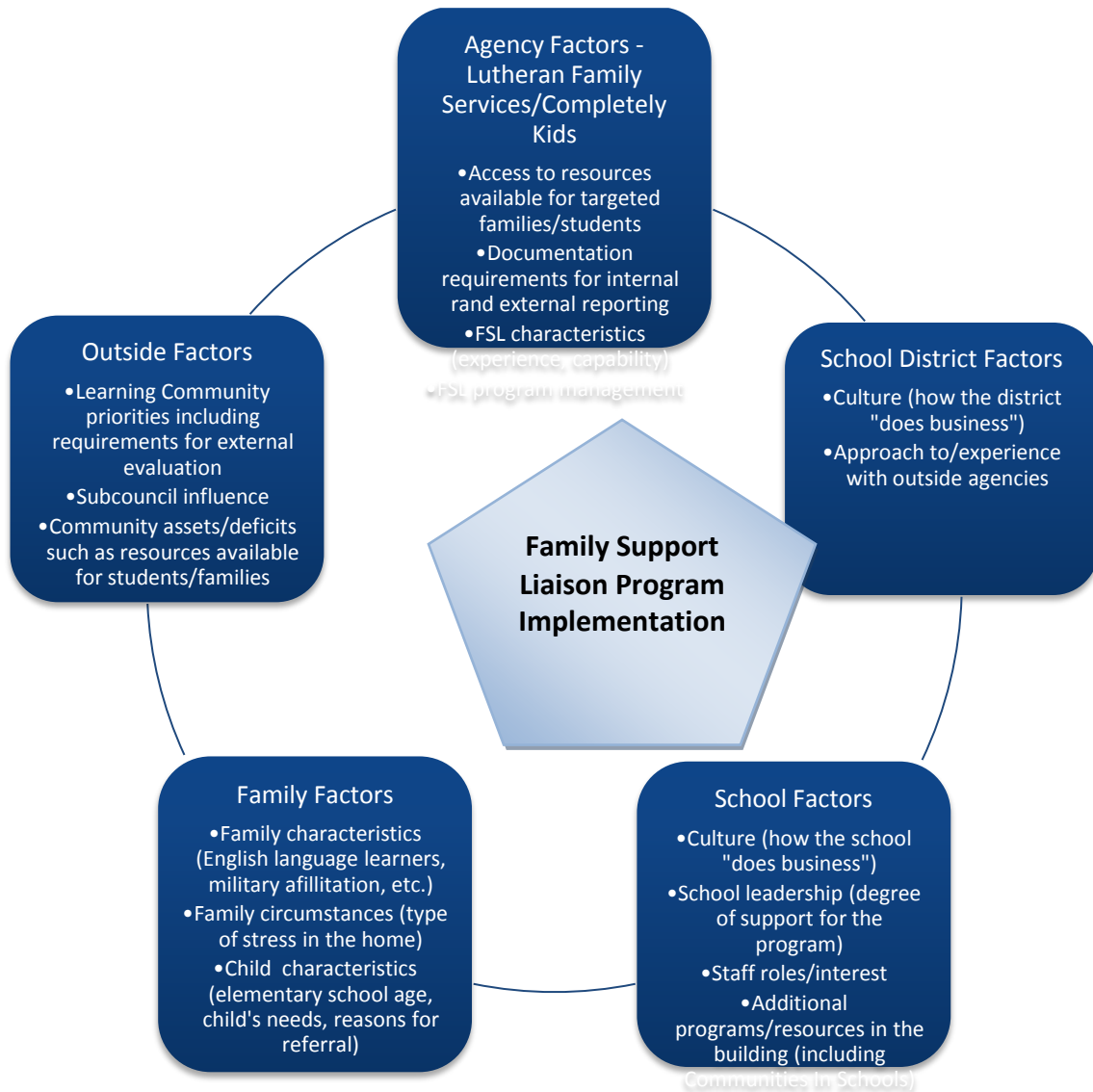
* *S*chool personnel and leadership clearly understand the program and believe its objectives fit an unmet need. * There is trust in the FSLs ability and a belief that s/he understands and is a part of the school/district's culture. * The FSL demonstrates willingness to communicate with leadership and includes other school staff (especially counselors) in decision making. * School personnel feel that their families/community would benefit from the types of services provided and families express interest. * Resources are available so that FSLs may provide services that fit a family's need.

Program is likely to be adopted conditionally (fewer than four phases of the model are implemented and implementation is not done with fidelity to the program model) when:

* The school has existing programs that is perceived to have a similar goal as the FSL program * School personnel are not supportive of, or are unclear about, the program's objective. * The FSL is not viewed as a team player or is not thought to have the experience/skill necessary to provide the level of intensive support required of this program. * School personnel don't feel that this program is an appropriate fit for their families/community. * Families don't express interest. * Resources are not available that address family need.

The following schematic was developed to illustrate factors that appear to affect program implementation. No single factor is represented as being more influential.[7]

Figure IV.3.2.2:[8] Factors influencing the Implementation of the Family Support Liaison Program Model

Agency Factors - Lutheran Family Services/Completely Kids
- Access to resources available for targeted families/students
- Documentation requirements for internal rand external reporting
- FSL characteristics (experience, capability)
- FSL program management

Outside Factors
- Learning Community priorities including requirements for external evaluation
- Subcouncil influence
- Community assets/deficits such as resources available for students/families

School District Factors
- Culture (how the district "does business")
- Approach to/experience with outside agencies

Family Support Liaison Program Implementation

Family Factors
- Family characteristics (English language learners, military afillitation, etc.)
- Family circumstances (type of stress in the home)
- Child characteristics (elementary school age, child's needs, reasons for referral)

School Factors
- Culture (how the school "does business")
- School leadership (degree of support for the program)
- Staff roles/interest
- Additional programs/resources in the building (including Communities in Schools)

Program Implementation Finding: Individual FSLs describe challenges and successes implementing the FSL program. Team members' reported experiences vary over time, by school and school district.

---

[7] A significant amount of further data collection and analysis would need to be done to explore which factors may exert more or less influence and in which specific ways.

[8] This schematic was developed by K. Golden and amended by LFS program management and the Family Support Liaisons.

Monthly reflection sessions were held with the full Family Support Liaison team to explore their experiences implementing the program. Data collected demonstrate that each FSLs experience differs.

Fall vs. Spring. In the fall, FSLs described difficulties communicating the program's intent to school community members which was perceived as the gateway to receiving referrals. Many FSLs felt that school personnel had little interest in the program, "there was no trust." FSLs engaged in activities that weren't associated with the program such as helping out in the cafeteria, etc. to establish trust.[9] By Spring, most FSLs had cases which they perceived to be a result of establishing trust, improving communication about the model and demonstrating successes. However, this was not a universal experience. There were FSLs without cases, or with small caseloads, by Spring.

Differences by School. FSLs reported that the interest school community members have in supporting the program has a direct effect on the likelihood that they will receive referrals for Phase 3 services. One FSL reported that a school staff seemed "threatened" by the FSL and was concerned that the FSLs work would undermine his/her position within the school, thereby limiting Phase 3 referrals. Elsewhere, an FSL was viewed as an instrumental team member whose experience was critical to increasing the number of students who could/should be served by Phase 3 services within that school.

Differences by School District. Bellevue Public Schools (BPS) had an existing program, the FASE team designed to support students and families. Leadership in BPS were concerned that the FSL program was an unnecessary duplication of the work that was already occurring within their schools. BPS schools referred far fewer students to the FSL program (than OPS), reflecting the district's preference that the FSL function as a part of the FASE team.

Program Implementation Finding: A mid-year survey conducted with school personnel indicates that the program and the FSLs are viewed mostly favorably – as a potential asset positioned to support the work that the school already does. Personnel cited a need to improve communication about the model, its processes and its intent.[10]

---

[9] At this time, the majority of FSLs did not have cases.

[10] The full mid-year report is available by contacting UNMC.

Quantitative data collected in January of 2012 from Bellevue Public Schools staff, [11] indicated that 75% of school personnel felt the FSL had mostly or absolutely met staff's expectations (n=12) and 100% of those surveyed felt that the FSL was totally or mostly capable (n=12). Eight respondents identified areas of improvement including: Improved communication with staff/administrator; Involve a broader array of individuals in his/her efforts to support students and families; Decrease the paperwork required by LFS; and Increase the amount of time the FSL spends with the school community.

A majority of school personnel, 82%, had questions about the program and its intent (n=11) and ratings suggest that the program had not quite met their expectations. Areas for improvement vary by respondent but clearly demonstrate a desire to ensure that the FSL program is tailored to meet the needs of the school community.

Overall, results suggested that reviews of the FSL program and those who staff it are generally positive when the work of Bellevue Public Schools is supported by the FSL program and its staff. The occasions when the program's approach was not viewed as aligning with the district's way of doing business created concerns among BPS personnel.

Program Implementation Finding: The Family Support Liaison program served approximately 256 children with one-on-one services (Phase 2 and Phase 3 Services) across 13 schools in two school districts, Omaha Public Schools and Bellevue Public Schools. The majority of students served, 78%, received Phase 3 services.

A total of 206 students provided one-on-one services were enrolled in Omaha Public Schools and 50 were enrolled in Bellevue Public Schools. About 86% of OPS students served were enrolled in Phase 3 services while about 46% of BPS students were enrolled in Phase 3 services. About 86% of students enrolled in a school within subcouncil 2 were provided Phase 3 services and 73% of students in subcouncil 5 were provided Phase 3 services. Overall, the majority of students served by the FSL program, 78%, received Phase 3 services.

---

[11] Data were only collected from Bellevue Public Schools personnel. In order to collect data from Omaha Public Schools personnel or students, a request must be made to Omaha Public Schools research review office. This request was made in November, 2011. Revisions were required before approval could be provided and UNMC was approved to collect data in May, 2012, at which time school had ended and staff were no longer available. We recommend that this process be reviewed early in the 2012-2013 school year to ensure that data from school staff may be collected to better examine this program and its effects by including all critical stakeholders.

