

Implementation Findings from HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program

2017- 8 School Year Annual
Evaluation Report

2018




HOME WORKS!
THE TEACHER HOME VISIT PROGRAM

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Introduction

HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program is a community-based, non-profit organization, serving the greater St. Louis area and central Missouri. HOME WORKS! partners with early childhood education (ECE) centers and K-12 schools to promote parent and family engagement in education to increase student learning and school success. The HOME WORKS! organization trains teachers in predominantly lower income and/or underperforming schools to better connect with parents and families to engage them in the learning process and to provide them with resources to maximize children's positive school outcomes. Teachers and other school staff conduct home visits and host family events in the school setting, including family dinners and classroom-based learning sessions, to foster positive, productive home-school connections. The program focuses on building quality parent and teacher relationships and promoting positive orientations toward school as a strategy to increase student engagement, prevent excessive absenteeism or problem behaviors, and improve academic achievement. The goals of the HOME WORKS! program model align with provisions in Missouri state law, which require all public school districts to adopt policies encouraging effective involvement of parents and families in support of the education of their children. §167.700 R.S.Mo.

The HOME WORKS! organization funds annual evaluations of program activities and outcomes to assess implementation quality and effectiveness. The program contracts with Evaluation, Management, and Training (EMT) Associates, Inc., an evaluation research and technical consulting firm, to conduct a process evaluation of the program 'as implemented' each year. HOME WORKS! is also completing its second year partnering with Concentric Research, Inc. to support an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) funded randomized controlled trial (RCT) to assess the impact of teacher home visit participation on student academic and behavioral outcomes. Results of the RCT will be available for public release in Spring 2019.

Evaluation Approach

The overarching goal of the 2017-18 annual evaluation effort was to establish a data-driven process for identifying lessons learned through implementation to support program improvements, sustainability, and future replication. The 2017-18 school year marked a time of transition for the HOME WORKS! organization, as well as a period of expansion with respect to the

number of schools participating. This year the program partnered with 27 ECE programs, public schools, and charter schools in 2017-18, as compared to 14 schools in 2016-17.

This program growth prompted a renewed focus on assessing internal management and operational structures to ensure that new schools had sufficient levels of readiness to meet program expectations and could be adequately supported by the HOME WORKS! organization, and that sound monitoring and accountability provisions were in place to maximize school effectiveness. As such, much of the focus of the evaluation effort this school year was on providing technical consulting to the HOME WORKS! administrative team to support efforts to strengthen management practices.

The evaluation team also continued to conduct standard measurement, data collection and analysis activities to monitor school performance and to gather feedback from stakeholders regarding program implementation quality and perceived outcomes. This work involved project-wide measurement of school, teacher, and family participation, and fidelity to the program model for all 27 active schools. The evaluation approach also included a more focused assessment of two model variants— the Parent-Teacher Learning Team (PTLT) model and the secondary school model. The purpose of these focused analyses was to learn more about how alternatives to the standard model were being implemented in selected schools, and to inform discussions about whether schools should have greater discretion in customizing model components to better fit the needs and preferences of their unique school contexts.

Data Collection Activities

Evaluation findings were informed by multiple data collection components, including the following:

School administrator interviews (n=8). School administrators and site coordinators from participating middle schools, high schools, and PTLT schools (n=8) participated in informal semi-structured interviews with the program evaluator to document how programs were being implemented and to identify any initial implementation challenges. Information documented through site interviews was shared with program staff and was used to inform organizational planning processes.

Field observation. The evaluation team lead attended a PTLT family dinner and classroom-based instructional sessions mid-year at one of two PTLT elementary schools to observe the program in operation. Observations were shared with program staff and were used to inform organizational planning processes.

Online home visit logs (n=2,758). Teachers and school staff are required to enter information about each home visit into an online visit log within 24 hours of completing a home visit. The log provides detailed information about each visit including date, time, location, presence of family members, characteristics of the child, and teacher perceptions of the visit. Each year the teacher home visit log is refined as needed as part of a continuous quality improvement effort. Information from online visit logs is used to measure program outputs for all active schools relative to established performance objectives.

Parent-Teacher Learning Team (PTLT) surveys (n-22). Teachers and other school staff who participated in the PTLT program model were invited to respond to a brief online survey at the conclusion of the school year to provide feedback on the program model and to share perceptions of student outcomes.

Secondary school teacher surveys (n=52). Teachers and other school staff from participating middle schools and high schools were asked to respond to a brief end-of-year survey to provide feedback on the home visit experience and to share perceptions of student outcomes resulting from home visit participation.

Parent feedback forms (n=540). Parents and family members who attended family dinners and PTLT sessions were asked to respond to brief surveys to provide feedback on their experiences with teacher home visits.

Summary

The 2017-18 report compiles data from these multiple sources to describe HOME WORKS! program implementation and to provide measurement of performance relative to established program objectives. The report also summarizes teacher and parent perceptions of their experiences with the program and identifies implementation strengths and challenges from the perspective of key stakeholders that may inform future replication and sustainability efforts.

HOME WORKS! Program Overview

The HOME WORKS! program goal is to build trusting, quality relationships between parents and teachers and to promote the adoption of effective parenting practices that will help children succeed academically. HOME WORKS provides leadership, training, and coordination, offers stipends for school-level coordinators, sponsors family dinners and other school-based events, and shares the cost of teachers' extra service pay with schools to help compensate teachers for their program involvement.

The HOME WORKS! organization is governed by a Board of Directors and is managed by a core administrative team that includes a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Chief Operating Officer (COO), a Director of Program Operations, and a team of Program Leaders assigned to each school who provide guidance and support for implementation and who are strongly committed to the program's mission and vision. HOME WORKS! also benefits from collaboration and funding support from numerous community and corporate partners and donors.

HOME WORKS! Program Models

HOME WORKS! supports multiple program models that vary with respect to program location (school- and home-based versus home-based only), populations of focus (early childhood through high school), and program components, and that share a core emphasis on establishing parent-teacher learning partnerships. These program models include the following:

Pre-K/Elementary School Model

The HOME WORKS! school-wide elementary school model includes formal training for school staff, two home visits per school year, and two family dinners. The school-wide model is typically implemented by teachers in early childhood education centers and elementary school settings. Schools that implement the school-wide model are expected to engage at least 40% of all classroom teachers and to encourage broad-based or universal involvement of students and families within those classrooms to the extent feasible. For the 2017-18 school year, 16 elementary schools and 2 ECE programs implemented the school-wide model.

Secondary School Model

The secondary school model is a variation of the school-wide model that has been adapted for secondary school settings. The secondary school model identifies students for home visits based on indicated needs for academic or behavioral support. Home visits are conducted by paired teams of teachers and school counselors who are knowledgeable of the student's academic performance. Schools conduct two home visits and two family dinners. At the high school level, home visits initially focus on 9th grade students with the intent of supporting school transitions and add grade levels each year of participation. For the 2017-18 school year, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools implemented the secondary school model.

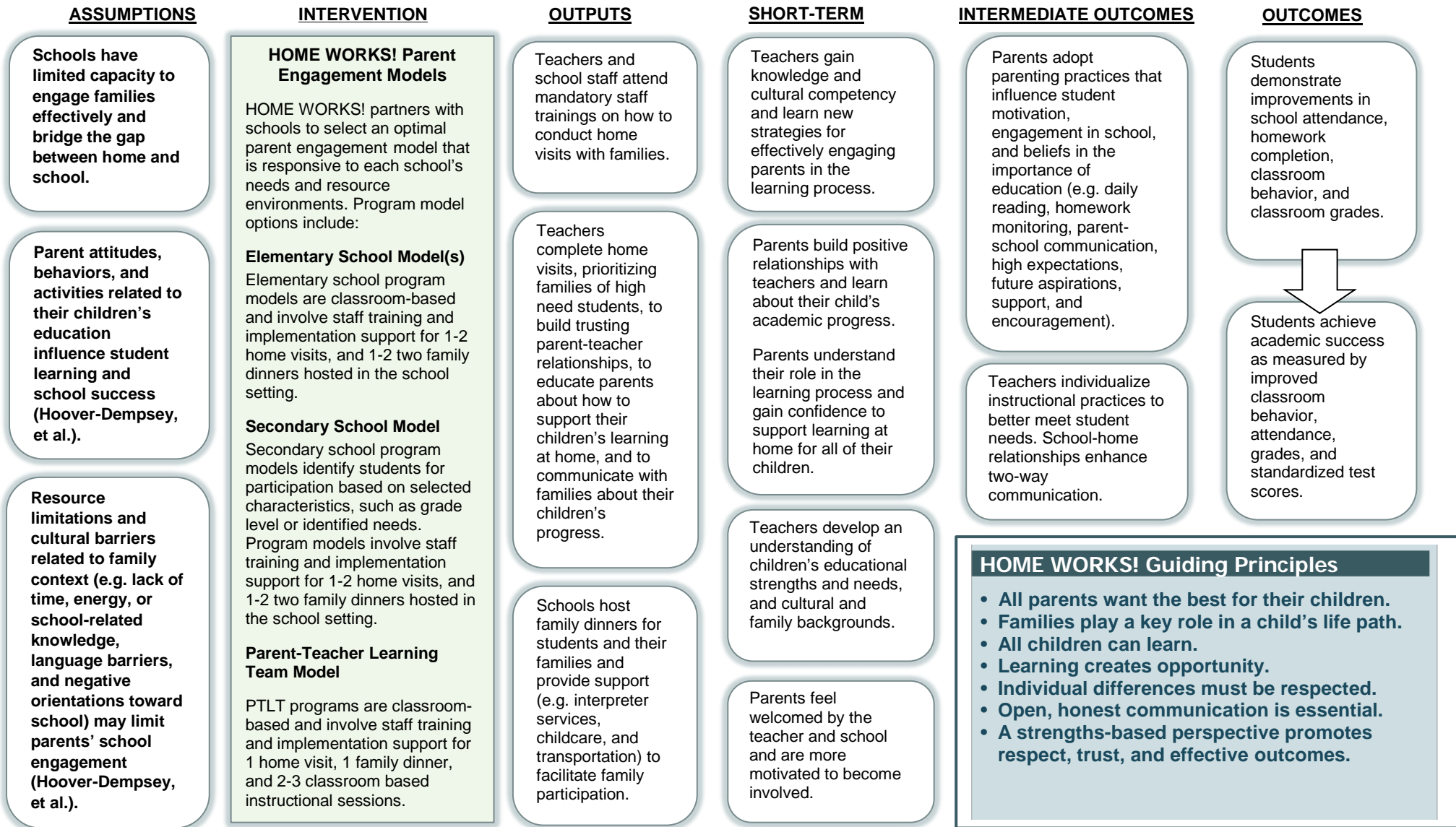
Parent-Teacher Learning Teams (PTLT)

The Parent Teacher Learning Team (PTLT) is a variation of the standard school-wide model that combines one teacher home visit with school-based parent engagement activities, including parent-teacher conferences and classroom-based instructional sessions for parents and other family members. For the 2017-18 school year, the PTLT model was implemented in two elementary schools.

