Expanding learning opportunities for youth and their families in the Mission Promise Neighborhood:
An interim assessment

the Mission Promise Neighborhood

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The Mission Promise Neighborhood (MPN) is a federally-funded Promise Neighborhood initiative that supports community-based organizations, schools, and other public agencies to work in defined neighborhoods and build integrated supports for children and youth from cradle to college and career. Encompassing the heart of San Francisco's historic Mission district, MPN was founded in 2013 on an overarching community transformation goal: to build a future for neighborhood residents where all children and youth "enter school ready for success" and "graduate from high school prepared for college and career,"….and where all families are provided "the opportunity to prosper economically and to call San Francisco their permanent home."[1] The Mission district is rich in the talent, cultural diversity, and human potential of its residents and numerous community-based organizations and public agencies. A major challenge facing MPN as it aims to create a more equitable and resilient community is the recognized need for better collaboration among all stakeholders. As well, MPN partners have seen the need to foster stronger norms of data-driven organizational learning and improvement. To confront these collective action challenges, MPN partners agreed to model new efforts to collaborate around a set of goals in their work with youth and families at the four MPN focus schools: Bryant Elementary (PreK-5), Cesar Chavez Elementary (PreK-5), Everett Middle School (6-8), and John O'Connell High School (9-12). The specific goals are:

1. *Families are supported to engage and participate effectively in schools and in the education of their children*
2. *Students are connected to school and community*
3. *Students come to schools ready to learn*
4. *Students achieve academically in preparation for college, career, and civic life*

With clarity of shared vision, specificity about desired goals, and renewed urgency, the MPN partners continue their efforts to promote sustainable community transformation.

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1 Mission Promise Neighborhood, Mission and Vision statement, available at: http://missionpromise.org/about-mpn/mission-vision/

About this Report

This report summarizes findings from ongoing research conducted in the MPN focus schools. Since 2013, the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities (Gardner Center) at Stanford University has partnered with MPN to support implementation and ongoing assessment of the initiative. We draw on perspectives from school principals, family engagement staff, teachers, community partners, and families regarding the ways in which implementation of MPN supports has advanced the initiative's goals. Specifically, we consider the following key programmatic and operational components of the MPN model: 1) the efforts to support strategic coordination of school-level supports and school-community partnerships by promoting collaborative leadership; 2) the resources of a Community School Coordinator and a Family Success Coach (FSC), and 3) the integrated academic, social, emotional, and health supports at each focus school.

Our interviews also probed for contextual factors that mediate achievement of goals as well as other ongoing challenges and areas for improvement. Finally, we incorporate student achievement and behavioral data drawn from the administrative records of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) as well as MPN survey data to complete our assessment. The object of this research is to draw lessons to support continuous improvement and scale-up efforts, and to inform policymakers and other researchers interested in Promise Neighborhood strategies across the country.

OPERATIONAL INPUTS/STRATEGIES

Promote goal alignment among MPN partners

Promote coordination & collaboration

Build structures for & model continuous improvement

Promote advocacy & build public will on behalf of target population

PROGRAMMING INPUTS

Community School Coordinators

Family Success Coaches

MPN partners' funded work

MEDA staff time & resources

GOALS

Families are supported to engage effectively with schools, to support & advocate for their children

Students are connected to schools & communities

Students come to school ready to learn

Students achieve academically in preparation for college, career, & civic life

MPN Goals

MPN supports a community school approach. As illustrated in the infographic above, the MPN implementation model attempts to support collective action and change through a set of programmatic and operational inputs and strategies. At the school level, MPN strategies are intentionally designed to support school connectedness among students and their families, to advance the climate for learning and instructional capacity and, ultimately, to improve student learning outcomes. In this section, we integrate available family survey and student-level school administrative data with respondents' professional judgment, first-hand observations, and perceptions about the relationship of MPN interventions to the four MPN goals.

Goal 1. Families Are Supported to Engage Effectively with Schools to Support and Advocate for their Children

Effective family engagement has been found to create meaningful connections between families and schools (Epstein, 1995; Fehrer, 2014; HFRP, 2010). Moreover, strong family-school connections build social capital in schools and communities, and contribute to student academic success and positive social and emotional outcomes, particularly for students of color (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Families with strong relationships at school more effectively advocate for their children, support their children's learning at home, and collaborate with school staff to ensure student success. Parents with a voice at their child's school contribute valuable expertise and critical perspectives to school communities (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013). Through their participation, families build and exercise leadership skills and collective social capital (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011). Prior research has also demonstrated, however, that efforts to engage with schools by families from non-dominant cultures often go unrecognized by school staff, especially when those efforts do not fit traditional models of parent involvement (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Mapp & Hong, 2010). To overcome this, schools and families work together to create culturally responsive and flexible strategies that build capacity for mutual engagement among school staff and families (London, 2016; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

In assessing MPN's efforts, we were guided by three overarching engagement strategies that have been found in prior research to capture positive and productive relationships between families and schools: 1) effective two-way communication and relationship building; 2) a welcoming school environment and meaningful opportunities and supports for families; and 3) family advocacy, leadership, and empowerment in school and community spaces.

GOAL 1 SUMMARY

Overall, respondents reported that the schools communicate frequently with families; families generally feel welcome at the schools; the schools offer a wide range of services, supports, and opportunities for families to engage; and many of these opportunities are available because of MPN funds or are more aligned to families' needs because of MPN interventions. These supports and opportunities seem stronger and more embedded at the sites than they did in the first year of implementation. In focus groups, parents uniformly offered that school and MPN-supported staff helped them to participate and engage effectively at the schools, and that they value the supports and the staff who offer them. They indicated, however, that there are subsets of families at each school who are not engaging for a range of reasons, despite the outreach efforts of family engagement staff.

On balance, parent involvement in school activities and in the education of their children is high. According to the 2016 MPN Neighborhood Survey, most parent respondents reported having some kind of contact with the school. Most frequently, they have received a phone call from a teacher, attended a meeting run by and for parents, or attended a class event. Most of the Neighborhood Survey respondents who had a child attending one of the MPN focus schools (about 80% across all four schools) had been contacted by a teacher to discuss how their child was doing in school. Parents with children at the MPN focus schools reported being involved at the school site in a number of ways, most frequently indicating that they had attended a parent advisory or parent council meeting (about 80% across all four schools) or had attended a program or class event (approximately 72% across all four schools). More than 60% had attended a school board meeting. Between 40% and 55% of parents with children in an MPN elementary or middle school reported that they helped out with class activities, trips, or school facilities or had donated money or goods to the school. Even among parents of high-school-age youth at O'Connell, more than 80% of respondents reported that they were contacted by

school or MPN-supported staff about their child's progress at school, or had attended a parent advisory or parent council meeting.

With respect to the development of leadership and advocacy skills, parents at each school reported that MPN-supported staff helped them to engage effectively in the work of site councils, English Learner Advisory Committees (ELAC), and other school-based governance opportunities. We found that this was especially true of parents or guardians of youth with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) who were particularly forthcoming about school and MPN-supported staff efforts to help them understand their legal rights and to participate effectively in an otherwise bewildering process. However, our research did not probe to discern whether, or to what extent, parents were taking on formal leadership roles at the schools or in their communities.

DISCUSSION

Family Engagement Strategy 1: Effective two-way communication and relationship building.
Effective two-way communication and relationship building is characterized by schools and families that engage in positive, bi-directional communication that fosters trust and acknowledges the expertise of both groups (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Epstein, 1995; London, 2016). Our research confirms that family engagement staff at MPN focus schools, including several individuals supported by MPN, bridge communication between families and school administrators, teachers, and programs and services at the school sites. The work of making these connections includes language translation, understanding family needs, knowing the breadth of supports available to make appropriate matches, explaining family context or needs to teachers, and explaining teachers' classroom experiences with students to families to enhance their understanding. As reported by our respondents, MPN focus schools place a high value on frequent communication with parents. Family engagement staff and parent respondents indicated that the schools use a variety of communication modes, including phone calls, emails, texts, flyers, announcements, and word-of-mouth through family engagement staff.

Staff at Bryant, Chavez, and Everett specifically cited building trust with families as critical to their family engagement work. Respondents at these sites explained that this process takes time, as some are reticent to open up or engage at first. School staff who are from the Mission district or have experienced immigrating to the U.S. themselves are a huge asset in building trust with families, as they are viewed as part of the community and generally earn families' trust more quickly. Family engagement staff, school leaders, and parents indicated that consistency and reliability on the part of school staff in their interactions with families is crucial to building that trust and being effective in their work.

Interviewees at Bryant, Chavez, and Everett indicated that the afterschool providers at the schools have important relationships with families, interacting with them at the end of the day and about different aspects of the school experience. Respondents noted that afterschool providers also communicated with key school personnel about families' contexts and challenges.

Respondents described a range of factors that impede two-way communication between families and staff at MPN focus schools. Frequently mentioned was the limited availability of parents to be present and involved at the school due to work obligations. Stressors at home, such as housing instability, domestic abuse, and mental health problems, also affect some parents' ability or willingness to engage with the school. There are also limits to what family engagement staff can do on their own. Parents often reported wanting to have effective direct communications with teachers; however, some parents and family engagement staff observed that not all teachers communicate with families with sufficient frequency, cultural sensitivity, or knowledge of family engagement opportunities and supports at the school.