Table IV.3.2.3: Phase of Service Summary

	OPS	BPS	Sub 2	Sub 5	Total #
Phase 1[12]	-	-	-	-	-
Phase 2	29	27	15	41	56
Phase 3	177	23	89	111	200
Total	206	50	104	152	256

Program Implementation Finding: The 200 Phase 3 students in the Family Support Liaison program represented 173 distinct families. The students served ranged from Kindergarten through seventh grade. Of students served, 67% were male and a majority identified as Hispanic (41%) or African American (30%). Most students received free/reduced lunch (92%). There was some variation by school district. Fewer BPS students received free/reduced lunch (74% vs. 94%) or were designated as ESL (17% vs. 33%).[13]

Table IV.3.2.4: Grade Level and Subcouncils of Students Served

	By School District				By Subcouncil				TOTAL	
	OPS (n=177)	%	BPS[14] (n=23)	%	Sub 2	%	Sub 5	%	Total # (n=200)	Total %
Kindergarten	8	4%	-	-	4	4%	9	8%	13	6%
1st Grade	28	16%	-	-	19	21%	10	9%	29	14%
2nd Grade	31	17%	-	-	18	20%	15	14%	33	17%
3rd Grade	23	13%	-	-	15	18%	9	8%	24	12%
4th Grade	29	16%	-	-	12	14%	22	20%	34	17%
5th Grade	24	14%	-	-	8	9%	20	18%	28	14%
6th Grade	24	14%	-	-	9	10%	16	14%	25	13%
7th Grade	10	6%	-	-	4	4%	10	9%	14	7%
Total	177	100%	23	100%	89	100%	111	100%	200	100%

---

[12] No numbers are reported for Phase 1 because these services are more indirectly provided to groups of students rather than individual students. For example, Phase 1 services might include attendance duty or greeting students.
[13] These percentages reflect proportions. They were calculated by dividing the number of students within each category out of all students served by school district. For example, the number of students designated as receiving Free or Reduced Lunch was divided from the total of all students served within each individual school district.
[14] Enrollment numbers by grade are not provided for Bellevue Public Schools because the students within certain categories are potentially identifiable.

Table IV.3.2.5: Free/Reduced Lunch Status of Students Served

	By School District				By Subcouncil				TOTAL	
	OPS (n=177)	%	BPS (n=23)	%	Sub 2 (n=89)	%	Sub 5 (n=111)	%	Total # (n=200)	Total %
Free-Reduced Lunch Status	167	94%	17	74%	85	96%	99	89%	184	92%
Non-Free-Reduced Lunch	10	6%	6	26%	4	4%	12	11%	16	8%
Total	177	100%	23	100%	89	100%	111	100%	200	100%

Table IV.3.2.6: English as a Second Language Status of Students Served

	By School District				By Subcouncil				TOTAL	
	OPS (n=17)	%	BPS (n=23)	%	Sub 2 (n=89)	%	Sub 5 (n=111)	%	Total # (n=200)	Total %
English as a Second Language	58	33%	4	17%	17	19%	45	40%	62	31%
English Speaking	116	66%	18	78%	72	81%	62	56%	134	67%
Missing Data	3	1%	1	4%	0	0%	4	4%	4	2%
Total	177	100%	23	100%	89	100%	111	100%	200	100%

Table IV.3.2.7: Race/Ethnicity of Students Served

	By School District				By Subcouncil				TOTAL	
	OPS (n=177)	%	BPS[15] (n=23)	%	Sub 2 (n=89)	%	Sub 5 (n=111)	%	Total # (n=200)	Total %
African American/ Black	59	33%	–	–	51	57%	9	8%	60	30%
Hispanic or Latino	80	45%	–	–	15	17%	68	61%	83	41%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5	3%	–	–	1	1%	4	4%	5	2%
Caucasian	22	12%	–	–	15	17%	22	20%	37	19%
Not identified	11	6%	–	–	7	8%	8	7%	15	8%
Total	177	100%	23	100%	89	100%	111	100%	200	100%

[15] The race/ethnicity information is not provided for Bellevue Public Schools because the students within certain categories are potentially identifiable.

Table IV.3.2.8: Gender of Students Served

	By School District				By Subcouncil				TOTAL	
	OPS (n=177)	%	BPS (n=23)	%	Sub 2 (n=89)	%	Sub 5 (n=111)	%	Total # (n=200)	Total %
Male	121	68%	13	57%	27	30%	72	65%	134	67%
Female	56	32%	10	43%	62	70%	39	35%	66	33%
Total	177	100%	23	100%	89	100%	111	100%	200	100%

Program Implementation Finding: Most Phase 3 Students were referred for poor academics (33%) or misbehavior (26%) followed by an emotional reason (13%), aggressive behavior (13%) and poor attendance (10%).

There was variation by district. For example, in Bellevue Public Schools, the greatest proportion of students, 36%, were referred for an emotional reason. In Omaha Public Schools, the greatest proportion of students, 33%, were referred for poor academics. Overall, poor attendance was not a common referral reason and it was not cited as a reason for referral at all in BPS.

Table IV.3.2.9: Summary of Reasons for Referral

	By School District				By Subcouncil				TOTAL	
	OPS	%	BPS	%	Sub 2	%	Sub 5	%	Total #	Total %
Poor Academics	95	33%	6	27%	47	33%	53	31%	201	33%
Poor Attendance	32	11%	0	0%	11	8%	21	12%	64	10%
Misbehavior	76	26%	5	23%	41	29%	40	24%	162	26%
Aggressive Behavior	37	13%	3	14%	16	11%	25	15%	81	13%
Emotional	32	11%	8	36%	17	12%	24	14%	81	13%
Other	16	6%	0	0%	10	7%	7	4%	33	5%
Total	288	100%	22	100%	142	100%	170	100%	622	100%

Program Implementation Finding. The 200 Phase 3 Students were assigned 554 goals to achieve during the 90 day intervention period. On average, each student was assigned between 2 and 3 goals (2.77). The majority of goals assigned were educational (62%), followed by a family goal (18%) and a social goal (11%).

Goals were developed by Family Support Liaisons in collaboration with the students/families being served to address presenting and emergent need. A majority of goals assigned were educational (62%).

Table IV.3.2.10: Summary of Goals

	By Subcouncil				Total	
	Sub 2 (n=89)	%	Sub 5 (n=111)	%	Total Goals	Total %
Educational	152	65%	189	59%	341	62%
Family	26	9%	73	23%	99	18%
Living Situation	8	3%	4	1%	12	2%
Mental Health	7	3%	13	4%	20	4%
Social	29	12%	35	11%	64	11%
Medical	4	3%	4	2%	8	1%
Legal	2	<1%	0	0%	2	<1%
Safety	1	<1%	0	0%	1	<1%
Cultural/Spiritual	0	0%	1	<1%	1	<1%
Other	5	3%	1	<1%	6	1%
Total Goals Assigned	234	100%	320	100%	554	100%

Program Implementation Finding: Assessment results indicate that, overall, Phase 3 Students had positive influences in their lives but reported having a low or mid-low sense of academic self efficacy.

Results of the 40 Developmental Assets assessment tell us that the majority of students served, 49%, were described by their parents as having between 21 and 30 assets of out a possible 40. They average 27 assets. According to the Search Institute, the assets "represent the relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to thrive (Search Institute's website: http://www.search-institute.org/content/what-are-developmental-assets)." Research shows that the more assets a young person has, the less likely they are to engage in high risk behavior. These numbers suggest that the overall population served by this program is more likely to have access to assets.[16]

---

[16] For reference, the Search Institute's research on youth in 6th-12th grade shows that girls have an average of 19.9 assets while boys have 17.2. However, the population served by this program is at a different developmental stage (kindergarten through 6th grade) and should not be strictly compared to these numbers.

Figure IV.3.2.11: 40 Developmental Assets Profile of Students (n=72)
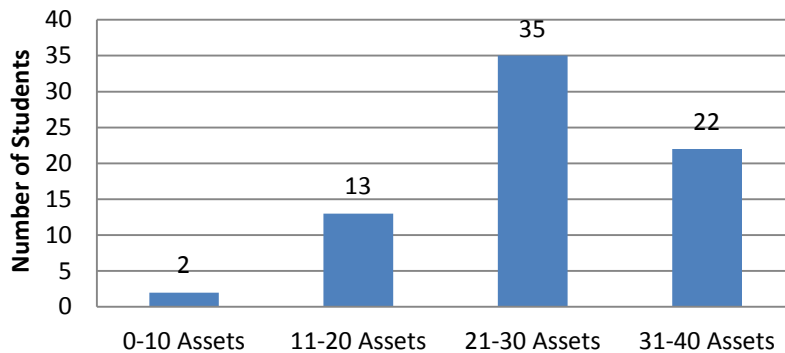
Students ages 8 and older (n=89) completed the 'What I Am Like' questionnaire to examine academic self-concept (Self-Perception Profile, Harter, 1985). On average, students' scored a 2.5 which indicates a middling score, where the student feels that s/he has neither a low or high sense of academic self-concept. Overall, a majority of scores (68/89 or 76%) fell into the low or mid-low range indicating that the student has a lower sense of academic self-concept. In other words, the majority of students served felt that they were less capable of being academically successful than their peers.

Program Implementation Finding. The majority of parents (97%) of Phase 3 students reported strong beliefs that they should be an active part of their child's education and a willingness to be involved with the school (85%). Most parents (75%) felt somewhat able to help their children succeed in school.

Figure IV.3.2.12: Student Academic Self-Concept Scores (n=89)

Three questionnaires from the Parent Improvement Project Study (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 2005) were used to explore parent reported beliefs around involvement. The vast majority of parents who responded (98%), reported that they believe it is their responsibility is to establish an active, rather than passive, relationship with the school. A majority of parents (85%), reported that they were oriented towards the school, rather than away from it, suggesting this population of parents

Figure IV.3.2.13: Parent Involvement Project: Valence Scale
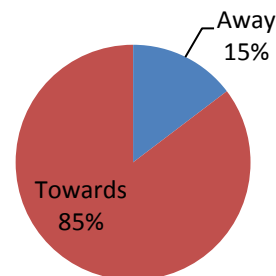
are more likely to engage with the school if given the opportunity. Finally, the last scale measures parent self-efficacy, or the parent's perception that s/he has the knowledge and/or experience to impact his/her child's ability to succeed in school. The majority of parents (78%), felt somewhat able to help their child succeed in school.