HOME WORKS! Program Logic

For the first time in the 2017-18 school year, HOME WORKS! began to discuss whether schools should be granted greater discretion to define an optimal program model for their unique school contexts. This discussion was prompted, in part, by school request, and, in part, as an acknowledgement of the fact that many schools had previously struggled to implement the full model with fidelity. For 2017-18, only two schools opted to modify the standard program design by reducing the number of planned home visits or the number of family dinners; however, there were several schools recruited in 2017-18 that elected to customize model implementation for the 2018-19 school year. These variations on the standard program model were reflected in a revised logic model shown on the following page.

HOME WORKS! The Teacher Home Visit Program Logic Model



Why is There a Need for HOME WORKS!?

- 63% of all Missouri public school students (grades 3-8) achieve grade level proficiency in English/Language Arts and only 48% of students achieve grade level proficiency in math (2016).
- Economically-disadvantaged students and students of color experience significant education disparities. Only 50% of low income students and 40% of African-American students achieve grade level proficiency in English/Language Arts, and only 35 % of low income students and 25% of African-American students achieve grade level proficiency in math (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016).

The underlying logic of the HOME WORKS! parent engagement program is that through the home visit process, teachers build positive relationships with families, and gain new insights into student strengths and needs that can shape instructional practices and enhance the quality of parent-teacher interactions. Parents, in turn, learn about their child's progress in school and their own role in the learning process, gain access to tools and resources they can use to support home-based learning, and adopt more positive orientations toward schools. The resulting changes in teaching and parenting practices lead to improvements in school attendance, homework completion, classroom behavior, and academic achievement.

Program Objectives

Each school year the HOME WORKS! organization also identifies a set of program objectives that correspond to the various model components and associated outputs defined in the logic model. The program objectives also include targeted benchmarks that align with program outcomes and that are used to monitor program performance. Benchmarks are refined on an annual basis to represent realistic growth targets that derive from the previous year's performance. Data collection tools, including the home visit log and survey forms, are designed to capture data supporting measurement of these objectives and benchmarks, which are used to communicate progress to program staff, funders and other stakeholders.

The next sections of the report present an analysis of findings from the HOME WORKS! evaluation that support measurement of these program objectives for 2017-18 school year.

Exhibit 1. HOME WORKS! 2017-18 Program Objectives

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Objective 1 | Provide training to 100% of teachers and school staff who are conducting home visits to enhance teachers' capacity to engage parents in the learning process. |
| Objective 2 | Complete first home visits with at least 65% of identified high need, priority students to build positive parent-teacher relationships and to introduce parents to educational practices that promote student learning and school success. |
| Objective 3 | Complete second home visits with at least 50% of HOME WORKS! families to discuss students' academic progress and to reinforce parenting practices related to education. |
| Objective 4 | Sponsor two family dinners at each school to communicate that parent engagement is welcomed, valued, and expected, and to reinforce parenting practices that support student learning. |
| Objective 5 | Implement the HOME WORKS! program model with fidelity for at least 30% of all families served (i.e. at least 30% of priority families will participate in all program components planned for their school). |

School, Staff, and Student and Family Participation

HOME WORKS! partners with local school systems to enhance parent engagement in learning and bridge the gap between home and school. Schools that participated are relatively diverse with respect to their geographic locations, school populations, and implementation approach. This section of the report describes the schools that participated in HOME WORKS! in 2017-18, the school populations they served, and the staff, students and families who participated in teacher home visits over the duration of the school year.

School Participation

School districts and individual schools request to participate in HOME WORKS! or are introduced to the program through the HOME WORKS! organization. School districts that choose to partner with HOME WORKS! must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining expectations for school and program involvement and must work with HOME WORKS! staff to establish parameters for program implementation (e.g., participation targets, timelines). HOME WORKS! commits to supporting the school for up to five-years of implementation.

There were 27 schools that participated in HOME WORKS! In 2017-18 that collectively enrolled more than 8,600 students. Schools included 2 ECE centers serving preschool-age children, 18 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 3 high schools. Each year new schools choose to participate, established programs become institutionalized within their school systems, and schools that have struggled with implementation are discontinued for that year. Of the 27 schools that participated in 2017-18, 80% were new to the program and 20% were returning schools.

Exhibit 2 describes the enrolled student populations of participating schools, including the number of students enrolled, grade span served, urban or rural location, and Title I designation. HOME WORKS! schools were located across St. Louis and central Missouri and were somewhat diverse with respect to school size and urbanicity. All participating schools were located in larger or mid-size cities or suburbs, enrolling anywhere from 75 to nearly 700 students. Fourteen of the 27 active schools received Title I funds serving high concentrations of families living at or below poverty. The geographic location of participating schools is shown in exhibits 3 and 4 on the following page.

Exhibit 2. HOME WORKS! School Characteristics

	School ID	Grade	Urban/Rural	Total enrolled	Title I
Elementary	101	PK-6	Large city	312	✓
	102	PK-5	Large city	400	✓
	103	PK-6	Large city	190	✓
	104	PK-5	Large city	673	✓
	105	K-2	Large suburb	520	*
	106	PK-5	Large city	218	✓
	107	-	-	75	-
	108	PK-6	Large city	425	✓
	109	K-5	Large suburb	375	*
	110	PK-5	Large city	108	✓
	111	PK-6	Large city	276	✓
	112	PK-6	Large city	340	✓
	113	K-5	Midsized city	430	-
	114	PK-6	Large city	309	-
	115	PK-5	Large city	353	✓
	116	1-6	Large suburb	300	*
	117	PK-5	Large city	420	✓
	118	PK-5	Large city	-	✓
ECE	401	PK-K	-	116	-
	402	PK-2	Large city	471	✓
Middle	201	7-8	Large suburb	450	*
	202	5-8	Large city	110	*
	203	9-12	-	205	-
	204	6-8	Large suburb	635	-
High	302	9-12	Large suburb	680	*
	303	9-12	Large city	222	✓

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

Notes: Student enrollment information from NCES was unavailable for the early education program. Data presented is from the 2016-17 academic year. Schools 107, 203, 301, and 401 had no enrollment data available and are absent from this Exhibit.

Exhibit 3. St. Louis Metropolitan Area and Central Missouri – Location of HOME WORKS! Schools by Type

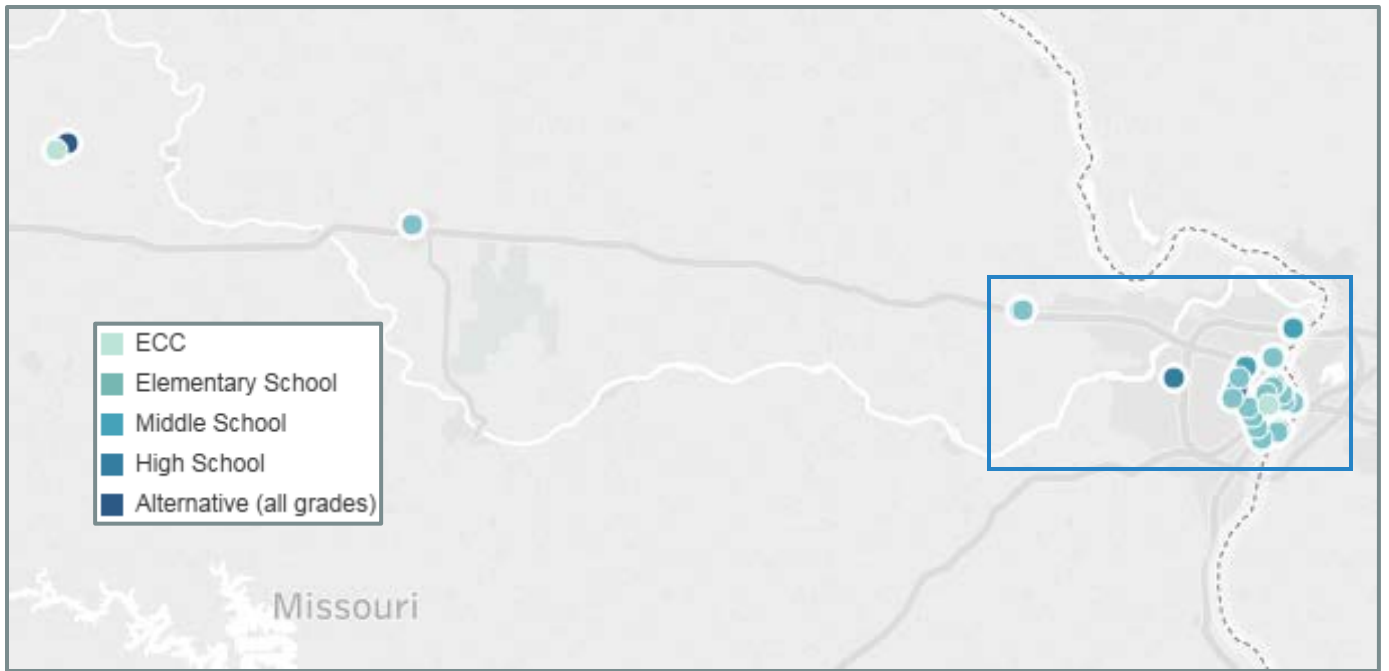
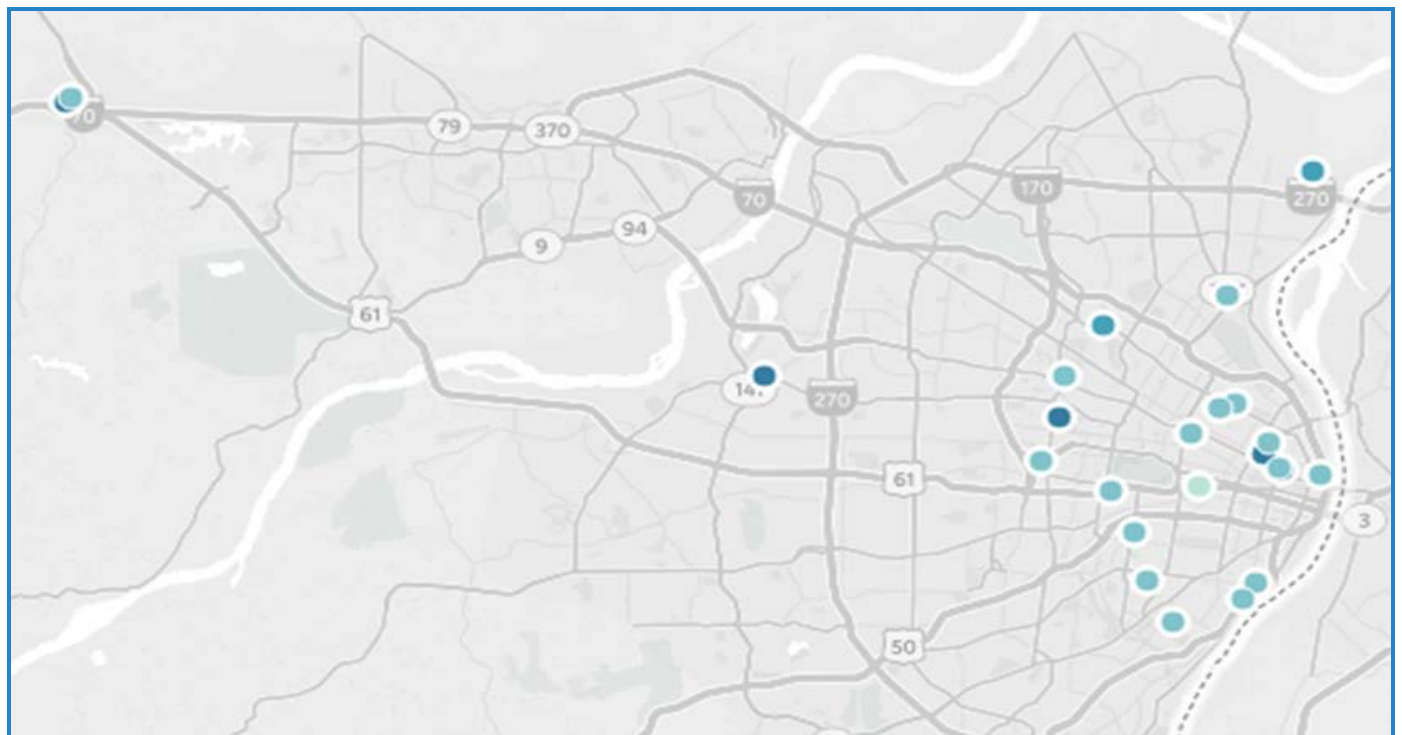