Family Engagement Strategy 2: A welcoming school environment with meaningful opportunities and supports for families. A school environment that is welcoming to parents and provides resources and services that families value offers parents opportunities to learn about their children's education and to acquire training or skill development that enables them to better support school goals at home (Epstein, 1995; HFRP, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; London, 2016).

In our interviews, parents at the four MPN focus schools reported that, in general, they felt welcomed at the school and that the family engagement staff had supported them and their families. One site also reported that their own

survey of parents yielded responses that indicated families felt welcomed and supported. Interviewees most often mentioned the following services were available to families and played a role in family engagement at the schools:

- *Opportunities to learn how to support their children academically at home*
- *Assistance or appropriate referrals regarding housing needs*
- *Food access, nutrition, and cooking*
- *Resources for financial literacy service*
- *Access to healthcare, including mental health services*
- *Opportunities to learn about student testing and English language redesignation*
- *College knowledge workshops and events*
- *Opportunities for families to be involved in the resolution of students' interpersonal conflicts*

Respondents at all four MPN focus schools specifically mentioned physical spaces at each site that were important to fostering engagement from families. At Bryant and Everett, Parent Rooms were valued as spaces for parents to socialize and build relationships, and as places for parents to get involved with school programs and services. The Wellness Centers at Bryant, Everett, and O'Connell were praised as places where the social worker, nurse, Instituto Familiar de la Raza staff, and other mental health professionals and trainees can interact and offer students and parents support. And at Chavez and Everett, the lunchroom was described as an open space for families to visit their children and share a meal during the day. Interviewees described that these spaces, and the school and MPN-supported staff who cultivate them, have become important for families to build community at the school and for the school to raise awareness about opportunities and services for families.

Another major theme that surfaced in our family focus groups was the importance of family engagement staff who helped parents and guardians to navigate complex social, legal, and bureaucratic systems. Parents of students from all four MPN focus schools mentioned that family engagement staff helped them learn "who to go to, where to go, and how to get help" when needed (e.g., gaining knowledge of school rules and expectations; understanding processes for serving student with disabilities; helping with learning about housing, immigration, child care, health care access, and job training resources). These efforts helped parents to feel connected to the school as a community resource, and parents reported that their children feel welcome in the school by extension.

The caring response helped to build trust among families and youth, even when solutions to problems were beyond the scope of the school. School and MPN-supported staff often reported feeling frustrated when they could not fully solve problems that parents brought to their attention (e.g., a housing eviction or immigration issue). Even so, parents reported that the caring efforts of the staff helped them cope and feel that they had support in the neighborhood even if a problem could not always be resolved through the school-based interventions or referrals.

While family engagement and a welcoming school environment were universally embraced goals, we observed conflicting views or priorities regarding the ultimate purposes of family engagement. Respondents at two MPN focus schools, for example believed that in the absence of a shared and clearly articulated vision or set of ultimate goal priorities, family engagement was less effective than it could be.

Family Engagement Strategy 3: Family advocacy, leadership, and empowerment in school and community spaces. This strategy can be advanced when families have opportunities and supports to advocate for themselves and their children through shared school governance and collective action. Schools can support parent advocacy and empowerment within and beyond their walls by helping families to exercise leadership and build social capital in their community (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Both elementary school sites and the middle school site have developed substantial family advocacy and effective participation norms under MPN's leadership. All four MPN focus schools have parent involvement in Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Site Councils (SSCs), and English Learner Advisory Committees (ELAC). At Bryant, we observed that the family engagement staff has provided informal training for parents (e.g., coaching them and providing protocols for running or leading effective meetings at the school site). At O'Connell, the family focus group for this study was convened by one of the parents, who was also an officer of a school site advisory committee. Effective participation in school site governance organizations is a critical first step for parents in learning the skills and knowledge for broader civic engagement, and democratic participation, self-advocacy, and leadership.

The extent of parent leadership (as opposed to participation) in these bodies, however, appears to vary greatly from site to site. In some cases, family engagement

staff at MPN focus schools provide the leadership and structure to those entities, while parents assume more of that responsibility within others. Some respondents speculated that, because this type of parent involvement is not customary in the schools of their countries of origin in Latin America, parents were not familiar or comfortable taking these leadership roles. In sum, this type of family engagement of parents as independent "outsider" advocates or leaders did not appear to be emphasized in MPN focus schools. No principal we interviewed indicated this type of family engagement was a priority.

Goal 2 – Students Are Connected to Schools and Communities

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines school connectedness as "the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals."[2] A substantial body of research has found that efforts to support both: 1) a positive school learning climate, and 2) productive parent, school, and community ties have the power to improve student connectedness to schools and thus to support student learning and positive youth development.[3]

Our assessment of MPN's efforts focuses on three school culture and climate factors that have been found in the available research to promote student connection to school and community and to predict positive student academic achievement and social and emotional development. These include: 1) a focus on cultivating caring adult and peer-to-peer interpersonal relationships, 2) efforts to promote physical and emotional safety, and 3) efforts to promote positive school-community engagement (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

GOAL 2 SUMMARY

In general, participants we interviewed suggested that the MPN interventions make school a more positive, desirable place for students to be and that students appear to feel more connected to the school as a result of being better supported socially, culturally, and academically.

Across the board, staff in all MPN focus schools and the available data described observable improvements across time in student attendance rates (drops in rates of chronic absence). As illustrated in Figure 1 below, improvements are noted in overall student discipline, including

Figure 1. Annual percentage of students who were suspended by MPN focus school: 2011-12 to 2014-15
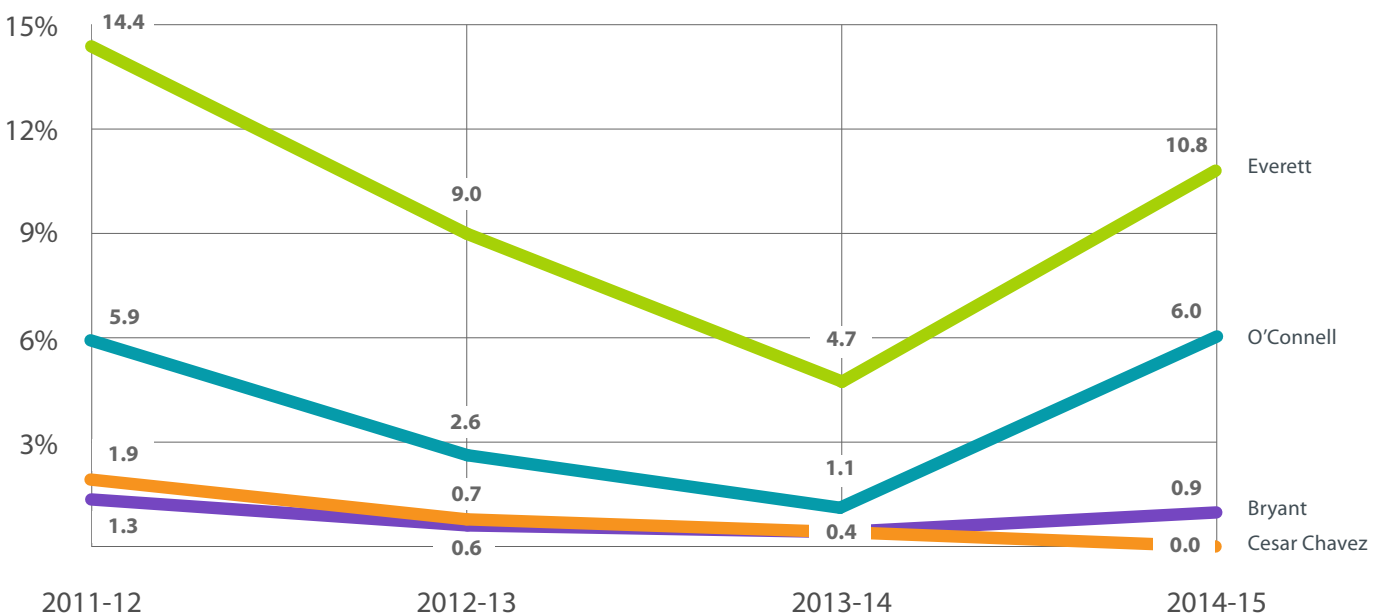
Source: SFUSD administrative files and CORE

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). School connectedness: Strategies for increasing protective factors among youth. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/AdolescentHealth/pdf/connectedness.pdf. Here we construe school-community engagement more broadly than in the prior section, which focused specifically on family engagement.
3 See, e.g., Sampson, Robert J., Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls (1997). *Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multi-variate Study of Collective Efficacy*. Science 277 (5328): 918-24 at authorities cited therein.

significant declines in disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions.