Figure IV.3.2.14: Parent Improvement Project: Self-Efficacy Scale

High Self-Efficacy 18%

Low Self-Efficacy 4%

Mid Self-Efficacy 78%
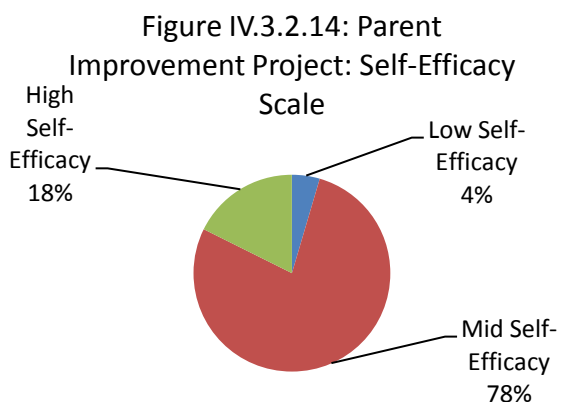
Program Implementation Finding. Average scores from a review of 25 randomly selected service plans suggest that the quality of service planning conducted by Family Support Liaisons improved 9% from Fall to Spring (from 17.8 to 20.3) but did not meet the indicator of quality set by FSL team (a score of 23).[17] There was variation in the quality of service planning by FSL.

In January 2012, a Service Plan Rubric was developed by the Family Support Liaison team with support from UNMCs evaluation team as a strategy for improving the quality of service plans written by FSLs.[18] The rubric addressed three areas: Responsiveness; SMART goals; and Professionalism. The areas were identified by FSL management to align plans with program goals more successfully. Responsiveness required that the plan respond to the unique needs of that student and family. SMART goals required that all goals be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Professionalism required that documentation accurately describe the work being done with the student/family.

The rubric assigned a point value to each of the 14 indicators within the three overarching categories. A low score received a zero, a middling score received a one and a high score received a two. There were 28 points possible. The FSL team voted to set a score of 23 as their indicator of quality. In other words, the team agreed that a quality plan had to score at least a 23.

The evaluation team reviewed a randomly selected sample of 25 service plans. Before the rubric was established, the average score was 17.8 points. After, the average score was 20.3 points, a gain of 2.5 points or 9%. This suggests that some, limited, progress had been made although the average did not meet the team's established indicator of quality (a score of 23). There was clear variation by FSLs as some scores were consistently high and others, consistently low. Qualitative data suggests the rubric was viewed positively as a tool for ensuring that the plans were comprehensive.

---

[17] These data were not subjected to a statistic al test as the sample is too small.
[18] Service plans are critical to the work of the FSL. They include individualized student/family goals, service provision rationale, and strategies for monitoring and adjusting their work with the family.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS FINDINGS

Program Effectiveness Finding. Students achieved 31% of the goals designed for them by their Family Support Liaison. Qualitative data suggests that the achievability of the goals developed for clients varied remarkably among Liaisons and changed over time, limiting the meaningfulness of this percentage as an indicator of effectiveness.

Data from case notes and service plans demonstrates that many goals established for clients were not achievable or realistic within a 90 day timeframe. Training was implemented in January 2012 to improve the functionality of goals developed for Phase 3 students. For example, a non-achievable goal might be "student will increase his/her reading grade from a B to an A." A revised goal intended to address that same need might include multiple, strategic goals such as, "student will learn 20 sight words by x date" and "student will turn in all reading homework assignments during March."

Table IV.3.2.15: Goals Summary

	Sub 2 (n=89)	Sub 5 (n=111)	Total Goals
Total Goals Assigned	234	320	554
Total Goals Achieved	65	109	174
% of Goals Achieved	30%	34%	31%

Program Effectiveness Finding: Teacher ratings of student ability[19] in the areas of math, reading and writing increased across all subjects from intake to discharge. This increase was found to be statistically significant.[20]

Teachers were asked to rate students' ability in the areas of math, reading and writing at intake. These ratings ranged from 1 to 3 with a rating of 1 indicating a student's ability to be below expectations, of 2 indicating a student's ability meets expectations or of 3 indicating a student's ability exceeds expectations. The pre/post ability ratings by teachers (*n*=63) are depicted below.

---

[19] Data was only collected on Phase 3 Students.
[20] To analyze teacher ratings of academic ability, the Paired Samples T Test was used. This test compares the means of two variables and computes the difference between the two variables for each case to determine if the average difference is significantly different from zero.

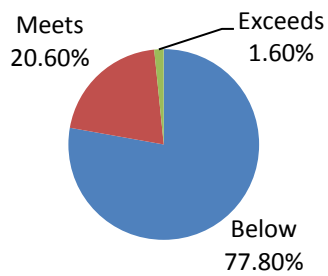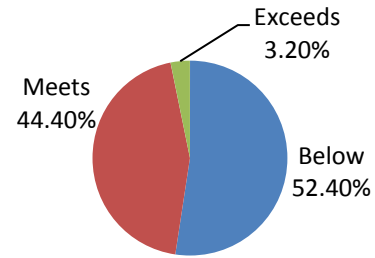Figure IV.3.2.16: Intake Math Rating

Meets 20.60%
Exceeds 1.60%
Below 77.80%

Figure IV.3.2.17: Discharge Math Rating

Exceeds 3.20%
Meets 44.40%
Below 52.40%

From intake to discharge, more students were rated as meeting or exceeding expectations in the subject of math and this difference was determined to be statistically significant at $p < .001$ (more than what you would find by chance).[21]
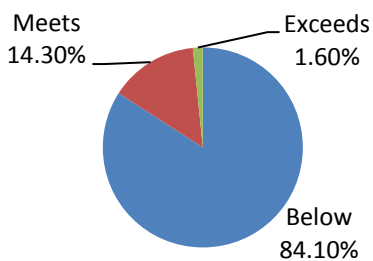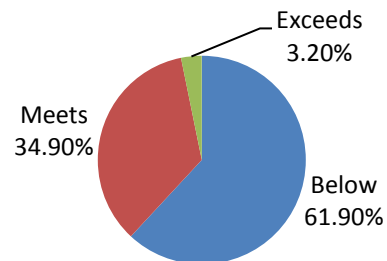

Figure IV.3.2.18: Intake Reading Rating

Meets 14.30%
Exceeds 1.60%
Below 84.10%

Figure IV.3.2.19: Discharge Reading Rating

Exceeds 3.20%
Meets 34.90%
Below 61.90%

From intake to discharge, more students were rated as meeting or exceeding expectations in the subject of reading and this difference was determined to be statistically significant at $p < .001$ (more than what you would find by chance).[22]

---

[21] There was a significant increase in the scores for pre math rating (M=1.24, SD=.465) and post math rating (M=1.51, SD=.564) by teachers $t(62)$ = -3.73, $p < .001$. Effect size = .47. Effect size was found by dividing the mean by the standard deviation or .270/.574.

[22] There was a significant increase in the scores for pre reading rating (M=1.17, SD=.423) and post reading rating (M=1.41, SD=.557) by teachers $t(62)$ = -3.79, $p < .001$. Effect size = .48. Effect size was found by dividing the mean by the standard deviation or .238/.499.
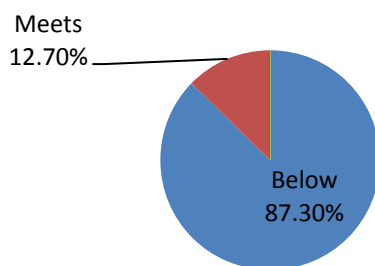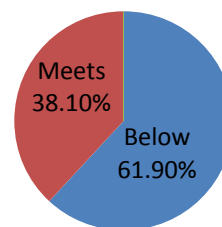
Figure IV.3.2.20: Intake Writing Rating

Meets
12.70%

Below
87.30%

Figure IV.3.2.21: Discharge Writing Rating


Meets
38.10%

Below
61.90%

From intake to discharge, more students were rated as meeting expectations in the subject of writing and this difference was determined to be statistically significant at $p< .001$ (more than what you would find by chance).[23]

Program Effectiveness Finding. Parent stress ratings from intake to discharged decreased. Ratings changed from 6.10 at intake to 3.97 at discharge. This decrease was found to be statistically significant.[24]

At intake, parents rated their perceptions of stress on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 indicating a low level of stress and 10 indicating a high level of stress. Initially, 46 parents completed this questionnaire and the mean stress rating was 6.26. At discharge, 39 parents completed the questionnaire and the mean stress rating was 3.97. For proper comparison, only the ratings of parents with complete pre and post data were analyzed (n=39). Excluding the seven participants without discharge stress scores, the initial mean stress rating of 6.10 was used for computing. The decrease of parent stress ratings from 6.10 to 3.97 was statistically significant ($p<.001$) which indicates that this change was not due to chance.

Figure IV.3.2.22: Parent Stress Rating

Intake: 6.10
Discharge: 3.97

---
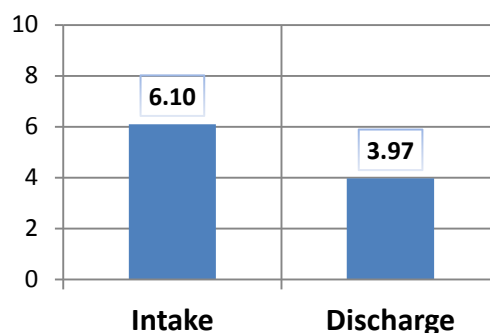
[23] There was a significant increase in the scores for pre writing rating (M=1.13, SD=.336) and post writing rating (M=1.38, SD=.490) by teachers t(62) = -3.98, $p< .001$. Effect size = .50. Effect size was found by dividing the mean by the standard deviation or .254/.507.

[24] To analyze parent stress ratings, the Paired Samples T Test was used. This test compares the means of two variables and computes the difference between the two variables for each case to determine if the average difference is significantly different from zero.

Program Effectiveness Finding: Although the total sample of parents interviewed/surveyed is too small to be generalizable (*n*=14), 83% of parents reported being satisfied with the program and 100% of parents were satisfied with their FSL.[25] Qualitative data suggests that parent satisfaction is linked to the program and FSLs ability to address the unique needs of the client and to consistently engage with the student, family and school.

Parents reported no concerns with the 90 day timeframe (*n*=11; 100% satisfied) or the paperwork (e.g. assessments) they were asked to complete (*n*=6; 100% positive experiences). Parent response was more mixed in other areas including their ratings of satisfaction with the goals set for their child (*n*=12; 83% satisfied), how well the program positions the child for success (*n*=11; 82% influential), how well the program positions the parent for success (*n*=11; 82% influential), how successfully the program met the child's needs (*n*=13; 69% successful) and how successfully the program met the parent's needs (*n*=13; 69% successful).