Exhibit 4. Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area – Location of HOME WORKS! Schools by Type



Staff Training and Preparation

One of the core components of the HOME WORKS! program model is the provision of comprehensive training to participating school staff to build capacity around parent engagement and prepare them to conduct home visits with families. Teachers, school administrators, and other school staff who are new to the HOME WORKS! program are expected to attend two staff trainings that correspond to the first and second home visits. Staff training in 2017-18 was conducted by professional trainers employed by the HOME WORKS! organization or by members of the HOME WORKS! management team.

According to the program design, first visit trainings are typically scheduled in late summer at the start of the school year, and second visit trainings are scheduled in the early fall before second visits are initiated. Staff training dates are typically negotiated with schools before the start of the school year. For 2017-18, 37 first visit trainings were held from August 2017 through October 2017 and 27 second visit trainings were held from October 2017 through January 2018. Returning teachers and school staff who had previously been trained and who had been active in the previous year were only required to attend one refresher training each year of their continuing involvement. For the 2017-18 school year, 10 refresher trainings were held between May 2017 and January 2018.

The HOME WORKS! organization established a program objective to provide training to 100% of participating staff who plan to conduct home visits, as school personnel are not authorized to participate in home visits until training has been completed. In 2017-18, 100% of all staff conducting visits had been appropriately trained, meeting the program objective. Because staff must complete training before home visits can be implemented, any delays in scheduling training sessions often translate into late program start-up and fewer completed visits school-wide.

Objective 1

Provide training to 100% of teachers and school staff who are conducting home visits to enhance teachers' capacity to engage parents in the learning process.

In all, HOME WORKS! implemented 102 in-person training sessions in the 2017-18 program year, including training for school administrators and site coordinators. A total of 595 school staff were trained, 70% of whom went on to become active in the

program as lead or co-visitors. In certain schools, administrators opt to train all staff as part of in-service training sessions, regardless of the intent to participate. This approach explains the relatively high percentage of staff (30%) who did not go on to conduct home visits with families.

Staff were asked to provide feedback on their training experience by completing a brief survey questionnaire at the conclusion of each training session. When asked to rate the training program's overall effectiveness in preparing staff to conduct home visits, responses were highly favorable. More than 94% of respondents rated the quality of training as either 'good' or 'excellent', exceeding the 75% target benchmark for training effectiveness.

To monitor the quality of training delivery throughout this transition, the evaluation team was tasked with redesigning the professional development survey form to better capture feedback from training participants regarding the quality of the training presentation and content. The evaluation team also worked with the HOME WORKS! data manager to integrate a new question into the home visit online log asking teachers to reassess levels of preparedness for conducting visits after having completed a home visit for the first time. This information will be used for performance measurement, as well as to provide constructive feedback to new school-based trainers to support continuous quality improvement efforts.

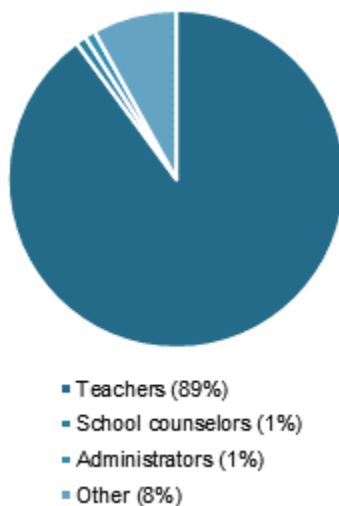
94%

of home visitors rated their training experience as either 'good' or 'excellent' in preparing them to conduct home visits with families.

Teacher and Staff Participation

School staff within each school building volunteer to participate in home visits or are required to participate by their school administrations. Staff conduct home visits in two-person teams comprised of a lead and co-visitor, with an interpreter as needed. The lead visitor is typically the child's classroom teacher or another staff member who has knowledge of the student's needs and academic progress. Co-visitors may be anyone in the school-building who is trained to conduct visits with families. Staff are encouraged to configure teams so that at least one team member shares the family's culture, or race or ethnic identity.

Exhibit 5. Lead Visitors by Position (n = 228)



In all, a total of 418 teachers and other trained school personnel conducted at least one home visit with families during the 2017–18 school year. About 15% of staff served as lead visitors only, 45% served as co-visitors only, and 39% served in both roles. As shown in exhibit 4 above, the 228 lead visitors, included classroom teachers and special education (SPED) instructors (89%), school counselors and social workers (1%), school administrators (1%), and other instructional and non-instructional staff employed by the school (8%). The number of school staff participating across schools varied widely, ranging from as few as 1 lead visitor to as many as 20 lead visitors within a school-building. Some of this variation was attributable to school involvement with the RCT, which restricted the number of participating classrooms to specific grade levels in accordance with the RCT study design. This variation in number of participating staff members was a major factor in determining how many students and families were reached by the program within a school building.

Prioritizing Students for Home Visits

A key role for lead visitors is to identify students for participation in the program and to engage in outreach to their parents and family members to encourage parents to accept home visits. While some schools aimed to reach all students in the school building, the HOME WORKS! parent outreach strategy prioritizes highest need students and families to ensure that program resources are targeted to those most likely to benefit from the intervention. This strategy also acknowledges that time constraints may limit the number of families who teachers can reasonably serve.

At the classroom level, teachers were provided guidance to help them select students for home visits. Specifically, staff were provided the following set of criteria to prioritize outreach to families:

- Students performing below grade level
- Students with discipline problems
- Students who are chronically absent
- Immigrant/ English Language Learners families
- New students or families without a positive teacher/ school relationship

Schools were required to identify a *priority student goal*, which represents the targeted number of students and families that schools anticipate their teachers will visit, based on levels of student and family need and levels of staff participation. For the 2017-18 school year, the priority student goal for all schools was to reach 2,392 students and their families. The two ECE programs set a goal of reaching 25-30 families. Elementary school goals varied more widely, ranging from fewer than 20 families to more than 300 families. Secondary schools set goals ranging from 80 to approximately 200 students. This variation most likely reflects differences in the number of staff members who elect to participate, as well as differences in expectations set by school administrators regarding levels of staff commitment. However, information on how schools identified the priority goal was not formally documented by the HOME WORKS! organization, which created challenges for interpreting data findings. For the 2018-19 school year, HOME WORKS! has modified its approach to have each teacher identify a priority goal, with a target of at least 11 first visits.

HOME WORKS! set an objective for 2017-18 that schools should reach at least 65% of priority students to build positive parent-teacher relationships and introduce parents to educational practices that promote student learning and school success. These