Staff at all schools mentioned at least one of the following MPN-supported measures as associated with positive change: implementation of alternative disciplinary practices and policies (e.g., restorative justice, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, trauma-informed care); improved academic supports and better alignment between classroom academics and afterschool tutoring (e.g., students feel a sense of purpose and belonging on campus and a greater coherence between their supports and expectations in the classroom setting); and concerted efforts to promote multi-culturalism and celebrate diversity as a community resource.

DISCUSSION

Focusing on Caring Interpersonal Relationships. Social interactions between caring adults and students directly affects students' behavioral and emotional engagement in schools and classrooms and provides an "optimal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning," especially for middle school and high school students.[4]

In the MPN focus schools we visited, respondents reported a major effort to adapt district-initiated efforts around restorative practices and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) to promote school connectedness, social and emotional learning, and positive adult-student and peer interactions on school campuses. Teachers and family engagement staff reported receiving substantial professional development resources and sustained attention from district leaders and MPN partners to make restorative practices an overarching framework for improving the way adults approach students' social and emotional development. Often mentioned in the middle- and high school were the use of Community Circles as a culturally-responsive tool to teach social skills such as listening, conscientiousness, and conflict resolution. Community Circles provide teachers, students, and other stakeholders an opportunity to be heard and to offer opposing perspectives in socially open, safe spaces. To be sure, not all staff fully embrace the restorative practices frame. Community engagement staff report that restorative models demand a lot of scarce time and skills from teachers and that they rely on the involvement of families who may not understand or fully

embrace the approach. Nevertheless, most respondents credit restorative practices and PBIS with promoting positive changes in the culture and climate of their schools and improving school-connectedness among youth.

Promoting Physical and Emotional Safety. Feeling safe in school is positively associated with student engagement, persistence, and, ultimately, academic learning and healthy youth development. Recent research suggests that positive school climate, with a focus on safety and supportive rules and norms, is associated with reduced: 1) aggression and violence, 2) bullying behavior, and 3) sexual harassment, regardless of sexual orientation.[5]

When asked about school safety, parent focus group participants typically indicated that prior to enrolling their children, they had heard that their current school was not a safe place, or that the pedestrian passage to the school was dangerous. These parents tended to say that it was a major concern as they considered choosing a school. However, focus group participants consistently told us that they have subsequently found the schools to be very safe and report being satisfied with the responsiveness of school security staff and leadership to their safety concerns. Parents at all four schools reported that the passage to their schools is generally safe. The singular exception came in interviews with parents of youth at Everett, where several parents voiced concerns about bullying on the campus by older youth, both boys and girls. Interviews with school and MPN-supported staff confirm that peer bullying is a continuing concern on the campus but, uniformly, they perceived that the incidence of reported bullying has declined appreciably in the last two years as bullying (both physical and emotional) has been a central focus of awareness-building through implementation of restorative practices. Staff at Everett also indicated that behavioral health services and the services of the San Francisco Beacon Initiative partners have shifted in recent years to a focus on promoting more positive peer-to-peer interactions either through direct instruction on the value of social awareness and tolerance, or through the creation of safe spaces for students to engage in academic pursuits, and to gain an academic identity.

More than physical safety, parents and partner staff emphasized the importance of emotional safety. In this respect, most parents reported that their children were

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4 Vol. 83 Review of Educational Research, at p.363.
5 Vol. 83 Review of Educational Research, at p.362.

happy with their school experiences. Many parents and partner organizations recounted examples of helping students become connected to school by making sure that struggling students had an opportunity to "experience success," either through skill building or homework support in afterschool and in-school settings. Both the school and MPN-supported members of family engagement teams reported a greater focus on identifying and checking-in with students who exhibit social isolation, most notably because of their newcomer or special education status.

While focusing on the important progress that had been made at schools regarding physical and emotional safety, respondents often noted that success with youth continued to be constrained by problems caused by social and economic conditions that overwhelm available solutions. MPN-supported partners and school staff reported that often there were only bad options available to youth whose parents or guardians may be the source of their problems (through abuse, neglect, or depression), or whose problems stem from poverty or housing insecurity. In these cases, staff can help youth and their parents cope with problems, but often cannot fully resolve them. This is a continued source of emotional distress for youth and also for the caring adults in the schools that work with them and their families.

Effective School Community Engagement. Studies by the UChicago Consortium on School Research have found evidence that schools with high relational trust (such as positive social relationships both among educators and between educators and families and community members) are more likely to make changes that improve student achievement. They found that positive school-community and school-family relationships helped to reinforce teacher capacity and promoted a safe and respectful learning climate (Bryk et al., 2010). Given the demography of the MPN neighborhood, we examined also the culturally responsive nature of school-community engagement.

At each site we visited, both school and MPN partner staff reported that the greatest challenges regarding social isolation and school disconnectedness were experienced by newcomer youth who hail from different parts of Latin America, Southeast Asia, and in some cases, Eastern Europe. In this realm, MPN-supported afterschool partners and family engagement staff have taken the lead in organizing numerous community engagement activities, such as school parties and theme-based celebrations that emphasize cultural awareness and opportunities to celebrate the diversity that is evident in the school and community. In the elementary grades staff and partners describe these events as incorporated into playtime and lunchtime activities for children. In the upper grades, partners also try to provide service learning opportunities, cultural field trips, and project-based learning assignments that include a community engagement or cultural knowledge component.

Goal 3 – Students Come to School Ready to Learn

Federal guidelines for school readiness set by the Promise Neighborhood Training and Technical Assistance Center stipulate three readiness targets for all federally-funded Promise Neighborhoods: 1) children enter kindergarten ready to engage in further learning (e.g., age-appropriate language and literacy); 2) children make successful transitions from middle grades to high school; and 3) students are emotionally and physically healthy (e.g., social and emotional development, physical health, and adequate resources such as shelter and nutrition).[6] In the section that follows, we discuss targets 1 and 3 above. We discuss target 2 (successful transitions from middle school to high school) in our review of Goal 4 (Academic Preparation).

GOAL 3 SUMMARY

MPN focus schools implement a number of strategies to support school readiness among children and youth in the neighborhood. The initiative provides financial support to employ a number of school staff and qualified, interdisciplinary professionals who are focused on students' physical, mental, and emotional health. The school leaders and family members we interviewed described these human resources as valuable assets and emphasized the critical importance of interventions to ensuring that students arrive to school ready to engage in learning with their peers and educators. As well, respondents noted the importance of these interventions to supporting the mental health of the adults on campus and developing knowledge among school faculty and staff about the role of trauma in students' ability to learn.

6 See, e.g., Promise Neighborhoods Results Framework, retrieved at: https://promiseneighborhoods.ed.gov/neighborhoods/promise-neighborhoods-results-framework
See, also (Duncan et al, 2007; Blair, 2002; Foundation, 1990) and research cited therein.

DISCUSSION

Readiness for Preschool and Kindergarten. Readiness for preschool and kindergarten includes cognitive, behavioral, social-emotional, and physical abilities (Fantuzzo et al., 2007; Gormley, Phillips, & Gayer, 2008; Magnuson et al., 2004; PCERC, 2008; Valentino & Stipek, 2016). In addition, key MPN partners such as SFUSD and First 5 San Francisco have their own definitions of readiness for preschool-aged children. Given the many meanings of readiness in this context, we did not provide interviewees with a fixed definition of the term. Instead we focused on how interviewees described students' readiness for preschool and kindergarten, as well as the challenges related to readiness. We also examined available results from the standard student readiness assessments employed by SFUSD and MPN partner preschool providers.

San Francisco's Preschool for All (PFA) sites administer the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP) assessment to three-year-olds at the beginning and end of the school year. The assessment includes four developmental levels to describe children's skills: Responding, Exploring, Building,

and Integrating. The assessed skills fall into eight domains: learning and self-regulation; social and emotional development; language and literacy development; English language development; cognition; physical development; History/Social Science; and visual and performing arts. PFA sites in San Francisco consider student scores in the top two performance categories (Building and Integrating) to be associated with age-appropriate functioning. During the 2015-16 year, among PFA sites in the 94110 zip code, which encompasses a good portion of the Mission Promise Neighborhood, no entering three-year-olds met those performance levels in every DRDP domain. By the end of the school year, when site staff assessed children again, growth in the share of children performing at the "ready" levels could be observed in all domains (See Figure 2). However, for all domains, at least one-quarter (and in some cases as many as three-quarters) of assessed children did not reach the level of age-appropriate functioning by the end of the year.