Table IV.3.2.23: Satisfaction Survey Results

Question	Rating	#[26]
How satisfied were you with the 90 Day Timeframe?	100% Satisfied (very or mostly)	11
Please rate your experience filling out paperwork. [27]	100% Positive (very or mostly)	6
How satisfied were you with the goals established for your child and family by the program?	100% Satisfied (very or mostly)	12
Please rate how much influence you feel the program had in positioning your child for success.	82% Influential (very or mostly)	11
Please rate how much influence you feel the program had in positioning your family for success.	82% Influential (very or mostly)	11
Please rate how successfully the program met your child's needs.	69% Successful (very or mostly)	13
Please rate how successfully the program met your needs.	69% Successful (very or mostly)	13
Please rate, how satisfied were you with your FSL.	100% Satisfied (very or mostly)	12
Overall, please rate your satisfaction with the program.	83% Satisfied (very or mostly)	12

Parents described positive aspects of their FSL as being supportive and motivating their children along with assisting families in filling out paperwork and providing information in a quick manner during a family crisis. The FSLs made parents comfortable, were easy to talk to, and provided one-on-one support and motivation. Parents positively described how FSLs assisted in

---

[25] Fourteen parents responded to UNMCs requests to volunteer to participate in a follow up survey or interview which is a 12% response rate. Eight were interviewed and 6 returned surveys. Reasons for this low response rate are hypothesized to include: inaccurate contact information for families, poor timing for data collection (occurred during summer 2012), and a lack of familiarity with the team collecting information e.g. UNMCs evaluation team. Our recommendation to improve this response rate is to include FSLs in the data collection process which should occur immediately following the family's time with the FSL program.

[26] The total number of respondents differs by question because responses of "Unsure" and no response were removed from analysis.

[27] This question was only asked during phone interviews, hence the low number of respondents.

transitioning the child to school, accompanied the family when needing to speak with a teacher, and helped a family meet all their goals.

One concrete criticism offered was the lack of communication about the FSL program, its goals and its services. Notably, one parent felt unable to respond to many questions, explaining that s/he was never given the opportunity to understand the program because the FSL never called the family nor provided the family with requested resources. Interestingly, this FSL was also described in a highly favorable way by another parent responding to these same questions.

Program Effectiveness Finding: Client satisfaction surveys conducted by Lutheran Family Services reveal that overall, parents rated the quality of the Family Support Liaison Program services highly (between 'good' and 'excellent'). On average, parents felt that the 90 Day Timeframe was sufficient but many noted that additional time would be even more beneficial.

Overall, parents rated the quality of the FSL program highly. Surveys used a 5 point Likert scale to rate parent perception of different components of the program. The scale's values were: Disagree Strongly = -2; Disagree = -1; Neutral = 0; Agree = 1; Strongly Agree =2. Results were as follows:

Table IV.3.2.24: FSL Satisfaction Results

Item "As a result of the Family Support Liaison Program…"	Average Rating	# of Respondents	Interpretation
I feel more confident in my ability to support my child academically.	1.4	26	Parent rating is positive, leaning slightly more towards agree.
I have a better understanding of my children's academic needs.	1.3	26	Parent rating is positive, leaning towards agree.
I believe I have a better understanding of how to deal with stress.	1.2	26	Parent rating is positive, leaning towards agree.
I have a better understanding of the attendance requirement at my child's school.	1.5	24	Parent rating is positive, exactly between agree and strongly agree.
I was satisfied with the referrals I received.	1.6	18	Parent rating is positive, leaning slightly more towards strongly agree.

LFS PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The FSL program was widely viewed as an asset (or potential asset) within schools and to families for multiple reasons and under context specific conditions. In general, school personnel attribute the program's utility or benefit to be associated with its ability to strengthen the school's existing network of support. Parent perceptions indicate that the program's benefit is aligned with its ability to provide customized, competent aid to families in need. Program staff report satisfaction that the program is able to position students and families to succeed both academically and personally.

The program experienced continual evolution over the course of its first year. Challenges with communication about the program's intent were a central concern noted by school staff, echoed by parents and referenced by program staff. Overall, individual schools and the program staff affiliated with each school, were able to establish a functional partnership and the FSL was able to provide support that aligned with the school's need or preference. This adaptation was both a strength and a challenge, resulting in a program implemented variably per the preferences of the school. In other words, schools that had "bought into" the FSL program, were more likely to implement the four phased model, while other schools with less interest in the model were more likely to ask the FSL to engage in activities that fell outside the purview of the program but that provided favorably-viewed support. Additional factors relating to the characteristics of the communities served (e.g. linguistic needs, cultural affiliations), resources available, capacities of program staff, program development/design issues and other variables had indelible impacts on how the program was, or could be, implemented.

The population targeted included families who were somewhat open to partnering with the school and engaging in their children's education (PIP results). Students were likely to have a low to mid-low sense of academic self-competence suggesting that they were well positioned to improve with targeted academic interventions (WIAL results). Students also had above average assets, indicating that they had access to positive influences in their lives which may increase the likelihood that this type of intervention be experienced positively (40 Developmental Assets results).

Outcomes in the areas of student academics and family stress were positive (and statistically significant) and satisfaction ratings from parents, staff and school staff were mixed but lean positively. Because the program's implementation was adaptive and continually shifted, it is not possible to determine exactly how the intervention contributed to such positive results. However, it is clear that the program had a positive impact and efforts to pinpoint program attributes that contribute to success should be undertaken.

Continual efforts to define/refine a program model, develop mutually beneficial relationships with and within schools and to implement the model with fidelity were critical learning experiences for the Family Support Liaison Program this first year. To improve the likelihood of improved, consistent outcomes in the future, the program might consider the following:

1. Continuing to refine its model to include and improve the program elements that were most critical to its "success" and identifying a clear, measurable definition of success. This also entails eliminating those activities that impede success. This should involve utilizing qualitative and quantitative data from all critical stakeholders (e.g. families, students, school personnel, program personnel) to make informed, comprehensive decisions that benefit the program, the schools/school districts and families/students served.

2. Implementing additional training for FSLs to improve consistency in service provision, planning and execution that is aligned with an improved program model.

3. Establishing a functional process to better assess a mutually beneficial fit with partnering schools and school districts before implementing the program. This reflects a critical need to improve communication about the program and establish mutually understood expectations to improve the likelihood that the program will be implemented as intended and have the effect desired.

Subsection IV.3.3   Communities in Schools

Lead: Kate Golden, M.A.

Introduction and Background

Communities In Schools uses an evidence-based[28] approach to assess student and school-wide needs that are then addressed by brokering in an array of services and monitoring their impact. The CIS model is primarily a dropout prevention approach that uses integrated student services. This means that CIS has expertise in the design, coordination and/or provision of relevant resources that reduce barriers to achievement. This primarily occurs via the Site Coordinator (SC) who is positioned inside schools to connect students to critical community resources.

The Communities In Schools program became a non-profit organization in Nebraska in March of 2010 and nationally, the organization has been in service for over 30 years.[29] The four Omaha area sites that are a result of a partnership with the Learning Community were in their first year of implementation at the time of this evaluation.[30]

CIS Key Findings

- **Implemented 112 hours and 65 individual Level 1 Services—broad, school-wide services**
- **126 students received Level 2 Services—targeted, individualized services—and 80% of these students met their goals**
- **The small group of parents and community partners interviewed or surveyed reported that they were satisfied with the CIS Omaha model (75%) and with their Site Coordinator (89%)**
- **Contrasting perceptions of Community Partners suggests that there is room to improve the relationship between CIS and their providers**

The program places Site Coordinators (SCs) in four elementary schools in the Omaha Public Schools district. Achievement Subcouncil Two is represented by the funded schools. The program employs seven staff including three managerial positions and four site coordinators.

---

[28] Evidence-based refers to a program that has been proven to have positive effects (Level 1 services had positive effects, Level 2 services were also proven to have mixed effects). CIS was the subject of a multi-site, 5 year evaluation conducted by ICF International in 2005. The report is available here:
http://www.communitiesinschools.org/media/uploads/attachments/Communities_In_Schools_National_Evaluation_Five_Year_Summary_Report.pdf
[29] http://www.communitiesinschools.org/about/our-story/
[30] The contract to begin services was signed in April, 2011.

The managerial positions include a program director, a project manager and a data and media manager. The SCs are housed in the schools in which they are assigned.[31]

Integrated services used within the CIS model are described as occurring at two levels as follows:

> *Level 1* services target the whole school community. SCs diagnose need and respond by connecting services to all students and their families. At times the SC will partner with community agencies or the school to deliver appropriate services. CIS national describes Level 1 services as: "Any widely accessible prevention and asset building services provided as part of a coordinated plan to address identified school-wide needs."

> *Level 2* services target specific students in need. SCs design tailored plans to address students' individual concerns by brokering in appropriate resources and monitoring progress over the course of a school year. CIS national describes Level 2 services as: "Any targeted and sustained intervention and prevention services provided for students experiencing risk factors that increase likelihood of eventually dropping out of school. Delivered as part of individualized student plans with clearly defined goals."

The Communities In Schools Model is as follows:
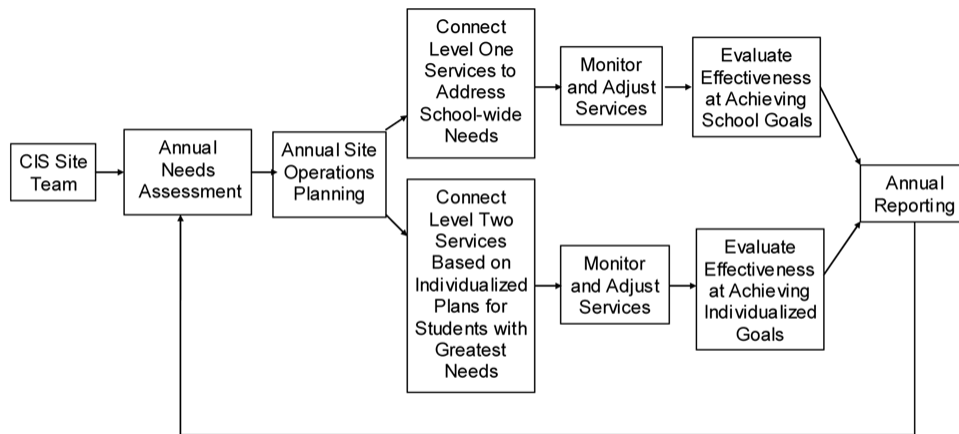
Evaluation approach and data collection[32]

The evaluation's focus is two-fold. The evaluation first explores how the model was implemented, specifically considering how services are provided to examine what occurred and

---

[31] The program began serving students on August 15th 2011.