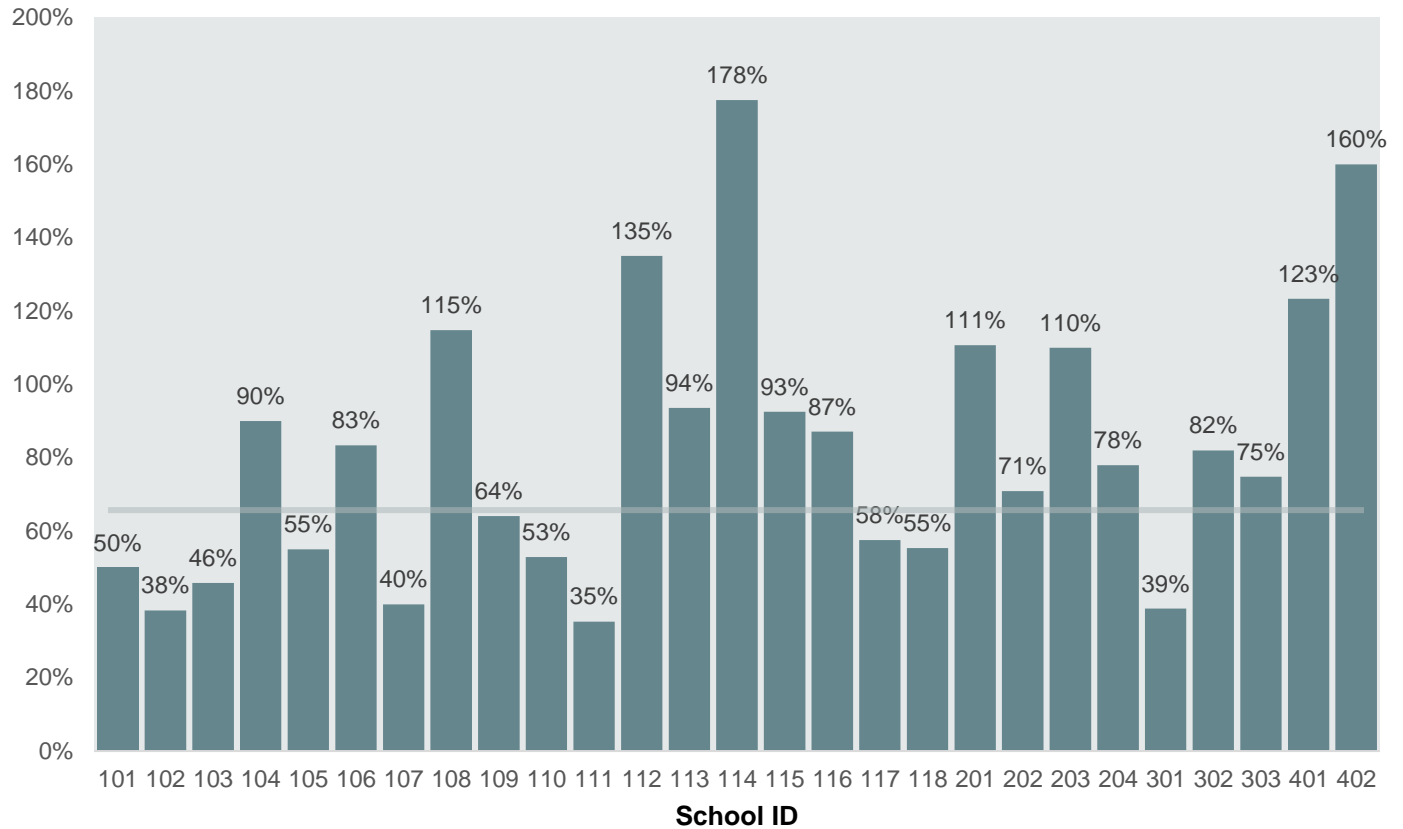
practices include daily reading, homework monitoring, regular school attendance, home-school communication, support and encouragement.

Objective 2
 Complete first home visits with at least 65% of identified high need, priority students to build positive parent-teacher relationships and to introduce parents to educational practices that promote student learning and school success.

Mid-way through the first visit implementation window, schools that were struggling to reach their priority goal for home visits were given the opportunity to revise their goal downward to set more realistic targets for participation. Through this revision process, the priority goal project-wide was modified from 2,392 at the outset of the school year to 2,130, or a more than 10% overall reduction in targeted program reach. Seventeen of 27 schools retained their original goal and did not make mid-year adjustments. However, of the eight that did revise their targets, the target goal was reduced by 50% on average with one school reducing the target by as much as 80%.

The total number of students and families ultimately reached by the program in 2017-18 was 1,886, or 79% of the priority goal established at the outset of the school year. This percentage exceeds the minimum target established by HOME WORKS! of reaching at least 65% of priority students. As shown in exhibit 6 below, at the individual school level, 16 schools, or 59% of all schools active in the program, achieved at least 65% of their target for 2017-18. The other 11 schools did not meet the minimum performance benchmark for completion of first visits. This finding highlights potential differences in either school commitment or capacity to implement the program design as planned and underscores the need (1) to more closely monitor how home visits are being implemented within school-buildings, (2) to identify barriers and challenges, early on, that may be impeding schools' progress, and (3) intervening in a timely manner to take corrective action or provide schools with appropriate support. These strategies are being implement for the 2018-19 school year.

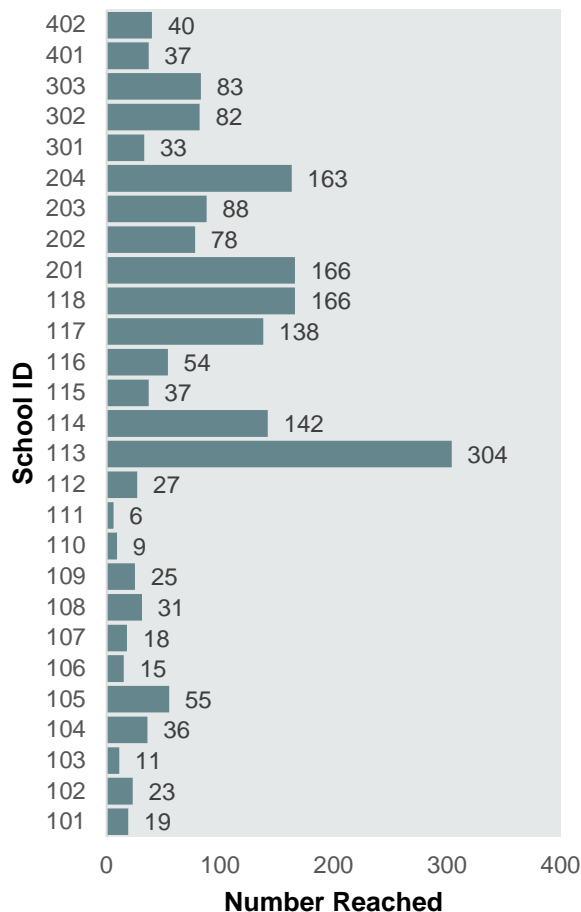
Exhibit 6. Completed First Visits as a percentage of the Priority Need Target



Students and Families Served

As noted in the previous section, schools completed first visits with 1,886 students and their families in 2017-18. This number serves as a proxy for the total number of students and families reached by the program, as all students must participate in at least one home visit to be defined as a program participant. The number of students across school setting is shown in exhibit 7 below, reported by school identifier. The exhibit illustrates the wide variation in program reach, ranging from as few as 6 participating students and families in one high school to 304 students and families in one elementary school. Four of 27 participating schools (15%) engaged 15 or fewer students and families, whereas 7 schools (26%) had 80 students or more. This uneven implementation across schools indicates a need for closer monitoring of schools' progress and more timely intervention by HW! staff to help identify and remove barriers to implementation before the window for conducting home visits has closed. These strategies are being implement for the 2018-19 school year.

Exhibit 7. Students and Families Reached



Information recorded in online visit logs, summarized for students served across all schools, provides additional insight into the types of academic and behavioral needs that prompted teachers to select families for home visits. As shown in exhibits 8 and 9, among students whose families received visits from teachers, about 32% had academic needs, 25% had behavioral concerns, 21% had challenges completing homework, 18% had social or emotions concerns, 15% had poor school attendance. About 45% of students were reading below grade level on standardized assessments.

Online visit logs also indicate that 8% of all students receiving first visits were English Language Learners (ELL) and 3% were Special Education (SPED) students. About 25% of all children and families visited in 2017-18 were new to their schools, confirming high rates of mobility in communities served by the program. About 9% of all children visited were kindergarten age, and of those, about 1 in 6 had never attended preschool.

Exhibit 8. Students with Identified Needs

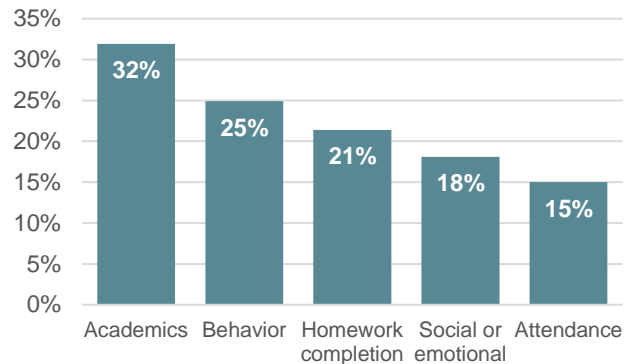
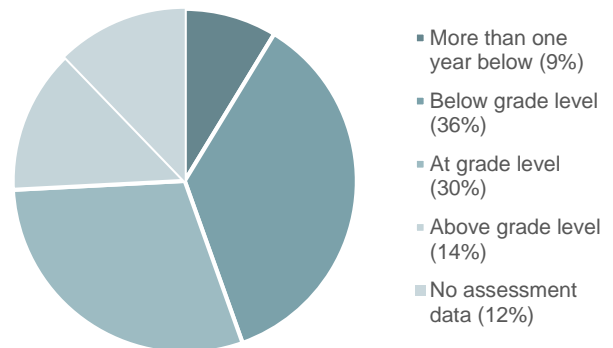


Exhibit 9. Student Reading Level



The profile of students served through HOME WORKS! indicates that teachers and other school staff were successful in reaching a high need student population that would benefit from intervention support. However, the data on student participation also uncovered significant variation in the overall number of students benefitting from the program, and the relative success of schools in meeting targets for participation. This remains a critical focus for future implementation.

Implementation Fidelity

As part of its emphasis on performance measurement, each year the evaluation focuses on assessing how well the program was implemented with respect to fidelity to the standard model. Fidelity assessment measures the degree to which interventions are implemented as planned and the extent to which the program “as planned” is reflected in the program “as implemented”. **Fidelity is important because stronger fidelity to the program model increases confidence that changes in outcomes can be attributed to program strategies.**

The standard teacher home visit model for 2017-18 involved two visits to the student’s home to build positive parent-teacher relationships, improve communication, cultivate positive family orientations toward school, and motivate parents to engage in their children’s learning. First visits are also used to communicate with families about the importance of regular school attendance. The second visit is intended to educate parents about school expectations, to discuss parental roles in supporting children’s academic success, and to review students’ academic progress. By design, families must participate in a first visit before receiving a second visit.

There are also specific design elements of the HOME WORKS! program that school staff are expected to implement. These elements include the following:

- Location of visits
- Timing of visits
- Student involvement in the visit
- Completion of two visits
- Attendance updates and goal-setting
- Family dinner attendance

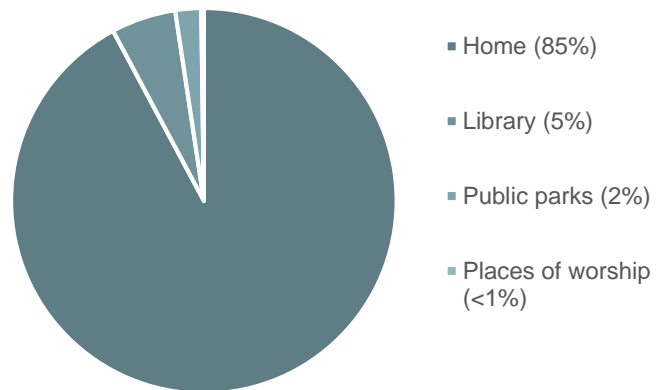
The next few sections present data from online logs for all 27 active school sites to assess how closely schools adhered to the proposed program model when implementing visits with families.