Beyond the formal assessments, preschool staff also observe how students relate to each other and to the adults in the room, and they seek information from family

Figure 2. Percent of three-year-olds at Preschool for All sites in the 94110 zip code meeting top two DRDP performance levels at the beginning and the end of the 2015-16 academic year

Source: MEDA, Annual Progress Report to the U.S. Department of Education, July 2016
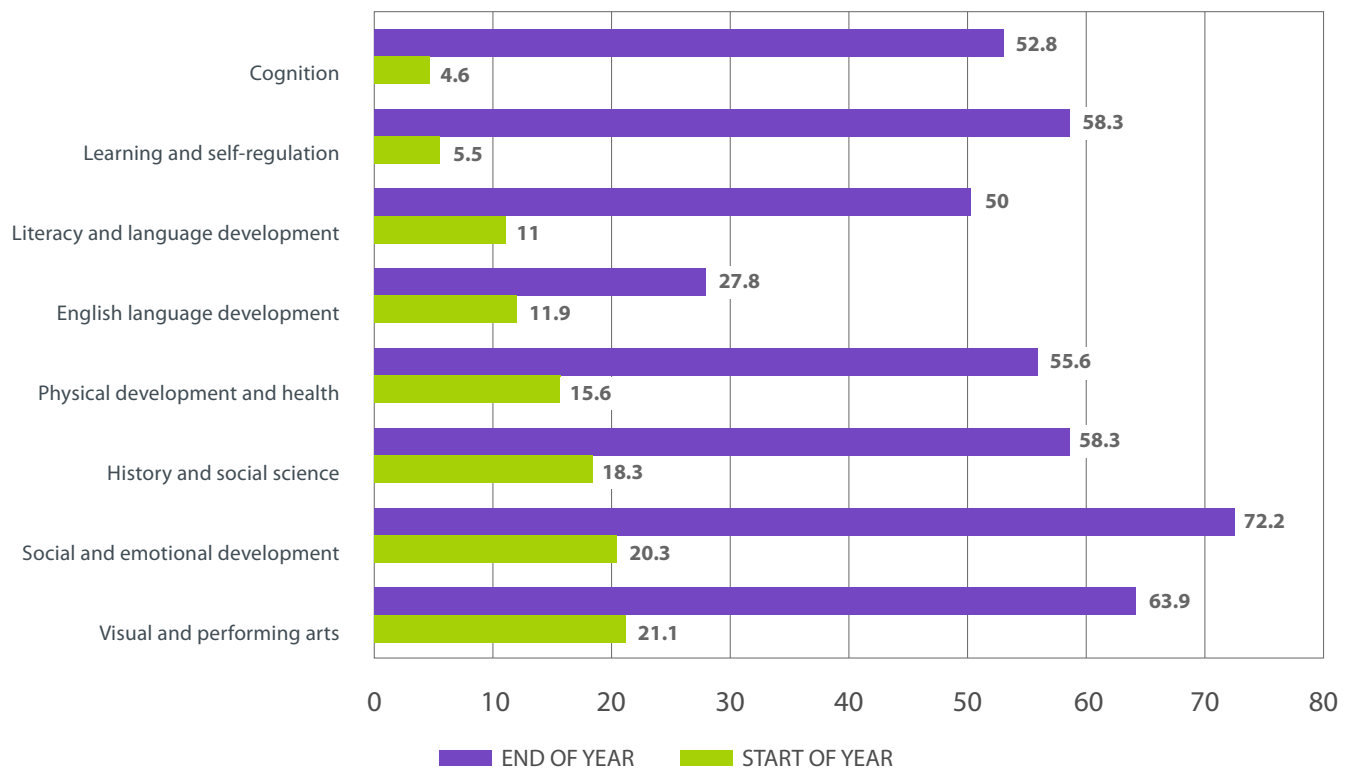
members to assess children's social and emotional readiness for school. They acknowledged that some of their students have experienced challenges at home, including conditions related to poverty and frequent moves. We also learned that attendance is a challenge for preschools in the Mission district. Teachers indicated that, increasingly, they relied on family engagement and support staff to connect with families about attendance issues specifically. Interviewees also explained that part of student readiness for preschool is parent readiness to support their children's learning, both in school and at home. School staff described coaching parents about the structure of the school day and year, the content of the curriculum, and the practices that would support their student's learning at home.

Another aspect of early learning readiness at MPN elementary schools relates to the alignment of learning and practice goals between preschool and kindergarten staff. In our interviews, we heard about promising efforts and early positive signs of more tightly aligned practice between the preschool and the elementary grades, as well as barriers to that alignment. For example, the district brings together preschool and kindergarten teachers annually to share readiness data and talk about implications for preschool and kindergarten instruction. The district has also supported curriculum coaches to create preschool and transitional kindergarten curriculum spirals that align to elementary English/Language Arts and Math Common Core curriculum. Participants also observed that the district supports preschool teachers to complete transition forms for their students. As a result, kindergarten teachers have more information about each student, instructional strategies that preschool teachers have tried, and how well these strategies have worked. The district is beginning a process of entering these data into a database where elementary school staff can access them.

Nevertheless, beyond these short-term district-supported interventions, most day-to-day collaboration appears to happen informally as a result of individual teacher initiative. For example, one respondent described a preschool teacher who brings their students to kindergarten classrooms to read with older students or to acclimate them to the space before the beginning of the next school year. Others reported that some preschool staff initiated opportunities to interact with kindergarten teachers, sharing materials, asking for advice, and building professional relationships. Interviewees at both elementary schools perceived that the preschools at the site were more tightly connected to the rest of the school than in the past. They offered that this tighter connection benefited students and families, who were more likely to

continue into kindergarten from the preschool on-site now than in the past. One school administrator explained that having students from preschool through fifth grade allowed for more coherence in their education, greater continuity in the supports they receive, and more time for families to build relationships and trust with school-based personnel. Most respondents suggested that they would welcome more structured opportunities to engage each other in aligning their practice.

Supplemental Social, Emotional, and Wellness Supports. All four MPN focus schools have a wellness team, including social workers, nurses, mental health counselors, family success coaches, administrators, and others who collaborate on student well-being. These wellness teams are an important part of the MPN approach to addressing the non-academic barriers to students' readiness to learn. One administrator noted that since creating the wellness center, disciplinary referrals to the principal's office had decreased dramatically. Another noted that the wellness center staff played a key role in forming a professional learning community at the school site focused on student health and well-being. Many interviewees expressed that the wellness teams acted as a valuable source of contextual information about what was happening within particular families.

Respondents offered numerous examples of academic issues that turned out to be rooted in health issues (e.g., a student who didn't have glasses that she needed to be able to read, or a student who was acting out in class because of an emotional issue in the home). Primary care, vision, dental, and reproductive health (at O'Connell) were among the most frequently mentioned services offered by respondents as directly related to school readiness.

MPN supports professional development for school staff to better understand the effects of trauma on their students' ability to learn and the practices that help students who experience stress or trauma in their lives outside of school to be better prepared and more receptive to learning activities in school. In addition, some MPN partners, including Instituto Familiar de la Raza and the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Hearts program, address the physical and mental health needs of school faculty and staff. As many interviewees noted, staff experience a great deal of stress, secondary trauma, and frustration in the course of their work. MPN-supported partners teach school staff how to manage their own stress, proactively address mental health needs, and create a healthier work environment.

Supports Embedded in the Classrooms. While all four MPN focus schools surround students with caring adults whose roles are to address non-academic needs at the school site, O'Connell also offers students this kind of support in the classroom. The Student Success Coach model (an adaptation of the Family Success Coach role) at the high school brings coaches into contact with the students in the classroom. This allows the coach to build rapport with students and enables them to promptly address student needs, such as hunger, illness, and emotional distress. Interviewees at O'Connell viewed this approach as a means to help adults form close relationships with students to get them the resources they need and to directly support social-emotional needs in the classroom.

Food Insecurity. In addition to student health needs, interviewees at all four MPN focus schools mentioned food as critical to supporting student learning. While staff did not dwell on the issue of food insecurity, they often mentioned that their schools provide food for students, particularly in the early morning and late afternoon. Beyond the meals provided through the National School Lunch Program, which all students at the focus schools may access, MPN now coordinates a food bank at Chavez and Bryant as well as a farmers market at O'Connell for families who may need it. Respondents also noted that leftover food from school meetings and events is routinely set aside for students. Addressing this basic need has

become a regular function in the MPN focus schools, as teachers and school support staff report that healthy students, and students who are not hungry, learn better and engage more productively in classroom activities.

Chronic Absence. When we considered the readiness of elementary and secondary students in MPN focus schools, chronic absence, defined as student absence for more than 10% of instructional time, emerged as a relevant indicator of both student connectedness to school and readiness to learn. Chronic absence has received a great deal of attention in recent years as a strong flag for student who are experiencing barriers outside of school related to their readiness to learn (Applied Survey Research, 2011; Balfanz et al., 2008; Chang & Romero, 2008; Sanchez, 2012). Figure 3 below shows the share of students who were chronically absent at each of the four MPN focus schools over a four-year period. At three of the four MPN sites, chronic absence decreased between the period prior to MPN implementation and the end of the second year of implementation. At Everett and O'Connell, in particular, we observe substantial drops in chronic absence in 2013-14 and 2014-15 when compared to the prior period.

While many school staff are directly and indirectly responsible for promoting student attendance, we view the chronic absence indicator as a barometer of MPN's and the schools' work to support students and families to arrive each day ready to learn.