[32] The selection of the evaluation's focus, model and method was the result of an agreement between the Communities In Schools management team and the University of Nebraska Medical Center's evaluation team lead.

how (process evaluation). Secondly, the evaluation examines the model's impact on youth with a primary focus on exploring the program's effect on academics and attendance (outcomes evaluation). The evaluation model draws from a Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework (Patton, 2011) which emphasizes the importance of evaluation's role in facilitating improvement. Therefore the evaluation produced real-time results used by the program to inform improvements and better support those served

The method used to guide data collection and analysis is termed a multi-level convergent mixed methods case study approach (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011; Stake, 1995). This involves examining narrative and numerical information from multiple groups (e.g. Communities In Schools staff, partner agency staff, parents) to understand and describe the program and its effects.

Evaluation questions

1. How is the Communities In Schools – Omaha model being implemented across schools in the Omaha Metro area?

- How does the referral process work?

- Who is receiving services?

- What do services look like?

- How are services provided?

2. How is the Communities In Schools – Omaha model positioned to or affecting student achievement?

- How are services targeting achievement?

- How do services affect achievement?

3. How is the Communities In Schools – Omaha model positioned to or affecting student attendance?

- How are services targeting attendance?

- How do services affect attendance?

4. How might the Communities In Schools – Omaha model be amended to better achieve its outcomes?

Findings

Findings are divided into two groups, those that describe program implementation and those that concern program effectiveness.

Program Implementation Finding 1. About 112 hours and 65 individual Level 1 Services were implemented during the 2011-2012 school year across all four schools served by CIS. The majority of Level 1 Services was provided by the CIS Site Coordinator (51% of service hours provided and 39% of services by the number of services provided). These services typically took the form of school-wide programming or one-time events and fell into the categories of Academic Assistance and Family Engagement/Strengthening.

Level 1 Services are provided to a broad population within each school to address concerns identified by a school-based needs assessment conducted at the beginning of the school year. These services vary but typically include events (e.g. dental fairs) and school-wide programming (e.g. behavior modification curriculum) provided by the CIS Site Coordinator, a community partner, school staff or a volunteer. CIS records show that the 112 hours and 65 Level 1 Services were attended by students approximately 7,532 times. [33,34] Because the total population across these schools is 1,340 students, it is reasonable to posit that if each student had participated in these services, each individual would have experienced a Level 1 Service approximately 5 times during the school year. The breakdown of these numbers by school is as follows:

Table IV.3.3.1: Level 1 Services Number and Hours Provided

School	School Population[35]	Total Times Attended	Total # Services Provided	Total # Hours
Franklin	268	1436	21	26.5
Kennedy	309	1819	11	33.0
King	333	2928	18	37.5
Skinner	430	1349	15	15.8
TOTAL	1340	7532	65	112.8

The majority of services (in hours and by number of services) were provided by CIS Site Coordinators, followed by volunteers, community partners and school staff. Both units of measurement (hours and number of services) are provided in the following chart because some services can only be measured in terms of number of services provided. For example,

---

[33] Data is from CISs internal database (CISDM) and was exported by CIS to UNMC for analysis. It was then reviewed by CIS staff to ensure accurate reporting.

[34] This number is duplicated, meaning that a student who was served at one event may have been served at an additional event. Therefore this number does not represent 7,532 students, but 7,532 occasions that students participated in these services.

[35] Data from Omaha Public Schools, Official Fall 2011 Membership Report. Accessed at:
http://www.ops.org/District/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=XZ3CPoQBfug%3d&tabid=1846&mid=4866

implementing a school coat closet or supply cabinet are Level 1 Services that are available to the entire school, but are not associated with a duration of time.

Table IV.3.3.2: Level 1 Service Hours and Types

Service Provider/Broker	# of Hours	% of hours provided by Service provider type	# of Services	% of services provided by service provider type
CIS Staff	57.5	51%	25	39%
Volunteer	24.25	21%	21	32%
Community Partner	18	16%	12	18%
School Staff	13	12%	7	11%
Total	112.75	100%	65	100%

The most commonly implemented Level 1 Services fell into the categories of Family Engagement/Strengthening and Academic Assistance. Because services provided are measured by both hours and in numbers of services, the data show that these two, not one, categories of services are provided or brokered more than the remaining five services. Family Engagement/Strengthening was provided at the highest number of hours (40 hours or 36%) and Academic Assistance services were provided most often (25 times or 39%).

Table IV.3.3.3: Level 1 Service Categories

Service Category	# of Hours	Percentage of total services provided by # of hours	# of Services	Percentage of total services provided by # of services
Family Engagement/Strengthening	40	36%	17	26%
Academic Assistance	31.75	28%	25	39%
Basic Needs/Resources	11	10%	9	14%
Behavior Interventions	19	17%	8	12%
Life Skills/Social Development	8	7%	3	5%
Enrichment/Motivation	2	2%	2	3%
College/Career Preparation	1	0%	1	1%
Total	112.75	100%	65	100%

Program Implementation Finding 2: The majority of Level 2 Students were Black/African American (72%), which reflects the population trends within these schools. A slight majority of students served were male (57%) and 70% were enrolled in Kindergarten, 2nd, 3rd and 5th grade.

Table IV.3.3.4: Student Racial/Ethnic Demographics

Racial/Ethnic Category	# of Students	% of Students (out of 126)
Black/African American	91	72%
Multi-Racial	11	9%
White	10	8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	4%
Hispanic	5	4%
Native American/Alaska Native	2	2%
Other	2	2%
Total	126	100%

Table IV.3.3.5: Student Gender

Gender	# of Students	% of Students (out of 126)
Female	54	43%
Male	72	57%
Total	126	100%

Table IV.3.3.6: Student Grade Levels

Grade	# of Students	% of Students (out of 126)
Kindergarten	21	17%
1st Grade	13	10%
2nd Grade	21	17%
3rd Grade	20	16%
4th Grade	13	10%
5th Grade	25	20%
6th Grade	13	10%
Total	126	100%

Program Implementation Finding 3: Across all four schools, 126 students received Level 2 Services. Students were primarily referred to CIS by parents (34%) and were identified as having an average of three total risk factors – the most frequent one being low socio-economic status (69%).   Level 2 Services were most often provided directly by Site Coordinators (53%) followed by Community Partners (34%) and School Staff (12%). Overall, services categorized as Academic Assistance (46%) and Enrichment/Mentoring (29%) were provided/brokered most often but there was notable variation in services provided by site. Typically, these services took the forms of: tutoring by Community Partners or general academic support by the SC; group and individual mentoring provided by the SC in the form of team sports and "being readily available to talk to;" and providing referrals to basic needs resources in the community to address difficulties such as paying utilities or accessing food.

Skinner Elementary served the most Level 2 Students (48), followed by King (31), Kennedy (25) and Franklin (21).[36] The majority of students receiving Level 2 Services were referred to CIS by a parent (34%) although teachers (23%) and 'other' (18%) were also likely referrers. Qualitative data from CIS Site Coordinators suggests that the group of undefined referrers likely includes the Lutheran Family Services Family Support Liaison, a member of a partnering agency that was also stationed in these four schools and worked in concert with the Site Coordinator to assess student need and identify an appropriate service provider.

Table IV.3.3.7: Referral Sources

Referral Source	Franklin Students [37]	Kennedy Students	King Students	Skinner Students	Total Students	% of Total
Parent	1	3	16	23	43	34%
Teacher	10	5	6	8	29	23%
Other	6	12	2	3	23	18%
CIS Staff	0	1	3	5	9	7%
Vice principal	0	0	0	8	8	6%
Principal	2	4	0	0	6	5%
School Counselor	2	0	3	1	6	5%
School Social Worker	0	0	1	0	1	1%
Total	21	25	31	48	125	100%

Level 2 Services are matched to an individual student to address emergent Risk Factors which range from misbehavior to family disruption to having a learning disability. All 126 students referred for service were identified as having or exhibiting one or more corresponding risk factor. Students served were described as having 1 to 11 risk factors out of a possible 25. On average, students presented three risk factors, the most common being low socio-economic status (69%), followed by misbehavior (33%), not living with both natural parents (33%), other (30%), family disruption (21%), poor academic performance (19%) and lack of effort (17%).

---

[36] This pattern is aligned with the total population at each school e.g. Skinner served the most Level 2 Students and has the highest student population, followed by King, Kennedy and Franklin.
[37] One student at Franklin did not have corresponding referral information and was not counted in this total number.

Table IV.3.3.8: Risk Factors

Risk Factor	Frequency	% of students[38]
1. Low socioeconomic status	88	69%
2. Misbehavior	42	33%
3. Not living with both natural parents	42	33%
4. Other	38	30%
5. Family disruption	26	21%
6. Poor academic performance	24	19%
7. Lack of effort	22	17%
8. Emotional disturbance	15	12%
9. Parents with low education levels	15	12%
10. Aggressive behavior	12	10%
11. High family mobility	12	10%
12. Large number of siblings	12	10%
13. Lack of family conversations about school	11	9%
14. Low educational expectations	11	9%
15. Low commitment to school	9	7%
16. Learning disability	8	6%
17. No extracurricular activity	8	6%
18. Poor attendance	8	6%
19. High risk behavior (e.g., alcohol, drugs, etc.)	4	3%
20. Sibling has dropped out of school	4	3%
21. Low parent/guardian contact with school	3	2%
22. Over age for grade	2	2%
23. High risk peer group (e.g., gangs)	1	<1%
24. Retained in grade	1	<1%
25. Teenage Parent	1	<1%

The majority of Level 2 Services (by number of cases served) fell into the categories of Academic Assistance (46%), followed by Enrichment/Mentoring (29%) and Basic Needs (19%).[39]

---

[38] The percentage was calculated by dividing the frequency of risk factor out of 126 to illustrate the proportion of students who were identified with each, individual risk factor. Because students can have (and most do) more than one risk factor, the percentages listed do not total 100%.

[39] Data show that Level 2 Services impacted 1,637 individual cases. These percentages were calculated by diving number of cases served associated with each major service category by the total number of cases referenced (1,637). Services could be provided at different reporting periods for each case and multiple times for each case which accounts for the higher number of total cases as compared to number of students served at Level 2 (126).

Impacting far fewer cases, were services associated with Professional Mental Health (2%), Life Skills/Social Development (2%), Behavior Interventions (1%), Family Enrichment/Support (<1%) and Professional Physical Health (<1%).