Location of Visits

The HOME WORKS! model emphasizes the importance of conducting home visits in the child’s home environment as a strategy to promote understanding of the family’s culture and home life, and to help the teacher assess conditions in the home that may support or limit a child’s opportunity for learning and school success. In some instances, the family may decline the home visit and the teacher will suggest another location. This accommodation may

have resulted in higher numbers of families agreeing to a visit than who might otherwise. As shown in exhibit 10, teacher logs indicate that in 2017-18 about 85% of all first visits were conducted in the child’s home and 15% were conducted outside of the home, including public libraries (5%), public parks (2%), places of worship (<1%), and other locations (8%), such as restaurants, schools, the home of a relative, hotels or shelters, at children’s sporting events or other activities, or on benches or at bus stops. About 86 % of all second visits were conducted in the home.

Exhibit 10. Location of First Visits

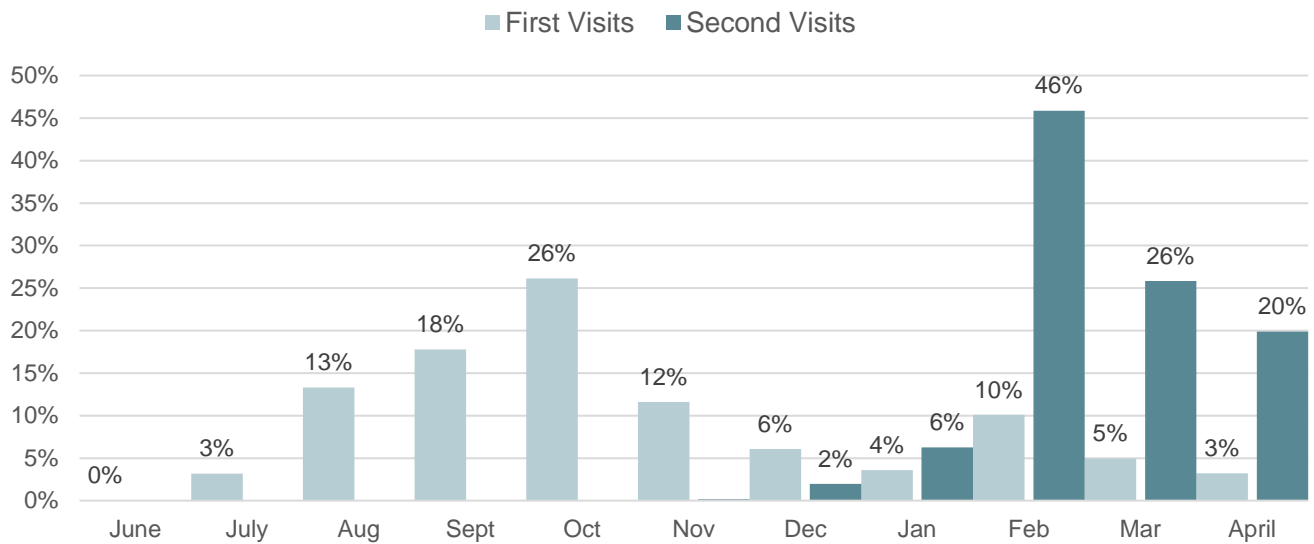


Timing of Visits

Although specific program timelines were negotiated on a school-by-school basis, program guidelines suggest that teachers should begin visiting families upon immediate completion of the first visit training. Schools should ideally conclude first visits within the first three months of the school year. Teachers were instructed to initiate second visits beginning in January and to conclude all second visits by March prior to standardized testing.

Exhibit 11 shows the distribution of first and second visits by month of the school year. For schools implementing the standard model, only about 60% of first visits were completed within the targeted timeline with some first visits initiated as late as April 2018. Seventy-eight percent of second visits in 2017-18 were completed within the targeted timeline. **Schools with delayed start-up that initiated visits later into the school year completed fewer visits overall.** Many visits were conducted too late in the year to have the maximum impact on family engagement or student school performance. This represents an area of need for improvement to push schools to initiate visits earlier on.

Exhibit 11. Timings of First and Second Visits by Month



Completing First and Second Visits

Completion of first and second visits has historically been a core component of the HOME WORKS! standard 2 +2 model. However, for the first time in 2017-18, HOME WORKS! began to grant schools greater flexibility to shape the planned model components for their schools, for example, by allowing schools to only complete one home visit or one family dinner. Nevertheless, for schools that continued to implement the 2 + 2 model, the HOME WORKS! organization established a program objective for schools to complete second visits with at least 50% of all families completing first visits as a measure of program performance.

Objective 3
 Complete second home visits with at least 50% of HOME WORKS! families to discuss students' academic progress and to reinforce parenting practices related to education.

Exhibits 12 and 13 compare the total count of students who received a first visit with the total count of students who also received a second visit in 2017-18. Online teacher logs show that of the 1,549 students in 2 + 2 schools who received first visits, 635 students, or 41%, received a second visit within the same school year. Rates of second visit completion varied considerably across schools from 13 to 86%. This figure fell below the minimum 50% target for completing second visits with families.

Exhibit 12. First and Second Visits – ECE Centers and Elementary Schools

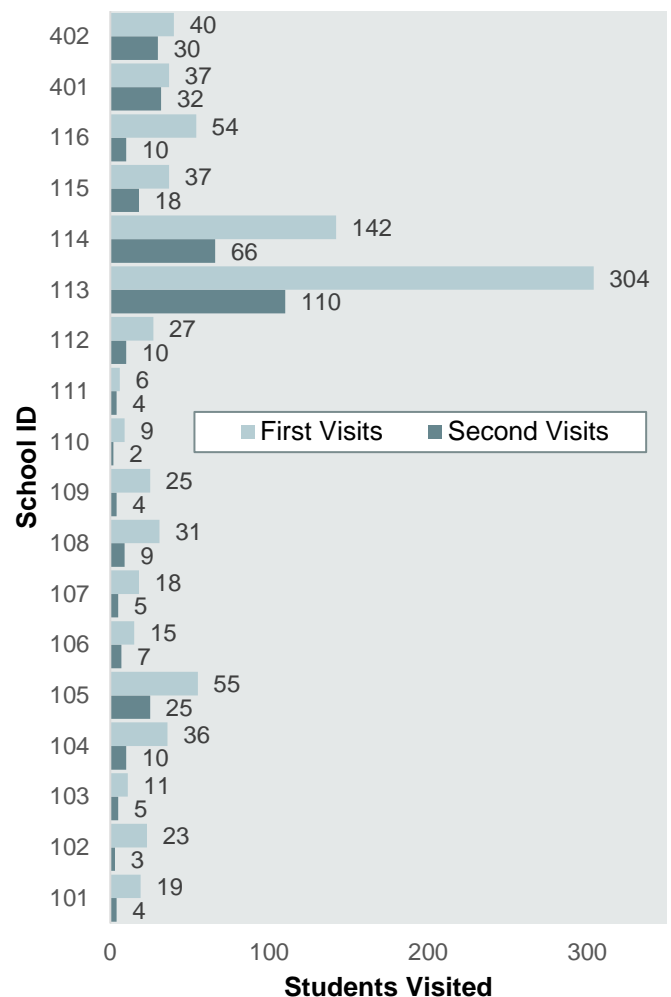
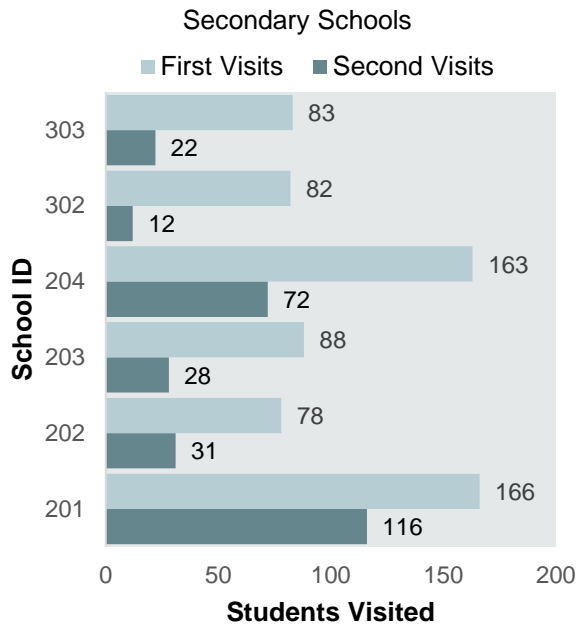


Exhibit 13. First and Second Visits – Secondary Schools



Child Present at the Visit

The HOME WORKS! program model also encourages students to be present during the home visit and to be actively engaged in sharing and goal setting activities. In 2017-18, in about 92% of all first visits and 93% of all second visits, the child was present at the home visit. This indicates a high level of adherence to the program design.

Home Visit Focus on Attendance

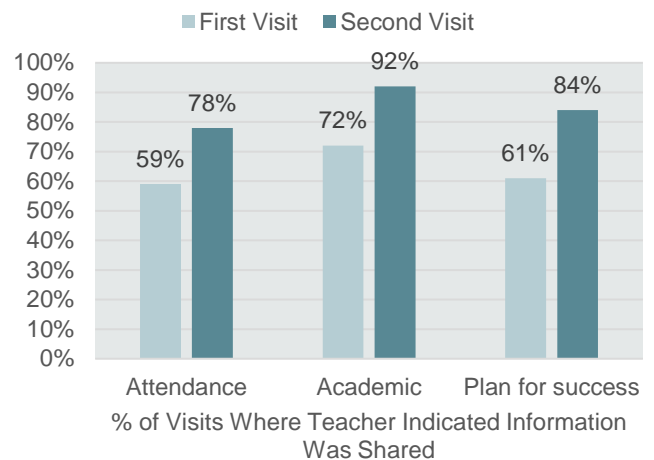
Initially, each home visit had a distinct purpose and orientation, with first visits focusing primarily on relationship building and second visits focusing on academic growth. As the program has evolved, staff have been given greater discretion to customize visits to the needs and levels of readiness of the family and to the timing of when visits occur. For example, staff have been encouraged to share academic information at first visits if teachers feel that trust has been successfully established with the family.