Figure 3. Annual rate of chronic absenteeism among all students at the 4 MPN focus schools: 2011-12 to 2014-15

Source: San Francisco Unified School District administrative data and CORE
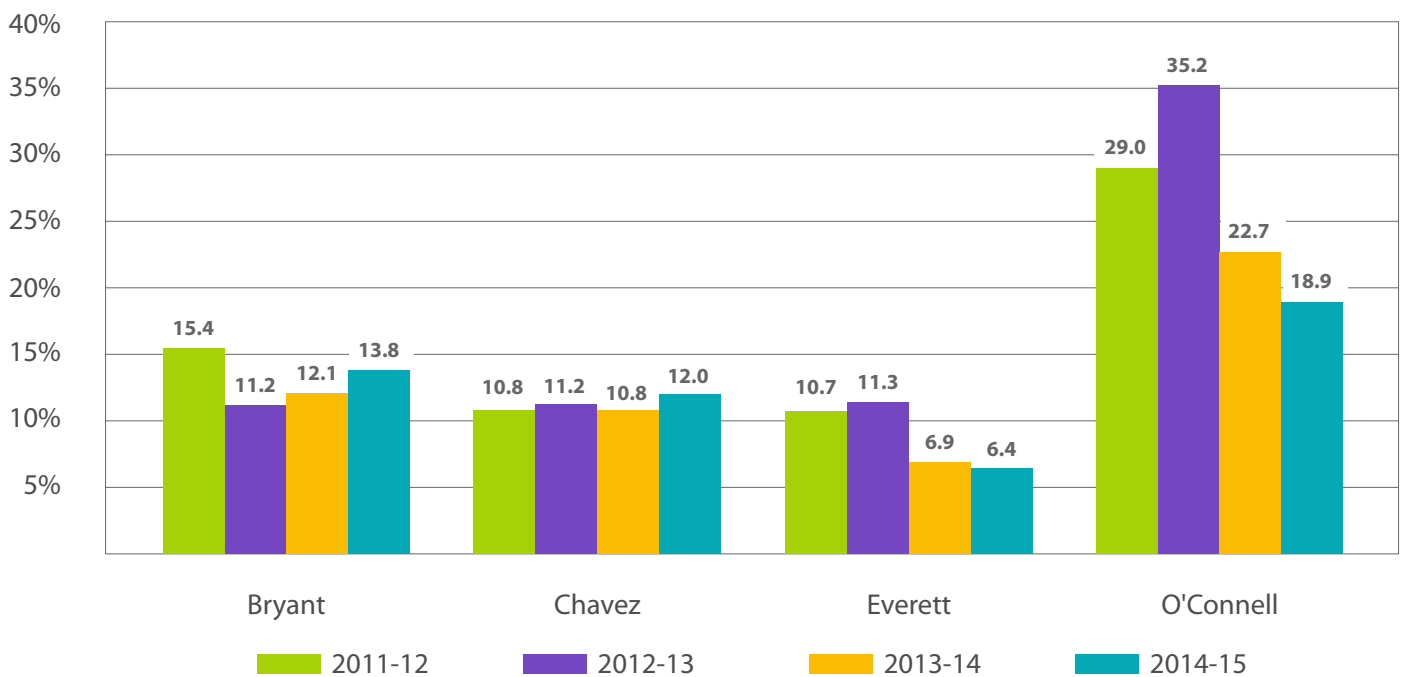
Goal 4 – Students Achieve Academically in Preparation for College, Career, and Civic Life.

Our review of MPN efforts to support student academic learning draws on a framework developed by the UChicago Consortium on School Research which defines instructional capacity as the dynamics of teachers and school partners engaging students effectively in academic learning and in acquiring essential social and emotional learning mindsets and competencies (Bryk et al., 2010). During site visits to schools, we asked site leaders, partner and MPN staff, and teachers to make observations about the relationship between MPN-supported interventions and teaching and learning. We assess respondents' comments in light of two factors that enhance or diminish the effectiveness of instructional capacity and the dynamics of teaching and learning at a school. These factors are: 1) direct supplemental supports for student learning, and 2) organizational and school climate reforms that provide indirect support for teaching and academic learning.
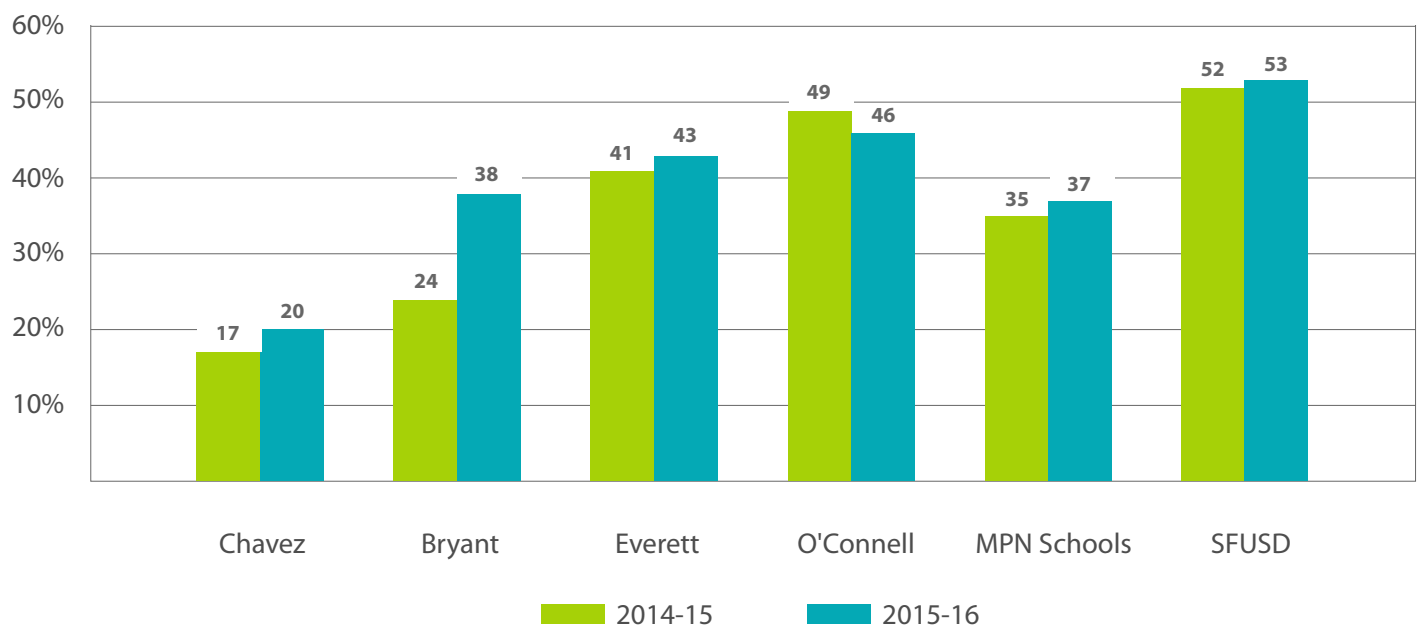
GOAL 4 SUMMARY

The overwhelming majority of respondents at all four schools report that MPN-supported interventions have positively affected the availability and effectiveness of student supports for learning, the availability of instructional time, and the level of student academic engagement in observable ways. Additionally, our review of SFUSD administrative data examined school-level trends in leading indicators of academic engagement and performance, including student performance on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) and graduation rates. While we cannot establish a causal link between MPN interventions and aggregate student outcome trends, we note that the examined school-level, year-to-year student trends are largely consistent with teacher, staff, family, and partner observations obtained during our interviews.
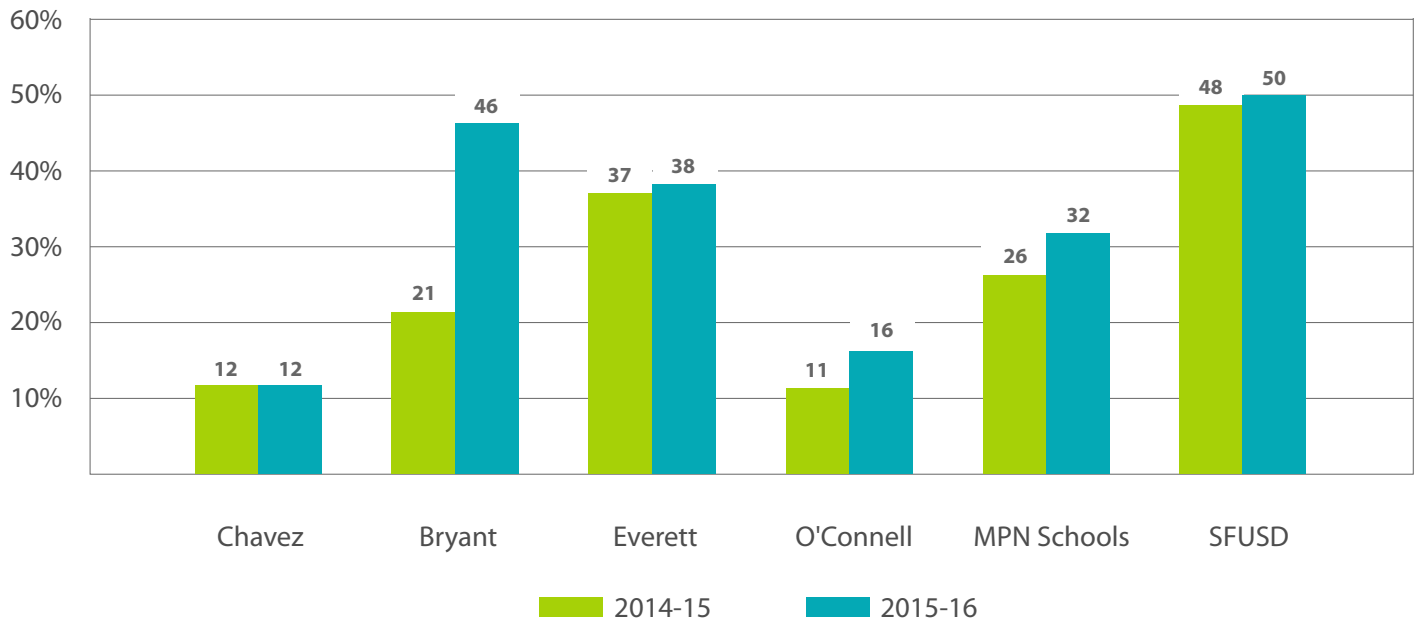
DISCUSSION