There was notable variation in service provision by school. For example, Level 2 Students at Franklin and Kennedy received 84% of Academic Assistance. Level 2 Students at King received the fewest Enrichment/Motivation services (4%) by case and the greatest proportion of Basic Needs services (75%). Skinner provided the majority of Life Skills/Social Development to its students (90%). Franklin and Skinner provided the smallest proportion of Professional Mental Health services (0% and 9%, respectively.

Table IV.3.3.9: Cases Served by Service Category

School	Academic Assistance	Basic Needs	Behavior Interventions	Enrichment/Motivation	Family Engagement/Strengthening	Life Skills/Social Development	Professional Mental Health	Professional Physical Health	Total Cases Served (per school)
Franklin	173	43	13	213	3	2	0	3	450
Kennedy	98	10	1	154	1	1	13	0	278
King	458	231	3	17	6	0	17	0	732
Skinner	25	24	4	93	0	28	3	0	177
Total Cases Served (by Service Category)	754	308	21	477	10	31	33	3	1637

There are notable trends in terms of the three most frequently occurring services, Academic Assistance, Enrichment/Motivation and Basic Needs which together, account for 94% of all Level 2 Services provided.[40]

Academic Assistance. Tutoring was the most frequently provided Academic Assistance service (68% or 509/754). It was mainly provided (280/509 or 55%) by community agencies including Heart to Heart Educational Institute and 100 Black Men of Omaha. King Elementary is the only school used to support tutoring (King's Extended Learning Program).The next most frequent Academic service provided is categorized as Academic Services/Educationally Related Services,

---

[40] As measured by number of cases served.

and were primarily provided for students at Franklin Elementary (138/169 or 82%) and were most often provided by 100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc. and Heart to Heart Educational Institute (169/509 or 33%).

Enrichment/Motivation. A service category entitled, "someone to talk to readily available" was the most frequently provided of the Enrichment/Motivation group (305/477 or 64%). In 99.7% of cases, the provider was the CIS Site Coordinator. Franklin and Skinner provided this service the most often, (Franklin-186/305 or 61%) followed by Skinner (92/305 or 30%). Long and short-term mentoring were the next most frequent Enrichment/Motivation services (64/477 or 13%). This primarily occurred at Skinner (60/64 or 94%) by the Site Coordinator (58/60 or 97%). CIS Staff at Franklin and Skinner functioned as the actual service providers for 69% of all Enrichment/Motivation services offered at all four schools.

Basic Needs. Within the broader category of Basic Needs, the most often provided service is Nutrition and Food (212/308 or 69%) which predominantly occurs via the Food Bank for the Heartland. Resource Referrals are next with 71/308 or 23%. A majority of the time, the CIS Site Coordinator provides the referral (53/71 or 75%). A collection of agencies provide the remaining referrals including Operation School Bell, Lutheran Metro, Heart Ministry, Salvation Army and Heartland Family Services. Transportation is also captured within this category but occurs much less frequently than the other services (13/308 or 4%). It is nearly always provided by CIS staff (12/13 or 92%).

To paint a more complete picture of what this actually looks like for a SC and subsequently, for Level 2

Case Example: What does a Typical "Day in the Life of a Service Coordinator" look like?

✓ The SC arrives at the school early to participate in morning duties like greeting parents & students to build rapport with families.

✓ A teacher asks the SC for help with a student who is having trouble following directions in class. The SC works with that student to redirect his behavior.

✓ Teacher-led Student Assistant Team (SAT) meetings take place. The SC attends any meeting about her Level 2 students and holds her own Site Team meetings to update staff and principals on student progress.

✓ The SC goes to his office to coordinate a Level 1 service. He works with the school to find a time/place to hold the event and then contacts a service provider to partner with. He makes fliers that explain the event and makes copies to hand out to parents after and before school.

✓ The SC calls 100 Black Men to check on a student who is being tutored. The SC makes sure to ask about any behavior issues that student might be having and notes pertinent information to share with the principal.

✓ Throughout the day, the SC meets with the principal, counselor and staff about Level 1 and 2 services.

✓ The SC completes student files, writes narratives, and enters assessments and progress notes in CISs internal database, CISDM. The SC takes this time to look at each Level 2 case individually to monitor, adjust and shift services as necessary.

✓ Walking down the hall, the SC notices a student is having a particularly hard time. She speaks with that student, finds out who that student's teacher is and shares what happened with that teacher.

✓ Phone calls to Mom or Dad are made to update them on student progress or to discuss a possible behavioral or other intervention.

✓ After the school day is over, the SC and a translator go with a non-English speaking family to a dental appointment.

✓ The African American Achievement Council, an organization that CIS regularly partners with, is having a meeting that night, so the SC attends.

---

students, see the following Case Example.[41]

The majority of Level 2 Services (by cases served) were provided by CIS staff (53%), followed by Community Partners (34%), School Staff (12%) and Volunteers (<1%). About 15 Community Partners work with CIS to provide Level 2 Services. Of those 15 providers, only four of them have provided services with regularity.[42,43] They include: Heart to Heart, Food Bank for the Heartland, Life Enhancement Services and 100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc. The following is a summary describing the contribution of the most active[44] Community Partners in terms of the percentage of cases served, the categories of services they provide, the schools affected and an explanation of what services look like.

Table IV.3.3.10: Community Partners

Community Partner	% of Cases Served	Category of Services Provided	Schools Affected	Explanation
Heart to Heart Educational Institute	27%	Academic Assistance	100% of cases impacted were based at Franklin, Kennedy and King	Individual and group led tutoring
Food Bank for the Heartland	21%	Basic Needs	100% of cases impacted were based at King	Providing food (backpack snacks) to individual students
Life Enhancement Services	16%	Professional Mental Health	100% of cases impacted were based at Franklin, King and Kennedy	Individual counseling and, in two cases, group behavior management work
100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc.	14%	Academic Assistance	95% of cases impacted were based at King and Skinner	Mostly test preparation, tutoring, and other educational assistance

Goals were developed for each Level 2 Student intended to address needs expressed as Risk Factors. On average, students' were assigned 2.3 goals during their time with CIS. The most frequently assigned goal categories were Improve Attitude and Commitment (32%), Improve Academics (26%) and Improve School Behavior (24%). Overall, only 15% of goals assigned

---

[41] These data were collected with the Site Coordinators. The evaluation team explicitly asked for a description of how they spend a typical day and asked them to include as many facets of their work as possible. This example was shared with CIS to ensure accuracy.

[42] Data were incomplete and provider names were not available for up to 9 different providers working with Kennedy.

[43] Regularity is defined as providing services more than three times. The remaining 10 providers have provided an average of 1.5 services each.

[44] The top four Community Providers include Heart to Heart, Food Bank for the Heartland, Life Enhancement Services and 100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc. This group provides 78% of all services out of those provided by 15 different Community Providers, in terms of cases served.

addressed attendance. However, there was variation by school. For example, 88% of all attendance goals occurred in King and Skinner Elementary schools.

Table IV.3.3.11: Goals for Level 2 Students

School	Total # Students	Decrease High Risk Social Behavior	Decrease Suspensions	Improve Academics	Improve Attendance	Improve Attitude and Commitment	Improve School	Total Goals Assigned	Average # Goals per
Skinner	47	2	1	16	10	27	14	70	2.9
Franklin	22	0	0	17	2	1	6	26	1.2
Kennedy	24	2	0	18	3	29	25	77	3.2
King	28	0	4	23	28	33	23	111	3.9
Total	121	4	5	74	43	90	68	284	2.3

Program Implementation Finding 4. Although the referral process within schools was originally perceived to be a challenge, it naturally evolved into a functional partnership between CIS and another service provider positioned within the school, Lutheran Family Services.

In the fall of 2011, Omaha Public School, Learning Community and agency personnel expressed concern that the referral process would be complicated by perceived similarity between two community based organizations newly working within these four schools. A flow chart outlining a shared process that both CIS and LFS should use was designed to ease this process (source: Learning Community meeting minutes, fall 2011). Qualitative data suggests that CIS and Lutheran Family Services employees housed in these four schools did not strictly adhere to process outlined by the flow chart but worked in tandem to develop what they viewed as a "no wrong door" partnership. In other words, a referral brought to either a CIS or LFS staff member was reviewed by that individual and/or the two parties, to determine which program/model would best address the needs of that unique case. Overall, CIS staff report that their partnership with their respective LFS staff was successful for both agencies because it provided a way for the student/family to receive services that best fit needs.

Program Implementation Finding 5. The implementation of the CIS Model in Omaha was adaptive, resulting in a "program" that was delivered differently from site to site.

Qualitative information gathered from Site Coordinators (n=4) which is echoed by parents' varied interpretations of the model, suggests that the variation in services provided is an experienced phenomenon. Data from Site Coordinators suggests that variation is, in part, influenced by these four factors (in no particular order) including the Site Coordinator, the availability of authorized services, cost of authorized services and the unique needs of the school or student.[45]

Table IV.3.3.12: Factors that Influence Service Provision

Factor	Explanation of Nature of Influence on Service Delivery	Example
Site Coordinator	The SCs knowledge, experience and preference seems to impact the nature and type of services available to the members of that school community	An SC may design a particular program to meet a need (e.g. a rewards-based behavior management program). The design and implementation of that program is unique to that individual and exists only in that school.
Availability of authorized service	SCs are required to select service providers that meet both CISs and Omaha Public Schools guidelines for being of quality. Services must also be available in that geographic area and be able to accept referred students.	Any tutoring or mentoring service provider must be approved by both CIS and OPS. If that provider has a long waiting list, the SC may elect to provide short term tutoring or mentoring until the provider has an opening.
Cost of service	SCs are limited to selecting services that have a cost that may be covered within their Level 1 or 2 budget and is approved by CIS and the Learning Community	Basic need services that do not directly support a Level 2 student's academic need are not fundable (e.g. providing a family with funds to pay a utility bill)
Needs of target e.g. the school (Level 1) or student (Level 2)	Because the program is designed to respond to the unique needs of the school and/or student, the service provided or brokered must address a need identified by a formal process (Needs Assessment and/or Risk Factor) or informal process (emergent need)	The student body at Franklin has different cultural and linguistic needs than the other four schools (28% English Language Learners). Services provided to students here are more likely to require translation to multiple languages.

---

[45] Qualitative data collected during quarterly reflection sessions, a concept mapping exercise exploring service delivery decisions, and a final interview, clearly show that SCs viewed their schools as unique communities with different qualities and characteristics that had a direct impact on their individual service delivery decisions.