To reinforce the importance of regular school attendance with families, HOME WORKS! introduced a new strategy for sharing de-identified classroom information about each child’s pattern of attendance and academic performance relative to the performance of their classmates.

Teachers were also asked to document in the online log whether they had shared this information with families and whether they had worked with families to develop a Plan for Student Success. The Plan for Student Success is a simple goal-setting activity that details action steps for how students, parents, and teachers can work together to promote student progress in need areas. Teachers were asked to share examples of proposed plans in online visit logs.

According to data from online logs, teachers shared attendance information with families in 59% of all first visits and 78% of all second visits, regardless of whether attendance was identified as an area of need. Teachers shared academic information in 72% of first visits and 92% of second visits and created or reviewed a Plan for Student Success at 61% of first visits and 84% of second visits. The targeted outcome was for teachers to engage in these activities in at least 90% of all second visits, thus the objective was met for only one of these three activities (e.g., sharing academic data).

Exhibit 14. Teacher Reports of Information-Sharing and Goal-Setting at First and Second Visits



“[We] discussed how much [student] has grown this year and we will continue to work on her reading to help her read on grade level. Talked about reading the small book each night in her binder and encouraging her to use her reading super powers to build her confidence. I also gave her the sight words on flashcards. [Mom] still needs to help her with her reading to read books on grade level.”

Family Dinner Attendance

The final measure of fidelity to the standard model is student and parent participation in family dinners. Family dinners are hosted by schools one or two times throughout the school year to increase parent engagement and foster positive parent-teacher and parent-school relationships. Families who receive home visits are invited to participate as part of their involvement in the program. Families of students enrolled in active HOME WORKS! classrooms who have not yet agreed to a teacher home visit are also encouraged to attend.

The HOME WORKS! organization established an objective for each school to host two family dinners for parents and family members, students, and school personnel to communicate to families that parent engagement is welcomed, valued, and expected. During the 2017-18 school year, 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools and 1 alternative school hosted 2 family dinners each according to the program as planned. Two elementary schools that had planned to implement both dinners failed to implement the second dinner and one elementary school did not implement either dinner. The remaining alternative school implemented only one family dinner according to their custom program model. In all, 88% of participating schools met the objective for family dinner implementation.

Objective 4

Sponsor two family dinners at each school to communicate that parent engagement is welcomed, valued, and expected, and to reinforce parenting practices that support student learning.

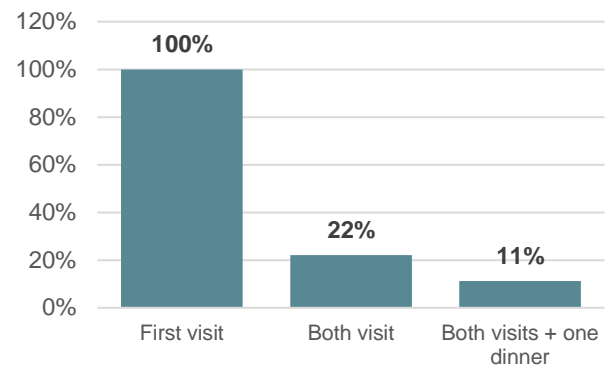
Parents who attended family dinners were asked to complete a brief survey at the end of the event to provide feedback on their experience. There were 540 parents or other family members in attendance at a family dinner who completed the survey form. Parents, overall, felt very positively about their family dinner experience. When asked for feedback, 97% of survey respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their participation made them feel welcomed and more connected to their child's school. Ninety-one percent of parents or family members surveyed believed that attending a family dinner had strengthened their relationships with their child's teacher and had helped them realize the benefits of a home visit.

97%

of parents stated attending a HOME WORKS! family dinner made them feel more welcomed and more connected to their child's school.

Fidelity to the HOME WORKS! model was defined as the percentage of students whose families received both first and second visits, and who also attended at least one family dinner. This provides a minimum threshold for the number and percentage of program participants exposed to the core components of the full intervention.

Exhibit 15. Percentage of Students Participating in Both Visits and At Least One Family Dinner



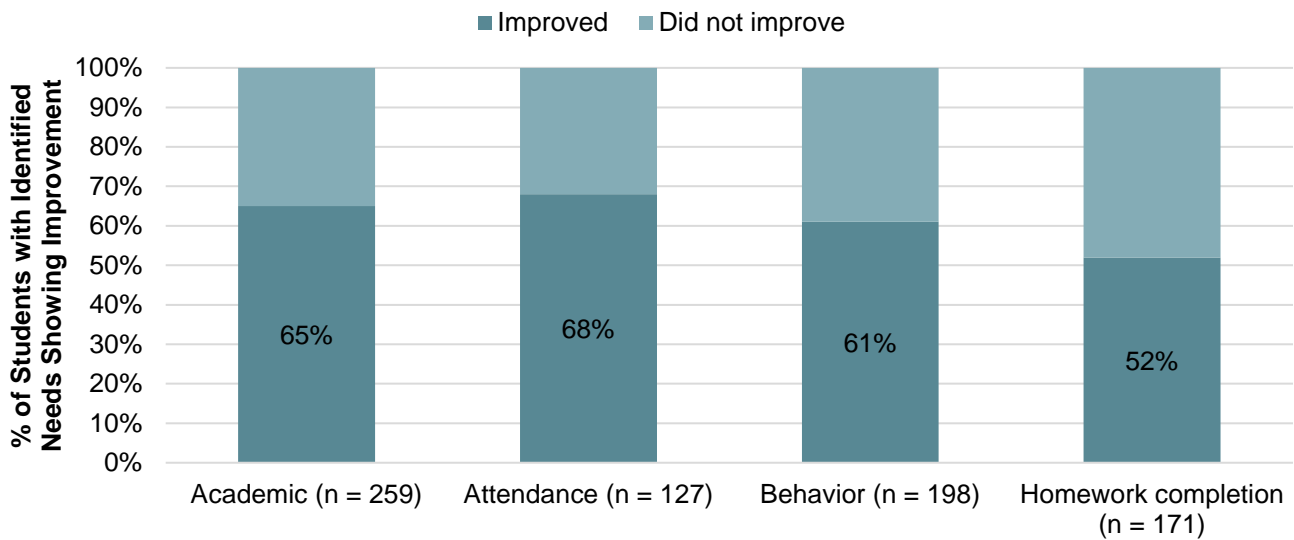
As shown in exhibit 10, only 11% of all students and families served through HOME WORKS! schools received the full program intervention, defined as two visits and one family dinner. Again, this percentage varied across schools, ranging from 76% of students receiving the full intervention in one high-performing school to 7% receiving the full intervention in lower-performing schools. This finding raises concerns regarding the feasibility of implementing the full program model for many schools and may point to the need for more extensive program monitoring and support to help remove barriers to implementation and ensure that schools are on track to meet expectations for program involvement.

Impacts on School Performance

Ultimately, the goal of HOME WORKS! is to increase parent and teacher engagement as a strategy to improve students' school performance. For students who participated in second visits, teachers were asked to assess student needs in areas targeted by the program, including academic achievement, attendance, homework completion, and classroom behavior.

For students who were performing below grade level academically (n=208), teachers indicated that 65% had shown some improvement over the course of the school year. Teachers also noted improvements among 59% of all students who had exhibited behavioral issues in the classroom, 51% of those who had trouble completing homework assignments, and 65% of those who had problems with school attendance.

These observations reinforce the perceptions shared by teachers and parents that home visits not only strengthen the quality of relationships forged between schools and homes, but that participation in home visits translates into better classroom performance and stronger school performance for the students who are visited.



Parent-Teacher Learning Teams (PTLT)

An additional focus of the 2017-18 evaluation was to learn more about alternative models for home visit implementation, including PTLT, which two elementary schools opted to implement in the 2017-18 school year. As noted in a previous section, PTLT is a variation of the standard school-wide model that combines one teacher home visit with school-based parent engagement activities, including optional parent-teacher conferences and classroom-based instructional sessions for parents and other family members. One PTLT school had a five-year history of success implementing the HOME WORKS! standard model and had transitioned to PTLT to continue their relationship with the HOME WORKS! organization. The other had implemented PTLT in the previous school year.

This next section of the report summarizes data from online logs and teacher surveys that were conducted at the end of the program year to understand more about PTLT implementation, including successes, challenges, and perceived outcomes for students and their families. Twenty-two teachers and other school staff completed the PTLT staff survey, representing a 65% overall response rate. This information from teacher visit logs and surveys is being used to help refine implementation of the PTLT model and to support replication to other schools.

Reasons for Participation

About 73% of all PTLT school staff surveyed were participating in the program for the first time in the 2017-18 school year. When presented with a series of statements concerning potential factors motivating their participation:

- More than 90% said they wanted to engage parents in their children’s education and believed that their students would benefit from their involvement;
- About 80% indicated that they were encouraged to participate by their school administrator; and,
- Three-quarters were motivated by personal benefits including earning extra money (77%) or the belief that their participation would help them teach more effectively (73%).

Staff Training

As preparation to implement the PTLT model, teachers and other school staff attended two staff trainings to build capacity around parent engagement and to prepare to conduct home visits and classroom-based learning sessions with families. The standard HOME WORKS! training curriculum was adapted by program staff to align with the PTLT program components.

When asked to rate the quality of the training program on end-of-year surveys, about 82% of staff indicated that the training was either “excellent” or “good” in preparing them to conduct home visits, whereas a much lower percentage (69%) indicated that the training was “excellent” or “good” in preparing them to lead classroom-based learning sessions. One-third rated the training as ‘okay’, ‘not very good’ or ‘poor’.