Two years of CAASPP standardized test data were available at the time of this report's publication. In Figures 4 and 5 below, we present the percentage of students who reached proficiency on the English/Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments. On the ELA assessment, students at three of the four focus schools demonstrated growth in proficiency, with Bryant indicating dramatic improvement, and O'Connell showing a slightly decline. On the Math assessment, Chavez students' rate of proficiency remained consistently low, while the other three MPN focus schools demonstrated growth in the share who performed at proficient levels. Again, Bryant's growth in proficiency was substantial.

Figure 4. Percent of students meeting proficiency in English/Language Arts on the CAASPP, by MPN focus school and in San Francisco Unified School District: 2014-15 and 2015-16

	Chavez	Bryant	Everett	O'Connell	MPN Schools	SFUSD
2014-15	17	24	41	49	35	52
2015-16	20	38	43	46	37	53

Source: CDE Dataquest

Figure 5. Percent of students meeting proficiency in Math on the CAASPP, by MPN focus school and in San Francisco Unified School District: 2014-15 and 2015-16
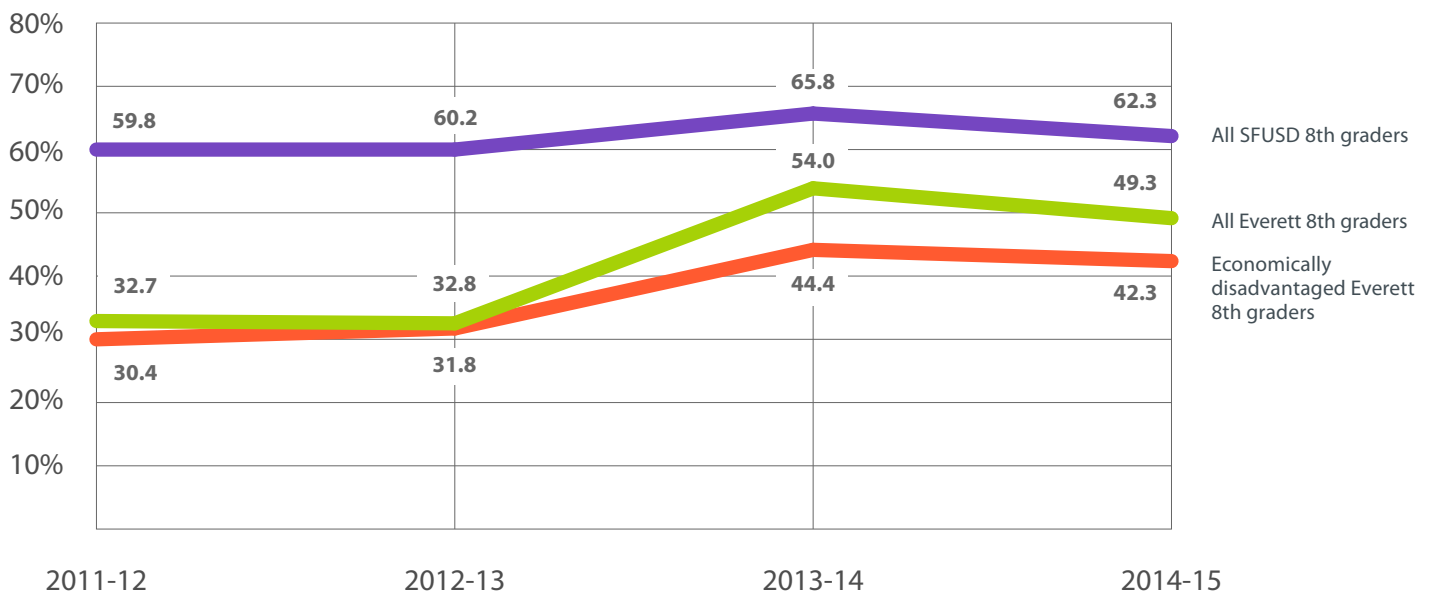
School	2014-15	2015-16
Chavez	12	12
Bryant	21	46
Everett	37	38
O'Connell	11	16
MPN Schools	26	32
SFUSD	48	50

*Source: CDE Dataquest

Looking toward the readiness of older students, educators and researchers have long emphasized the importance of the transition from middle to high school to secondary academic achievement (Alspaugh, 1998; Hertzog & Morgan, 1998; Isakson & Jarvis, 1999; Mizelle & Irvin, 2000). Based on a review of many characteristics of eighth grade students, the researchers working with the CORE districts in California[7] identified three characteristics that, when taken together, formed an indicator that was highly predictive of students' success in high school. These characteristics are: having a grade point average of 2.0 or better; having course grades no lower than a C; and attending school more than 90% of the time. Figure 6 below shows the percentage of students at Everett demonstrating high school readiness by this measure across four years. The figure also shows this four-year trend for economically disadvantaged students at Everett and for all 8th grade students enrolled in SFUSD.

Figure 6. Percent of eigth grade students meeting the CORE high school readiness indicator: 2011-12 to 2014-15

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
All SFUSD 8th graders	59.8	60.2	65.8	62.3
All Everett 8th graders	32.7	32.8	54.0	49.3
Economically disadvantaged Everett 8th graders	30.4	31.8	44.4	42.3

Source: San Francisco Unified School district administrative data and CORE

Figure 7. Cohort graduation rate for students at John O'Connell High School and in SFUSD: 2011-12 to 2014-15
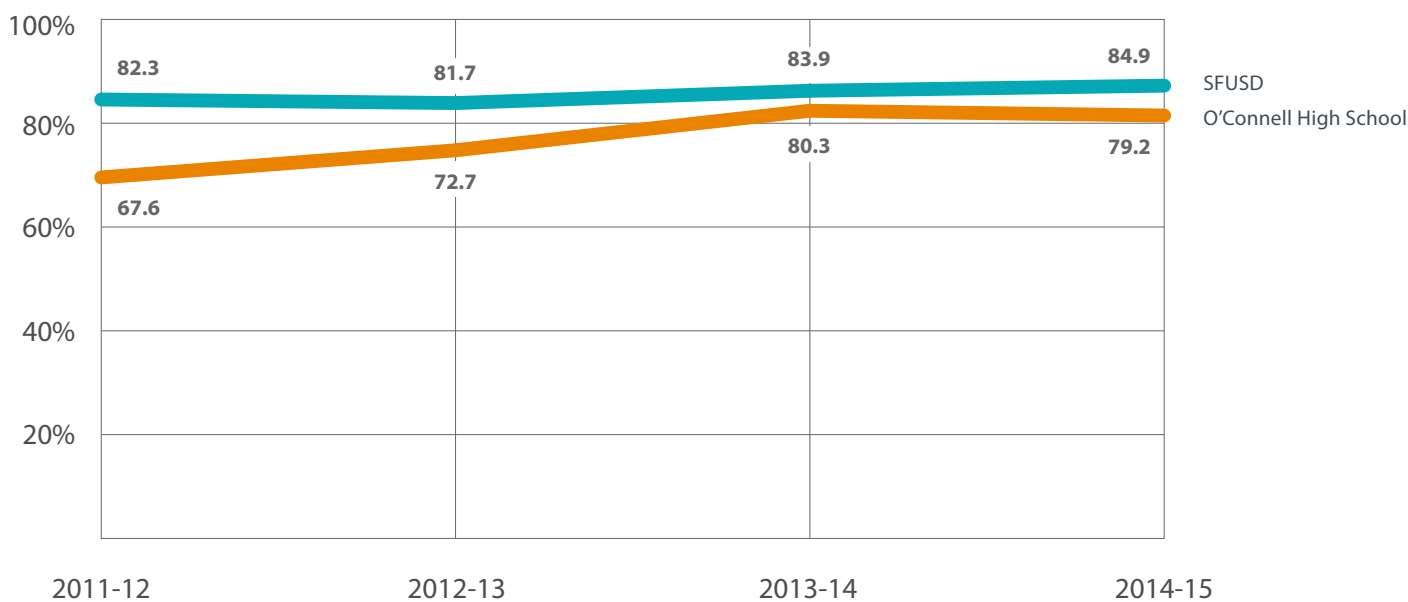
Source: Graduation data retrieved from the CDE DataQuest online portal: http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/

In the four most recent years for which cohort graduation rates were available, the share of O'Connell students who reached graduation grew approximately 12 percentage points. And in the two latter years, the school's graduation rate began to approach the SFUSD average.