Quantitative data support this as they demonstrate site to site variation in terms of Level 2 Services provided (in terms of cases served). The following chart demonstrates a measured degree of variation to illustrate this phenomenon simply.[46]

Table IV.3.3.13: Variation in Schools

School	Franklin	Kennedy	King	Skinner
Primary Role of SC (in terms of category of Level 2 services provided)[47]	Enrich/Motiv., 71% (provided 5 types total)	Enrich/Motiv., 93% (provided 6 types overall)	Academic, 59% (provided 4 types overall)	Enrich/Motiv., 60% (provided 5 types overall)
Dominant Level 2 Risk Factors[48]	None[49]	Misbehavior, 19%	Not living with both natural parents, 11%	Other, 15%
Primary Level 2 Services Provided	Enrich/Motiv, 47%	Enrich/Motiv, 55%	Academic, 63%	Enrich/Motiv, 53%
Primary Level 2 Goal areas	Improve Academics, 65%	Improve Attitude & Commitment, 38%	Improve Attitude & Commitment, 30%	Improve Attitude & Commitment, 39%
Primary Community Partner Used for Level 2 Services	Heart 2 Heart Educational Inst., 88%	Heart 2 Heart Educational Inst., 79%	Food Bank of the Heartland, 49%	100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc. 74%
Primary Use of School Staff for Level 2 Services	Enrich/Motiv (Soccer), 100%	Negligible, <1%	Academic (Extended Learning Time), 100%	Not used, 0%

The chart illustrates school-based trends apparent in the implementation of the CIS-Omaha model. For example, it is clear that all Site Coordinators take on multiple roles as service providers across a variety of service categories; however, the degree of variation differs from school to school. Qualitative data show that the reasons for this vary, but tend to relate to the SC needing to address gaps in service provision occurring because a particular service has a waiting list or the service simply doesn't exist in the area (among other reasons).

---

[46] Additional analysis would be beneficial to illustrate more layers of variation that are present in the data. This was not possible given the limited time allotted for preparing this report.

[47] All percentages of services represent the highest proportion of services provided by that group (e.g. Site Coordinator, Community Partner, School Staff) out of all services they provided. For example, the figure for Site Coordinators represents the number of services they provided (by case) in a single category out of all categories of services they provided. Services provided by other groups were not counted in this percentage.

[48] Risk factors are duplicated, so the percentages represent the frequency of this risk factor out of the total number of risk factors associated with each school. In other words, this percentage shows the proportion of each individual risk factor type out of those attributed to all Level 2 Students by school.

[49] Risk factors at Franklin were fairly evenly spread, so no dominant risk factor emerged and is therefore no represented here.

The use, or nonuse, of school staff as service provider is another example that demonstrates school to school variation. School staff is not used as a service provider within Kennedy and Skinner, but is a relatively significant provider of Enrichment/Motivation and Academic Assistance services at Franklin and King. In both cases, the school's engagement with CIS is to provide a single type of service within a single category (soccer and Extended Learning Time, respectively).

Program Effectiveness Finding 6. The small group of parents interviewed/surveyed reported that they were satisfied with the CIS Omaha model (75%) and with their Site Coordinator (89%). Parents reported benefits in the areas of caring for students, academic support and connecting parents to basic needs resources. One challenge described was associated with a lack of communication about the model's intent.

Although the final sample of parents interviewed/surveyed is too small to be generalizable,[50] it illustrates that among those interviewed/surveyed, 75% of parents and Community Partners (n=8) reported being satisfied with CIS overall and 89% reported being satisfied with their Site Coordinator (n=9).[51]

Parents describe positive aspects of the program such as the amount of care that SCs had for students and families, that the SC didn't judge the family and how the model worked to inform the child. Parent perceived opportunities for CIS to improve included addressing a lack of communication regarding what the model entailed, to help determine if it was in fact, a good fit for his/her student and to perhaps add more community resources to extend the model's reach.

In addition, 67% of parents felt the model met their child's needs (n=8) and 89% felt it was influential in positioning their child for success (n=9). All parents were satisfied with the goals set by CIS for their child (n=4) although one parent surveyed did not know that goals were a part of the model. Finally, 78% of parents were satisfied with the communication they had with their CIS Site Coordinator (n=9). Overall parents felt CIS "is a good program for kids and schools" and "they haven't done anything but help me." The only concrete criticism offered related to lack of communication about the model including what it is and what it does. Interviewers find evidence to support this as they needed to re-direct parents to discuss CIS rather than the school or other community programs.

---

[50] Nine parents responded to interviews and/or surveys regarding their experience with CIS out of 125, 7% response rate. We hypothesize a variety of reasons may account for this low response rate including but not limited to: lack of knowledge about the CIS model (qualitative data from parents and providers support this hypothesis), poor timing for data collection (e.g. June/July 2012), inaccurate contact information, and using an unknown team to collect data (e.g. the University of Nebraska Medical Center).
[51] Additional parent data would need to be collected to better understand the range of their perspectives and to validate that the percentages listed here are representative of parents of Level 2 Students.

Program Effectiveness Finding 7: Contrasting perceptions of Community Partners suggests that there is room to improve the relationship between CIS and their providers. However, those community partners interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about their partnership with CIS and its impact on students/families.

Although only a small group of Community Partners were interviewed (n=3), 100% of them reported being satisfied with CIS and the CIS staff member with whom they communicated.[52] Provider satisfaction was linked to the opportunity that partnering with CIS provided for them to be able to extend their reach to help additional students/families receive basic needs support in the community.[53] These data should not be considered generalizable as they represent a very minor cross section of Community Partners and only include one of the four main Community Providers.

Interviews would need to be conducted with Community Partners that represent additional types of services (e.g. Enrichment/Motivation, Academic Assistance) to examine perceptions of satisfaction with CIS more fully. Reasons for declining interviews (e.g. provider explaining that s/he is not sufficiently knowledgeable about CIS and its model to engage in an interview about it) and a lack of accurate information about Community Partners (e.g. one provider was no longer in business) suggest that there is opportunity to improve the relationship between CIS and these Community Partners.

Notably, this contrasts Site Coordinators' perceptions of their relationships with Community Partners. All Site Coordinators interviewed (n=3) felt positively about the quality of communication shared between them and their ability to engage with them to monitor and adjust services.

Program Effectiveness Finding 8: Parents did not perceive the model to have a singular purpose or function suggesting that satisfaction was associated with the model's customized approach to serving them and their children.

Parents (n=5) who agreed to be interviewed described the CIS model differently. It is described by two parents as emphasizing family involvement and advocacy. Another believes its overall purpose is to bridge together resources to "make kind of everything available to the children and their families without having to go all over town." Another parent's explanation suggests it

---

[52] CIS provided UNMC with contact information for 12 Community Partners. Of those, one had gone out of business and the other could not be reached with the information given. Of the remaining ten service providers, three agreed to be interviewed. Four did not respond to email or phone messages, one chose not to participate as his/her agency did not sign a formal contract with CIS, one explained that s/he felt unable to discuss CIS with any sufficient knowledge or personal experience and another agency was unable to find a team member willing to be interviewed.
[53] All Community Partners interviewed represented Basic Needs organizations.

was a strategy to get basic needs because it's only function was that it provided a coat for the student. A parent also reported that CIS is supposed to "teach children to be better."[54]

Program Effectiveness Finding 9: Attendance issues were identified in two ways. At the onset of service provision as an individual Risk Factor and via quarterly monitoring by Site Coordinators. At the end of the year, 20% of Level 2 Students had been assigned an attendance goal, of those students, 67% are described as having met their attendance goal.

At the end of the year, there were 24 students with a goal of improving attendance. Of those, 16 or 67% met their goal.

Program Effectiveness Finding 10. Level 2 Students' progress at the end of the year are judged in terms of if they have met their goals and if they have been promoted (e.g. successfully completed their current grade and are being moved to the next grade). In 2011-2012, 80% of students met their goals and 99% were promoted to the next grade level.

A majority of students (80%) have met their goals overall.

Table IV.3.3.14: Student Goals

Schools	Total # Students	# goals met	# goals not met	# not reported or missing data	Total (EOY reporting)	Total goals (not EOY reporting)[55]
Skinner	48	45	21	4	70	70
Franklin	22	26	0	0	26	26
Kennedy	25	37	2	1	40	77
King	31	29	11	0	40	111
Total[56]	126	137	34	5	176	284

In terms of individual goal areas (examining goals with greater than 20 students associated), Improving Attitude and Commitment was rated the highest at 91% of these 53 students meeting their individual goal. This is followed by Improving School Behavior (82% of 40 students), Improving Attendance (67% of 24 students) and Improving Academics (66% of 58 students).

Table IV.3.3.15: Types and Percentage of Goals Met

---

[54] If additional qualitative data were collected on parents, it is reasonable to posit that additional variation would be described.

[55] Variation in End of Year (EOY) reported numbers as compared to non-End of Year reported numbers is likely due to a exporting error associated with the reports generated by CISDM for analysis.

[56] Note that many students are assigned more than one goal during their time as Level 2 Students, hence why there are a greater number of goals than students.

Goal	Total Students with Goal (EOY)	# Did Not Meet	# Met	% Did Not Meet	% Met
Decrease High Risk Social Behavior	3	2	1	67%	33%
Decrease Suspensions	1	0	1	0%	100%
Improve Academics	58	20	38	34%	66%
Improve Attendance	24	8	16	33%	67%
Improve Attitude and Commitment	53	5	48	9%	91%
Improve School Behavior	40	7	33	18%	82%

At the end of the year, 99% of Level 2 Students were promoted and will begin school in the 2012-2013 year in the next grade. Four students transferred to a different school.

Table IV.3.3.16: Students Promoted to Next Grade Level

School	Dropped out	Promoted	Retained	Transferred	Total # of Students per School
Franklin	0	22	0	0	22
Kennedy	0	24	0	0	24
King	0	28	0	3	31
Skinner	0	46	1	1	48
Total # of Students by End of Year Result	0	120	1	4	125

CIS Conclusions and Implications for Program Improvement

A total of 126 students received Level 2 services--the more targeted, individualized services offered by CIS. Of these students, 80% met their goal for the year. Broadly, the CIS Omaha model was perceived to be successful, and that success was attributed to the model's ability to be tailored to the unique needs of that student or school. In other words, the benefit of the model was in its ability to adapt, effectively becoming a different "program" from site to site. This adaptation represents both a strength as well as a challenge. The Site Coordinator was positioned to manage established and emergent need, but was not always able to access authorized, cost-efficient and/or available community-based services. To resolve this challenge, the SC adopted the role of service provider to ensure that needs were met. An obvious strength is that there was an attempt to address needs of that student and his/her family immediately. An embedded challenge was assessing the quality of interim or emergent services not provided by a vetted community partner. CIS primarily addressed Academics, Enrichment/Motivation

and Basic Needs via specific outlets, such as tutoring, "being available to talk to," or providing resource referrals. However, finding or establishing additional services that increase the depth and/or breadth of services available may prove a valuable asset to improving the opportunities that CIS might access to meet the needs of students and schools in the future.