Exhibit 16. Preparation to Conduct Home Visits (n=22)

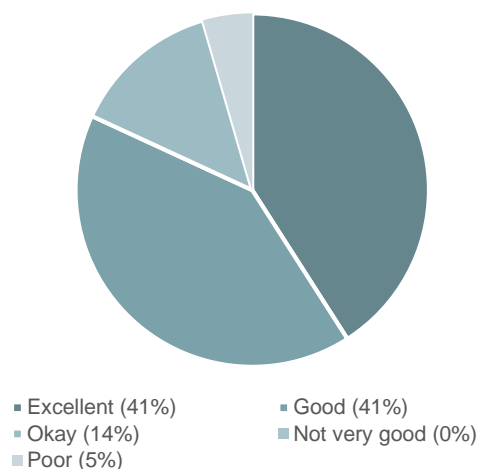
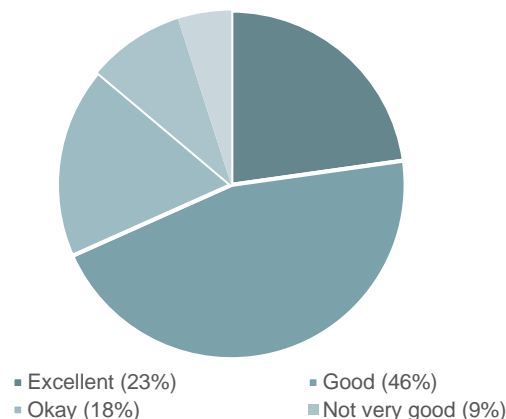


Exhibit 17. Preparation to Lead Classroom-based Learning Sessions (n=22)



“Trainings focused too heavily on a script and not on parent interactions”

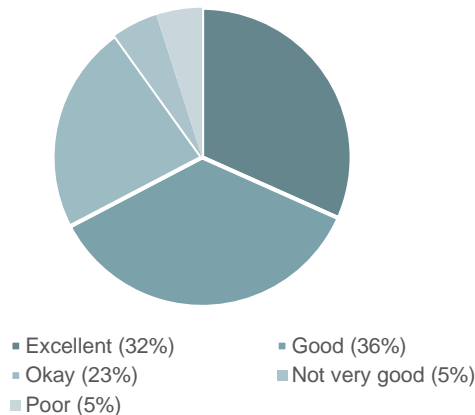
“The first session, I did not feel prepared, but once I understood the flow of the meetings, the rest went really smoothly. Parents enjoyed the meetings a lot.”

“Our school made adjustments. It worked better with all of the parents together in the library for the Icebreaker. The parents seemed more relaxed and willing to share.”

Any staff member who rated the training quality as either ‘okay’, ‘not very good’ or ‘poor’, was asked to offer recommendations on how training sessions could be improved. Two teachers recommended focusing more on how to effectively engage parents through classroom-based learning sessions, and another recommended sharing positive outcomes as motivation and to demonstrate how the program can make a difference.

Teachers were also asked to rate the overall quality of the PowerPoint templates that were provided as a resource for leading classrooms-based learning session with parents. Responses were mixed, with 68% of teachers rating the PowerPoints as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ and 33% rating quality as ‘okay’, ‘not very good’, or ‘poor’. Most teachers did agree (85%) that customizing the PowerPoints templates for use with parents and families in their classroom was either ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’. When asked how the PowerPoints could be improved, teachers recommended that slides be age-specific and more interesting. Some teachers mentioned that they added slides or made other changes to make slides directly pertain to their classrooms and parents.

Exhibit 18. Quality of PowerPoints (n=22)

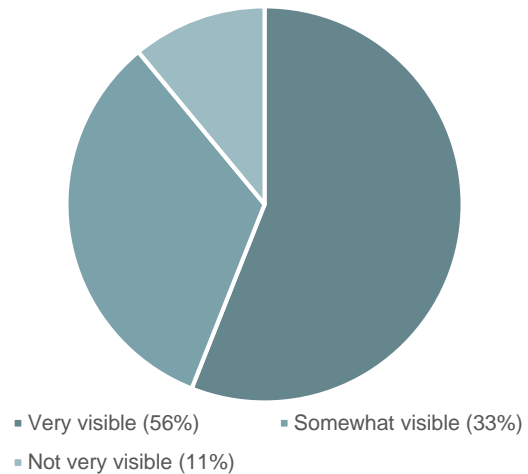


Program Visibility and Outreach to Parents

School staff were also asked to indicate how visible they felt the PTLT program was to members of the school community, including parents, family members, students, and school staff. More than half of teachers felt the program was ‘very visible’, one-third felt the program was at least ‘somewhat visible’, and about 10% felt the program was ‘not very visible’ at all. Responses varied by school site, with Woerner Elementary staff perceiving greater awareness of the PTLT program within their school-building than staff from Dewey.

Exhibit 19. PTLT Program Visibility in Schools

“I would prefer to make my own PowerPoint to cater it to my students’ needs. It would be better if we just received an outline of what needs to be on the PowerPoint.”

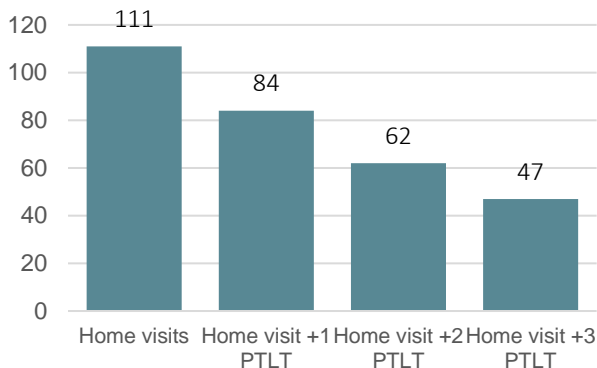


Teachers were also asked to identify some of the most effective strategies in promoting the PTLT program to encourage participation in both home visits and PTLT sessions (n=13). Eight respondents (62%) believed incentives such as dinners, goodie bags, homework passes, and a dance party for kids and parents had been effective in encouraging participation. Four teachers mentioned publicizing the program using flyers, emails, and word-of-mouth. Two respondents mentioned that the provision of childcare and accommodations for students to stay after school until the PTLT session began had been instrumental in promoting parent participation.

Implementation Fidelity

Fidelity to the PTLT program model was defined by completion of a home visit with subsequent attendance at classroom-based learning sessions. Schools each implemented three classroom sessions throughout the school year. Teacher visits logs were also used to assess levels of participation or dosage to determine how much of the intervention each student and family received.

Exhibit 20. Fidelity to the PTLT Program Model



Across the two PTLT schools, staff conducted home visits with 111 students and their families in 2017-18. Of the students and families who participated in home visits, 84 parents attended at least one PTLT classroom-based session (76%), 62 parents (56%) attended at least two PTLT classroom-based sessions, and 47 attended all three PTLT classroom-based sessions (42%), thus benefitting from the entire intervention. Parents of nearly 200 other students across the two schools attended PTLT sessions only without receiving a home visit. Among parents who received any contact with the HOME WORKS! program in 2017-18, 9% of parents at Dewey Elementary and 20% of parents at Woerner Elementary achieved fidelity to the program model.

Teachers were asked to identify any barriers that they believe may have prevented families from participating in home visits or impeded their own ability to conduct visits with families. The most common barriers included difficulty convincing families to participate (56%) and feeling it was too much of a time commitment (56%).

Exhibit 21. “Somewhat” or “Very Significant” Barriers to Implementing Home Visits

Barriers & Challenges	%
Difficulty convincing families to participate	56%
Too much of a time commitment	56%
Difficulty scheduling and coordinating visits with a co-visitor	50%
Difficulty scheduling a convenient time for a visit	50%
Too much distance to travel	44%
Concerns about personal safety	38%
Not feeling like visits were making a difference	38%
Families’ distrust or reluctance to engage during the visit	31%
Parents not showing up for a scheduled visit	31%
Too much data entry and record-keeping	19%
Difficulty finding an alternative location when the home was not an option.	13%

Teachers were also asked what they felt were the most important ingredients of their home visits. One major theme that emerged in responses was building relationships with families that involved listening, communicating, being truthful and getting to know them. A second prominent theme was providing resources to families, such as strategies to use at home to assist their children’s learning.

When asked what elements of the home visits did not work well, there were only two responses. These teachers expressed concern with scheduling visits for families with multiple siblings and having the same handouts and graphs for families who have received visits in previous years. When asked for recommendations on how the PTLT program could be strengthened, the few teachers who responded recommended extending the sign-up period, reaching out more to at-risk students, and making the program mandatory for all teachers to help families and build strong relationships.

Teachers were asked to identify any barriers that they believe may have prevented families from attending classroom-based PTLT sessions or that prevented them from delivering classroom-based sessions effectively.

Exhibit 22. “Somewhat” or “Very Significant” Barriers to Implementing PTLT Sessions

Barriers & Challenges	%
Scheduling sessions at convenient times for families	59%
Difficulty getting parents to attend	71%
Lack of clarity regarding the purpose and objectives for each session	24%
Difficulty adapting or preparing PowerPoint slides for classroom-based sessions	12%
Difficulty facilitating session when working with a translator	35%
Too much of a time commitment planning for sessions	41%
Difficulty facilitating classroom-based sessions	6%
Not feeling like sessions were making a difference	41%

The greatest perceived challenges to effectively implementing PTLT learning sessions were scheduling PTLT session at times that were convenient for families (59%) and getting parents to attend (71%). A smaller percentage of teachers (41%) felt that planning for PTLT sessions was too time consuming or that sessions were not making a difference.

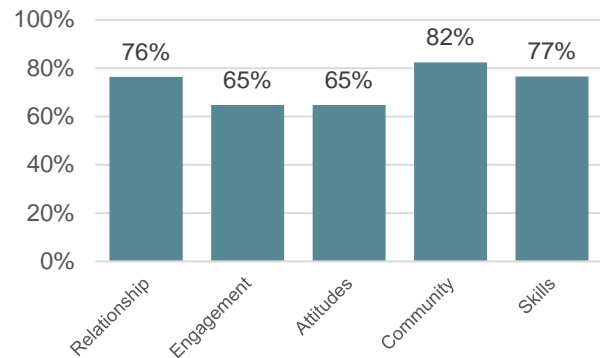
When asked to identify the most important ingredients of PTLT sessions, two teachers responded that the toolkits provided were helpful. Three respondents emphasized the importance of getting the parent involved and engaged in their child’s education, including providing strategies to use at home. One teacher believed that teaching a short lesson during the session to demonstrate exactly how their children were being taught was useful for families.

Teachers were also asked if there were any aspects of the PTLT session that did not work well. One respondent felt that one-on-one parent conferences should not be replaced by PTLT sessions. This sentiment was also shared by teachers in responses to other open-ended items suggesting that parents may realize different types of benefits from conferencing versus small group sessions and that each component is valuable.

Teacher Perceptions of Program Impact

Teachers were also asked to reflect on their involvement with the PTLT program and to share perceptions of how the program impacted their relationships with students and families and performance of students in their classrooms.

Exhibit 23. Teachers Perceptions of Impact on Relationships – ‘True’ or ‘Very True’



About 76% of teachers surveyed believed the statement “I felt my participation in the PTLT model improved my relationship with parents and families” was either ‘true’ or ‘very true’. Sixty-five percent believed participation increased parent’s engagement in their children’s learning, and a same percentage believed it improved parents’ attitudes towards school. Lastly, 82% of teacher respondents believed their participation fostered a sense of community among families at their school, and 77% believed they helped parents develop practical skills and strategies to use to support their children’s learning at home.