Ample research indicates that academic, social and emotional learning is directly affected by the availability, organizational coherence, and effectiveness of direct supplemental student supports for learning, including tutoring and other expanded learning opportunities beyond classroom instruction. Several MPN interventions are specifically designed to support academic learning by providing effective supplemental supports to students in partnership with community-based organizations. We also examine staff and MPN-supported partner observations about the importance and effect of organizational supports that are intended to improve the overall climate for learning, including health, behavioral health, and family interventions that are designed to support student academic engagement.

Standards-aligned Tutoring and Mentoring. Staff across the schools saw significant improvements in students' academic learning that they report can be traced, at least in part, to the improvement and quality of Common Core State Standards-aligned tutoring and academic mentoring evident in all the MPN focus schools. At the elementary level, teachers often remarked on the strong alignment between supplemental reading supports provided by afterschool partners

and the standards for reading instruction applied by classroom teachers. According to teachers and site leaders, this level of coherence provides students with a consistent developmental pathway for reading and the acquisition of critical literacy and English Language Arts skills. Likewise, middle and high school teachers and afterschool partners remarked on the level of collaboration and routine consultation between teachers and afterschool providers—both regarding curriculum and the academic support needs of individual students. They reported that this increase in collaboration on academic standards promoted a more coherent through-line for students as they moved between classrooms and outside tutoring.

At most sites, principals seemed to encourage MPN afterschool partners to spend time in classrooms observing lessons and collaborating with teachers, and also to attend some grade-level meetings of teachers. At O'Connell, the level of collaboration was the most formalized as the leadership at that school has made the "embeddedness" of afterschool partners and MPN-supported staff into classrooms a structural feature of the school design. O'Connell partners were assigned to morning or afternoon shifts in classrooms where they provided real-time interventions as Student Success Coaches supervised by teachers. One teacher at O'Connell remarked that these practices of embedding academic and postsecondary preparation services into classrooms and across the entire day made instructional supports more immediate and reached more students.

Other Expanded Learning Opportunities. Respondents at all sites, but especially those at the middle and high schools, commented on the availability and importance of a wide array of expanded learning opportunities for youth in the Mission Promise Neighborhood. These interventions include co-curricular learning or enrichment (e.g., music, dance, and organized sports), gender-specific mentoring, and direct instruction in deeper learning skills, such as note-taking, study habits, how to work in groups, and time management skills. The implementation of these supplemental or expanded learning opportunities aims to increase the effectiveness of student engagement in academic learning, as well as to expand the range of learning activities available to students across the entire day. Teachers often mentioned that although not directly related to academics, expanded learning opportunities played an observable role in promoting school-connectedness among youth and the availability of more academically focused caring adults on the campus help to build the study, persistence, and student collaboration skills that translated well into more effective classroom learning.

In the high school grades, community service opportunities and work-based internships and experiences were also mentioned as important factors in promoting academic success. At the middle school, teaching staff were very positive about the quality and diversity of expanded learning opportunities available to their students. They noted, however, that participation in summer learning and afterschool opportunities was not as high as they would like to see, engaging only about half of their students across the year by their estimation.

Supports for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Teachers, school staff, and school partners often mentioned how MPN partners and funded services worked to provide direct support for students' social and emotional learning including mentorship programs and alternative disciplinary practices. Staff reported that attention to building SEL skills was especially important in MPN focus schools due to the high degree of trauma and difficult circumstances experienced by many students, particularly those from newcomer immigrant families. Although we did not detect that either the school district or its MPN-supported partners pursued an explicit SEL agenda or curriculum, staff often mentioned SEL in the context of their work to implement restorative justice practices or tiered PBIS for all students. The engagement of all teachers and support staff in restorative practices and PBIS was intended to promote improved school discipline and behavior, but also

to cultivate age-appropriate SEL skills in youth, including most notably self-management, conscientiousness, and social awareness.

Senior staff, with multiple years of experience in their respective schools regularly reported gradual year-over-year improvements in over-all student SEL learning in areas of responsibility, self-control, and self-awareness. They also noted that their campuses were notably calmer (e.g., in the hallways during transition periods). According to most respondents, students have access to substantially more social-emotional supports within the community school model as there are better systems in place and more dedicated staff available to identify students that need additional support and connect them to the right services.

More Time for Learning. Interview respondents commented on how MPN supports helped to make more time available for teaching and learning in classrooms for both teachers and students. Most notably, teachers often cited the behavioral health and wellness services as helping to maximize the time available for learning activities. Teachers frequently noted that wellness services improve students' readiness to learn, and allow teachers to focus more on direct instruction as they have more support in addressing student's other needs. Several teachers also report that the presence of more caring adults who can work directly with youth allows teachers more time to plan and reflect on their own practice and to collaborate with colleagues.

Another set of services critical to improving instructional time on task is the presence of the family success coaches, community school coordinators, and family liaisons who can connect quickly via phone with parents of students who are chronically tardy or absent from class. One teacher observed that these early morning calls, as well as positive calls to parents (about good student behavior) contributed to better attendance and academic engagement by students in her classes. Several teachers and site administrators noted that making these calls would be impractical for teachers who might have 125 or more students, or who can make calls only at times of day when parents may be harder to reach. As well, individual calls to parents may consume 5-30 minutes each, adding to the challenge for teachers who are responsible for many students.

Staff at all MPN focus schools mentioned at least one intervention regarding school discipline (e.g., PBIS, restorative practices, individual student counseling, or in-

class intervention by a Student Success Coach) as clearly linked to a reduction in disciplinary referrals, suspensions, or disruptive behavior. As a result, there is additional learning time available for specific students as well as for all students in a given class. Respondents indicated that the residual effect on teachers may not be an actual decrease in workload, but rather, a workload that is more focused on teaching and learning, where teachers don't feel like they are on their own to deal with individual student issues and problems that could consume class time, and where their students can better learn and grow.

Improved School Climate for Teaching and Learning. Earlier in this report we examined how attention to school climate affects student readiness to engage in schools by, for example, promoting better school attendance and school discipline. Here we assess staff and teacher comments about the effect on classroom teaching and learning of these MPN efforts to improve overall school climate and parent-school connections.

Veteran teachers – those who had been at their school sites four or more years – were fairly uniform in their opinion that the increased presence of caring adults who attend to the academic, social, and emotional lives of youth have greatly improved the overall climate for learning at their schools and classrooms. Schools are perceived by staff as more orderly and calm through the day, and that this orderliness creates a safer space for young people to cultivate academic identities and to engage with learning. Teachers, partner staff, and family members also reported that neighbors and parents also have a more positive view of the schools' climate and safety, which helped parents feel comfortable entrusting their children with afterschool and expanded learning time activities at the school site.

At Chavez and Bryant, respondents also credited school partners' efforts to create a positive school climate that values learning and promotes students' academic identities and academic engagement. At O'Connell and Everett, partners have focused on creating a college and career-going culture, including better structured afterschool activities that seek to make learning fun, so that there are safe places to learn. These efforts include approaches such as better structured and supported study halls, and more academic interest clubs, field trips, college visitations, and community service opportunities. Such activities foster a sense of social awareness and opportunities to learn other SEL and academic skills while engaged in projects that are relevant to students' communities and interests.

Building Trust with Families and Community that Supports Teaching and Learning. As noted earlier, a central concern of MPN school-based efforts, is to create a more welcoming environment for families to be present at school, particularly in the elementary schools. The increased presence of families in schools, in turn, is reported by teachers and school leaders to contribute to an environment conducive to academic engagement, even for those students whose parents do not engage with the school. Staff often attribute these school climate outcomes to tighter communication with families that is supported by the Family Success Coaches who bring cultural and language competencies to their work and the dedicated time to hold these relationships with parents and guardians.

In focus groups, parents report that a key aspiration is that their children should succeed academically where they themselves have not, and they often credit the family engagement teams (family success coaches, community school coordinators, and family liaisons) with helping them to learn how they can support their children's academic learning. At the elementary school level especially, MPN-supported staff explained how they look for opportunities to coach parents on how to read to their children, how to support homework, and the importance of making sure that children get enough sleep. One social worker at a school talked about how MPN-supported staff work to help parents envision success for youth so that they can help to foster academic mindsets (e.g., growth mindset and self-efficacy) among parents. Focus groups with families also made clear that outreach by wellness and behavioral support staff at the schools have been critical for parents of students with disabilities and those who have tier 3-classified children. These staff help to find and remove barriers to academic engagement and learning for children who have high and intensive needs. Taken together, most teachers interviewed indicated that the intensive outreach and goodwill that partner organizations have built with families has "increased [academic] production in class" as well as improved behavior and regular attendance.