Section IV. Elementary Learning Programs Overall Conclusions

The Learning Community funded a variety of programs to serve its mission of overcoming barriers to student achievement. The evaluation used diverse methods, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, to describe and measure the quality of implementation, the nature of programming, and to report outcomes demonstrated by the elementary learning programs funded by the LC: Extended Learning (including Literacy Coaching), Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten, and Family Support focused programs. The LC served 7,295 students in the past program year. Overall, the evaluation results of the funded programs were positive and suggest that the Learning Community's efforts are accomplishing two overarching tasks: (1) programs appear to be using evaluation data for improvement and (2) early returns on student learning suggest they are improving.

Extended Learning Programs. Extended learning programs served 5,857 students and included four major types of programs: tutoring programs, broader extended learning programs during the school year that served students greater than one hour daily and all/most days of the week, summer extended learning programs, and literacy coaching programs. Eighty percent (80%) of students were eligible for free/reduced lunch. A total of 3,492 students were served an average 95 hours in school year programs and 1,670 students were served an average of 244 hours in summer programs. A total of 695 students were served in Literacy Coaching school year programs. External measures of program quality demonstrated that best practices were mostly to consistently evident across sites. Because schools and sites are achieving the ceiling of the current quality measure, and are showing little variation in scores, it is recommended that the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta) observation tool become a mandatory continuous improvement measure and be expanded to all types of extended learning programs in the next funding year. In this way, results can be used to refine and continuously improve each program, as well as to guide the general continuous improvement process for programs funded by the Learning Community. Further, the connection can then be measured between quality changes at the site level to student outcomes. Student achievement results were provided by some, but not all, programs and varied in their types and in their outcomes. When significant improvements were found, they were small in most cases. Notable exceptions were found for some summer programs where effect sizes changes were in the medium to large range (.60 to 1.01 in writing and mathematics, respectively).

Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten Programs. Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten programs were provided in four districts and two community agencies. A total of 891 pre-kindergarten students were served an average 96 hours total over the summer. Students significantly improved on the

Bracken School Readiness Assessment and showed medium to nearly high effect size changes at the individual program levels as well as the overall LC program level (Bracken 2009, gained 4.11 standard score points, $p<.001$, d=0.63). Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with and impact by the Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten programs. The only challenge found in the evaluation was the lack of a consistent externally rated quality measure of the learning environment. Therefore, it is recommended that the CLASS observation tool continue to be used and even expanded from a pilot measure (optional) to a mandatory continuous improvement measure and be expanded to all Jump Start Pre-Kindergarten classrooms in the next funding year. In this way, results can be used to refine and continuously improve each program, as well as to guide the general continuous improvement process for programs funded by the Learning Community.

Family Support Focused Programs.

A total of 547 students and their families received family support focused services of one of three types.

Learning Community Center of South Omaha: LCCSO programs were provided for parents with children attending six elementary schools within Subcouncil Five. A total of 66 parents and 165 students were served by LCCSO. LCCSO participants received a wide range of interrelated services, including, but not limited to: Parenting Education, Navigator Services and Adult Education (ESL & Computer Training). Because the program is in its beginning stage of implementation, pre to post analysis of results is not yet possible. These will be reported in the next evaluation report. As a group at baseline, parents assessed at the High Beginning ESL level in language testing. At baseline, assessed below average using standard scores in English language and school readiness; standard scores in Spanish language were assessed within average range. Initial progress can best be measured through examination of the quality of implementation and parents' responsiveness to the program. Tremendously high levels of program satisfaction were reported by participants. LCCSO has helped parents develop their parenting and language skills, as well as utilize more resources in the community in order to activate long term strategies to support their children's success in school.

Family Support Liaison Program: This was a new program and evolved as it was delivered. A total of 256 (200 at Phase 3) participants were served. Outcomes in the areas of student academics and family stress were positive (and statistically significant) and satisfaction ratings from parents, staff and school staff were mixed but leaned toward the positive. Phase 3 students significantly improved in teacher ratings of academic performance (reading, writing, and mathematics) from intake to discharge and effect sizes were medium, suggesting something within the intervention and the overall services the student was receiving both from this program as well as interventions delivered by the school and the child's family benefitted

the student academically. Because the program's implementation was adaptive and continually shifted, it is not possible to determine exactly how the intervention contributed to such positive results. However, it is clear that the program had a positive impact and efforts to pinpoint program attributes that contribute to success should be undertaken in the next year of evaluation.

<u>Communities in Schools:</u> A total of 126 students received Level 2 services--the more targeted, individualized services offered by CIS. Of these students, 80% met their goal for the year. Broadly, the CIS Omaha model was perceived to be successful, and that success was attributed to the model's ability to be tailored to the unique needs of that student or school. In other words, the benefit of the model was in its ability to adapt, effectively becoming a different "program" from site to site. This adaptation represents both a strength as well as a challenge. The Site Coordinator was positioned to manage established and emergent need, but was not always able to access authorized, cost-efficient and/or available community-based services. To resolve this challenge, the SC adopted the role of service provider to ensure that needs were met. An obvious strength is that there was an attempt to address needs of that student and his/her family immediately. An embedded challenge was assessing the quality of interim or emergent services not provided by a vetted community partner. CIS primarily addressed Academics, Enrichment/Motivation and Basic Needs via specific outlets, such as tutoring, "being available to talk to," or providing resource referrals. However, finding or establishing additional services that increase the depth and/or breadth of services available may prove a valuable asset to improving the opportunities that CIS might access to meet the needs of students and schools in the future.

Summary

Overall, the programs evaluated in this report served the students that the Learning Community targeted and provided quality programming. A total of 7,295 students were served this program year. When available, outcomes related to academic achievement were measured and in general, showed that students benefitted from the additional resources, with strongest effect sizes found in school readiness and reading achievement. It is challenging to quantify the results of the evaluation in such a way as to show which programs impact students *more*. When asked, which types of programs yield the best outcomes? To answer these questions next year, the evaluation design must include the addition of two major components: (1) consistent utilization of a same or similar tool to be used to assess program quality, at least in programs focused on teaching and learning; and (2) student level data provided by all districts and programs to the program evaluation team. Without these, it is difficult to address what elements in the program were associated with positive benefits for students, and similarly, we

can't really respond to questions about variation in benefits for students. Do some students benefit more than others? Are there subgroups not making gains?

Although there are still improvements to be made, the foundation for closing the achievement gap has been laid, some programs are showing low to medium effects, and with continued focus on improvement, additional gains should be expected.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the evaluation team be provided student state identification numbers (NSSRS numbers), demographic variables, and student performance on NeSA reading, writing, mathematics, and science assessments over time. The true impact of Learning Community participation can best be measured over multiple years.

2. It is recommended that the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (Pre-K to Upper Elementary CLASS, Pianta) external observation tool be added as a mandatory item for all future program funding in the areas of extended learning, literacy coaching, and pre-kindergarten programming.

References

Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., Schirm, A., & Taylor, J. (2009). *Structuring out-of-school time to improve academic achievement: A practice guide* (NCEE #2009-012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides.

Bracken, B. (2002). Bracken *school readiness assessment.* San Antonio, TX: Harcourt Assessment Inc.

Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R., & Mashburn, A. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-kindergarten programs. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 25(2), 166–176.

Center for Applied Linguistics. (2005). *BEST Plus Test Administrator Guide*. Washington, DC: Author.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed)*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Communities In Schools of Omaha. (2011, September 30). *Our Model*. Retrieved from: http://www.cis-omaha.org/what-we-do/cis-model/.

Creswell, J. W., and Plano-Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hamre, B., Goffin, S. & Kraft-Sayre, M. (2009). Measuring and improving classroom interactions in early childhood settings. http://www.teachstone.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/CLASSImplementationGuide.pdf

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hoover-Dempsey, K.V. & Sandler, H.M. (2005). *Final Performance Report for OERI Grant # R305T010673: The Social Context of Parental Involvement: A Path to Enhanced Achievement.* Presented to Project Monitor, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, March 22, 2005.

Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Wilkins, Sandler, H.M., and O'Connor. (2004). *Parental role construction for involvement: Interactions among theoretical, measurement and pragmatic issues in instrument development.* Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April, 2004

Larrabee, A. (2007). Predicting academic achievement through kindergarten screening: An evaluation of development and school readiness measures (Doctoral dissertation). *Retrieved from: Dissertation Abstracts International section A: Humanities and social sciences*. (AAI3228216).

Learning Point Associates (2006). *Teacher Survey for 21st Century Community Learning Centers*. Naperville, IL.

Nebraska Department of Education, 2009-2010 *State of the Schools Report: A Report on Nebraska Public Schools.* Retrieved from: http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/Main/Home.aspx.

Neuman, S. (2006). N is for nonsensical. *Educational Leadership, 64*(2), 28-31.

Panter, & Bracken, B. (2009). Validity of the Bracken school readiness assessment for predicting first grade readiness. *Psychology in the schools, 46*(5), 397-409.

Patton, M. Q. (2011). *Developmental Evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use.* New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2012). *Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pianta, R., LaParo, K., & Hamre, B. (2008). Classroom assessment scoring system (CLASS). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Director of this Learning Community Evaluation
Lisa St. Clair, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor, MMI & Pediatrics
Munroe-Meyer Institute
University of Nebraska Medical Center
985450 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-5450
Lstclair@unmc.edu
(402) 559-3023 (office) and (402) 677-2684 (cell)

Evaluation Team
Nicole Buchholz, M.S.
Kate Golden, M.A.
Jennifer Harmon, LMHP, MSW
Kristina Norwood, B.A.
Kari Price, B.S.
Regina Robbins, Ph.D.
Colleen Schmitt, M.S.
Belle Sheaf, M.S.
Abbey Siebler, M.A.
Michelle Simpson, Ph.D.
Sarah A. Smith, M.S.
Traci Strazdas, B.S.
Becky Zessin, B.A.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER unmc.edu