Concluding Observations

In this final section, we conclude with observations drawn from our respondent interviews regarding MPN program implementation focusing on the operational strategies that characterize MPN's effort to advance greater coordination of effort and resources around shared goals. These strategies,

as presented in the MPN infographic depicted on page 3 of this report, include efforts to: 1) promote goal alignment and, where necessary, goal prioritization among MPN-supported partners, 2) strategically adapt the work of MPN staff and partners to their contexts and community needs, and 3) build structures and norms of interaction among partners (including data sharing) that foster continuous learning and improvement. The fourth operational strategy, promoting advocacy and building public will on behalf MPNs target population, is discussed separately.

1. Promoting Goal Alignment

A central prerequisite to effective collective action is that partners share agreement on goals and strategies to achieve them. The large body of interviews conducted for this study suggest that there is very high degree of agreement and alignment of effort around a discrete set of fundamental academic and social and emotional learning goals for youth in the MPN focus schools. In this regard, MPN partners (including SFUSD district leadership) have taken the lead in centering school-based responses on restorative practices, trauma-informed care, and culturally-sensitive family engagement. It is also clear that goal alignment has benefited enormously from district-aligned professional development on the Common Core that has been extended to key MPN-supported partners, and conversely training or individual coaching on trauma-informed care and restorative practices that have been made available by MPN-supported partners to district employees and to other school- and community-based providers.

In some cases, the convergence around goals has taken more time than respondents would have liked. This has been the case, with respect to the evolution of goals and priorities regarding family engagement as well as the acceptance of the Family Success Coaches in the MPN focus schools. In many ways, this trial-and-error approach to goals is a structural feature of the distributed leadership model that MPN employs. Because adherence cannot be commanded a priori, collaborating parties have to negotiate and build trust on disputed issues or about how to incorporate new roles into existing institutional arrangements before concerted action can take place. But here, too, our respondents report that, compared to the first 18 months of MPN implementation, there is much greater alignment on the goals and activities to be pursued by the community school coordinators and Family Success Coaches.

2. Promoting Strategic Adaptation

MPN implementation began with a road map laid out in the funding proposal to the Department of Education. However, as is common for such initiatives, implementation has necessitated adaptation. The role of Family Success Coaches, has adapted in response to the priorities of the school site leaders and to the collective skills and needs of the family engagement staff at their sites. For example, while Family Success Coaches at the elementary level meet with families to assess their needs and make referrals to appropriate service providers, as MPN planned, the Family Success Coaches also regularly support the work of family liaisons and community school coordinators in planning and executing events, creating informational materials, and conducting outreach to families. At the middle school, the Family Success Coach has developed a focus area based on his particular expertise and rapport with newcomer families and young men who need support. And the role of the Family Success Coach at the high school level has adapted the most. There, the Family Success Coach is officially a "student success coach," embedded with students and teachers in the classroom, working to help students address a range of challenges. In that setting, the Family Success Coach has contact with parents or guardians as needed, but their primary service is to students rather than their families. That these types of adaptation have occurred is not surprising. A question as the work proceeds is how those evolving roles can remain tied to both the priorities of the schools and of the initiative, and how can MPN support strategic adaptation of roles and partnerships so that they are responsive to multiple goals.

3. Promoting Continuous Learning and Improvement

A central premise of the national Promise Neighborhood Initiative is that successful collaboratives should commit to "results-based accountability" as a framework for guiding their planning and implementation efforts.[8] This is challenging when partners must engage in a learning process to ascertain how best to test their initial theories of change and to adapt their organizational and operational inputs to evolving circumstances. To meet this challenge, MPN partners have gradually come to embrace structures and norms of continuous learning and improvement that are more in line with iterative cycles of inquiry and the formation

8 See e.g., http://www.promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org/sites/default/files/focusing-on-results-in-promise-neighborhoods.pdf

of formal and informal learning communities.[9] But the formation of these norms has been slow. While MPN partners convened a few times in the first two years of the initiative, MEDA took a more proactive leadership role in Year Three to convene partners with greater structure and intention. These quarterly partner meetings have generally been well attended by MPN partners and other stakeholders. However, our interviews indicate that many MPN staff and partners have a desire to meet more frequently, to be more aware of the work of others involved in the Initiative, to learn from the expertise that exists within MPN, and to focus inquiry and learning around more targeted areas for improvement. In short, there is a desire among many we spoke with to be more engaged with MPN as a professional learning community (PLC), provided the content of the work of that PLC is focused and relevant. For example, the MPN community school coordinators convene themselves on an ad hoc basis to share their professional experiences and to collaborate. And the MPN early learning manager convenes MPN early learning partners on a regular basis. We perceived from our interviews that there is an appetite among other MPN partners for this type of smaller group learning and collaboration in service of greater coordination and efficacy.

Promoting Advocacy and Public Will on Behalf of the Target Population

This study has focused on MPN's school-based interventions. Nevertheless, respondents generally reinforced the continuing and evolving need for MPN partners, including most notably MEDA and Instituto Familiar de La Raza, to continue allied efforts to engage in policy advocacy on a number of fronts beyond the neighborhood that affect youth academic engagement and social and emotional learning. These include several contextual factors that came up consistently as constraints to MPN strategic action. Although progress was still evident along all four goal areas, respondents often noted that progress was constrained by factors that were beyond their control or that could not be fully addressed given the place-based, school-centered strategies that were implemented. The issues that respondents believed were ripe for policy advocacy are summarized below.

• **Challenges related to the need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform.** Respondents report that the spikes in migration of unaccompanied and other newcomer immigrants into SFUSD schools, right as MPN implementation began, accelerated demographic change in the Mission district to a pace that was not fully anticipated. The school district reports that there were 1,029 newcomer students enrolled in SFUSD schools in the 2014-15 school year, 1,591 newcomer students in the 2013-14 school year, and 840 newcomer students in the 2012-13 school year.[10] Reports from the Migration Policy Institute make clear that this spike in the flow of migrants was both historically unprecedented and includes a disproportionate flow of undocumented migrants fleeing political instability, persecution, and social violence.[11] One critical consequence of this shift was to accelerate housing competition in a neighborhood where the growth of technology-sector workers is already pushing housing costs up and causing housing insecurity and instability for those least able to keep up with these costs.

• **The need for polices to support the working poor.** Providers and families report increasing pressure for both parents of school-aged children to take on second jobs and for women to seek childcare so that they may enter the low-wage, unskilled workforce. We do not know the full extent of this problem, but participants reported it without prompting and it often came up in the context of housing costs. School-based personnel report that this trend is felt by both elementary and secondary school-aged children as parents are increasingly absent from the home.

• **Addressing unmet needs for child care.** The supply, access, and regulatory complexity of publicly provided child care for low-income families came up fairly often in interviews.

• **Combating housing insecurity and homelessness.** While acknowledging that housing insecurity is already an issue animating local and regional public officials, there remains a reported gap in both advocacy and available solutions for undocumented or mixed-immigration status families to navigate the current housing crisis. Homelessness or "virtual homelessness" among MPN youth remains a recurrent theme. This

9 See, e.g., Bryk, Anthony et.al. (2015). "Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better," (Harvard Education Press, Cambridge, MA).
10 As reported in the San Francisco Examiner, August 11, 2014, "SF schools Preparing for Increase in Unaccompanied Immigrant Students," retrieved online at: http://www.sfusd.edu/en/news/media-coverage/2014/08/sf-schools-preparing-for-increase-in-unaccompanied-immigrant-students.html
11 See, e.g., Pierce, Sarah (2015). "Unaccompanied Child Migrants in U.S. Communities, Immigration Court, and Schools. (Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC).

is problematic insofar as school personnel report varying procedures for the identification, referral, and intervention of youth who are homeless or experience housing insecurity.

• **Understanding and addressing food insecurity among MPN families.** The topic of food insecurity among youth and their families in MPN focus schools came up often in interviews with school and provider interviewees. The sources of this continuing phenomenon in a food-rich city like San Francisco are beyond the scope of our research, but bear further examination and respondents often urged advocacy on behalf of economically distressed families.

• **Advocating for greater culturally sensitive and trauma-informed care in the broader MPN community.** As noted earlier, many of the social workers and family engagement staff we interviewed reported that their work with vulnerable newcomer youth only scratched the surface of trauma-informed care given that children and youth were often affected by trauma experienced by family members not within the purview of school-based staff. These staff often observed that there is a need to reach parents, caretakers, and other extended family in the community who are also experiencing the effects of trauma but may not have access to culturally-appropriate mental health care or therapy. This theme was often also intimated by family members in focus groups who mentioned their own struggle with trauma, depression, and anxiety.

Finally, we note that some MPN staff and partner organizations have observed that the school is an ideal venue for efforts to organize parents to become more civically engaged and to become a political force for advocacy around children, youth, and community development. While we note some initial efforts on this front in some schools, it was not the norm. In part, we observe that fostering parent empowerment or civic engagement is not a widely embraced role for school-based family engagement staff. School leaders, in particular emphasized the importance of family engagement focused on building relational trust between parents and school-based staff. This focus on trust and two-way communication around academic goals has taken precedence over efforts to organize parents around civic engagement more broadly.

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