The PTLT Teacher Survey also asked about perceived improvements in students' school performance. Teachers were asked to rank how much improvement they saw in students' motivation/attitudes towards school, attendance, homework completion, academic performance, and behavior in the classroom. Responses ranged from '1' indicating students improved 'not at all' to '5' meaning indicating students improved 'a lot'. The majority of responses across all areas of performance indicate at least some perceived improvement.

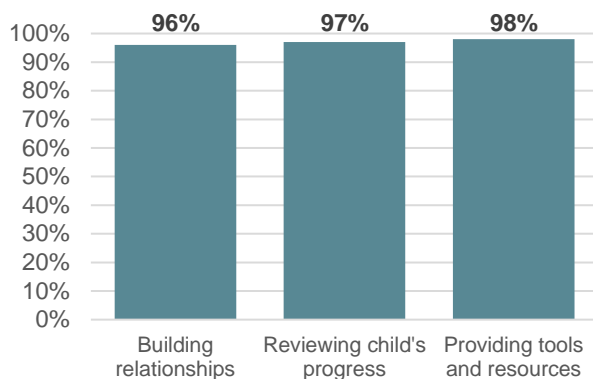
Overall, responses to year-end teacher surveys in both PTLT elementary schools, and feedback from parents who attended classroom sessions, were highly favorable. Their responses also provided constructive feedback that can be used by schools to shape and refine the program for future implementation.

Parent Perceptions of PTLT Instructional Sessions

Parents who attended PTLT session were also given an opportunity to provide feedback on the perceived value of the instructional session. Survey forms were administered at the end of each session and were translated into English, Spanish, and Arabic. The reactions of parents who completed survey forms were overwhelmingly positive, with more than 95% of all parents (n=335) indicating that PTLT sessions were either 'extremely useful' or 'very useful' in building relationships between parents and teachers, in helping parents review their child's progress in school, and in providing tools and resources that parents could use to support learning at home. Ninety-eight % of parents indicated that they would plan to attend another PTLT session in the future.

“The session was very informative and went very smoothly. I think it’s awesome that we as parents are given this opportunity to be active in the classroom again. Thank you!”

Exhibit 24. Parent Perceptions of Impact



Secondary School Model – Teacher Perceptions

The 2017-18 evaluation also focused on assessing implementation of the HOME WORKS! model at the middle school and high school level. At the start of the school year, the evaluation team met with school administrators and site coordinators from each of the middle schools and high schools to learn more about how schools were implementing the model. The evaluation was also structured to capture feedback from secondary school home visitors to document their perceptions about the impact of home visits on family engagement and student educational outcomes, and to gather feedback on areas in need of improvement. This section summarizes data from secondary school teachers who were active in the program during the 2017-18 school year.

Reasons for Participation

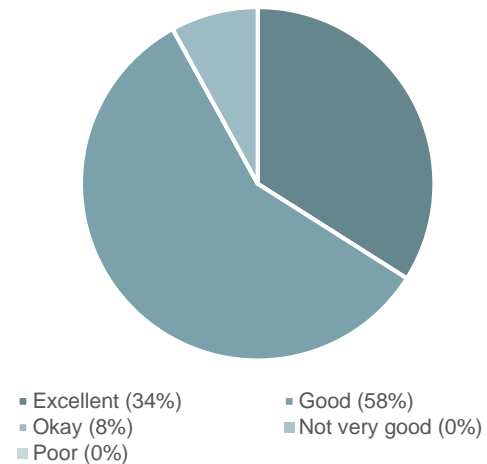
Teacher surveys administered at the end of the 2017–18 school year were used to document some of the reasons that staff chose to become involved with the teacher home visit program. Respondents were presented with a series of statements about why they might choose to participate and were then asked to mark ‘yes’ if the statement applied to them personally. According to survey findings:

- Nearly all home visitor respondents (98%) said they participated because they wanted to engage parents in their children’s education.
- Most teachers (94%) also chose to participate in the program because they believed that their students would benefit from home visits.
- Teachers and school staff were also driven by the belief that home visits would help them teach more effectively (86%).
- Teachers also noted other motivations for their involvement including encouragement from and administrator (82%), the opportunity to earn extra money (60%).
- Nearly half of school staff indicated that they were also required to participate by their school administrator (47%).

Staff Training Feedback

Teachers were also asked to rate the quality of training they received from HOME WORKS! to prepare them to conduct home visits. Of the home visitors surveyed at the end of the year, 92% said their home visit training experience was either ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ as shown in exhibit 25.

Exhibit 25. Quality of Training (n = 50)



When asked to identify any aspects of the training that could have been improved (n=30):

- Six respondents (20%) said they would like to review more real-life scenarios and to participate in more role-playing to prepare for home visits.
- Three home visitors (10%) believed on-going training with check-ins throughout the year would improve their experience.
- Two (7%) said they would like training that was more specific to their school; and,
- One home visitor (3%) remarked that those with previous experience in the program should not be required to attend every training session.
- The remaining 14 respondents indicated that all their needs were met during the training and had no recommendations for improvement.

Home visitors were also asked if they felt that the expectations for participation in the HOME WORKS! program had been clearly communicated to them. Seventy-two percent responded ‘yes, definitely’ and 24% responded ‘yes, somewhat’. Only 4% said ‘no, not really’ when asked if expectations were clear.

“I had no training issues that were not met. I appreciated the availability of the HOME WORKS! staff and how quickly they resolved issues.”

Identifying and Removing Barriers

As noted in the previous section of the report, many secondary schools struggled to implement the full program model. To learn more about the reasons that

schools may have encountered challenges to implementation, teachers and other school staff were asked about their experiences when attempting to complete home visits with families. Teachers were presented with a list of potential barriers and were asked to indicate how significant each barrier was for them personally. Exhibit 26 below shows the percentage of home visitors who categorized each issue listed as either an 'extremely significant' or 'very significant' barrier to implementation:

Exhibit 26. Barriers to Implementing Home Visits

Barriers & Challenges	%
Difficulty convincing families to participate	67%
Difficulty scheduling a convenient time for a home visit	64%
Too much of a time commitment	44%
Parents not showing up for a scheduled visit	42%
Families' distrust or reluctance to engage during the visit	40%
Not feeling like visits were making a difference	22%
Concerns about personal safety	22%
Too much distance to travel	20%
Too much data entry and record-keeping	14%
Difficulty finding an alternative location when the home was not an option.	11%
Difficulty finding or selecting my own students to visit from the list of eligible students	11%

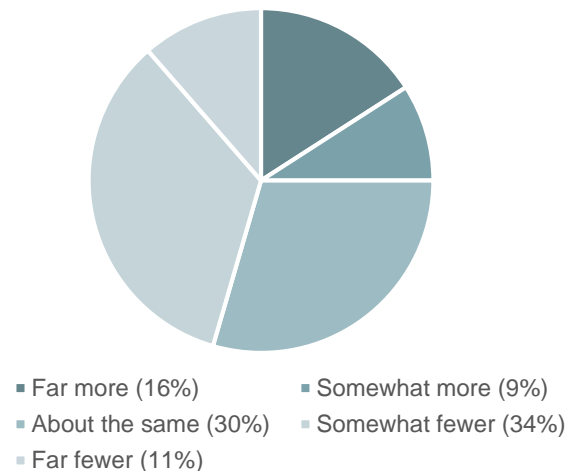
The most significant barriers identified by teachers related to the difficulty of engaging families in the home visit process. About two-thirds of all teachers and staff surveyed (67%) reported having difficulties convincing families they contacted to accept the home visit invitation, and 64% reported challenges when attempting to schedule a convenient time for a home visit. Further evidence of these challenges is found in online logs completed by teachers. Specifically, there were 385 attempts to schedule a first visit recorded in the home visit logs in 2017-18 that did not result in a completed visit. On average school staff contacted families 2-3 times before ending the attempt. When asked about other barriers to implementation, responses included having incorrect addresses, lead visitors failing to schedule visits, issues with the online log, and having trouble finding the resources families needed.

Almost half of all teachers and staff (44%) surveyed also noted that parents not showing up for a scheduled visit was a major barrier to implementation. In the 2017-18 school year, there were 182 no shows recorded in the online log for first and second visits combined. No shows occur when the home visit team prepares for the visit, contacts the family on the day of the visit and arrives at the home at the scheduled time, but the family is either not home or, does not answer the door. No shows account for about 8% of all attempted first visits and 4% of all attempted second visits.

Completion of Home Visits

When asked to evaluate their own success in meeting personal expectations for completing visits with families, about 34% of all secondary school lead visitors surveyed reported reaching 'fewer' or 'far fewer' students than they had intended at the outset of the school year.

Exhibit 27. Expected Number of Students Reached



Lead visitors who indicated that they were less successful than anticipated (n=27) were asked to share perceptions of why they visited fewer students and families than initially planned. The reasons offered included having less time available to conduct visits than initially anticipated, encountering greater difficulty contacting parents and encouraging them to accept visits, having difficulty coordinating with other teachers, and setting unrealistic expectations for themselves regarding how many visits they could reasonably complete. One school staff member cited concerns about safety risks in students' home environments as being the reason for conducting fewer visits than planned.

Ingredients of a Successful Home Visit

Teachers and other school staff were also asked to identify what they felt were the most important elements or ‘ingredients’ of a successful home visit. The intent was to understand which aspects of home visits teachers believed were most effective in supporting parent engagement and school success. Of the responses provided (n=32):

- Fifty-two percent (52%) referenced the importance of making personal connections with the family, the importance of listening, engaging in dialogue, and building trust.
- Sixteen percent (16%) mentioned sharing student data with families on the child’s school progress.
- Thirteen percent (13%) focused on the resources that teachers bring to the home as part of their visits. Specific resources mentioned included the graphic showing the amount of time students spend at school versus time spent at home and the action plans that were developed for struggling students.
- Thirteen percent (13%) of responses highlighted the importance of conducting visits in a comfortable environment.
- Other ingredients mentioned included having opportunities to learn about students’ home cultures, engaging in goal setting with the parent and child, having a script, being prepared for the visit in advance, and having a co-visitor readily available.

“The critical components of the visit were the student data communication and listening. Also, getting to know the students’ home culture.”

Teachers were also asked about the perceived impact of HOME WORKS! on the families who participated.

- Seventy-nine percent believed that it was ‘true’ or ‘very true’ that home visits strengthened their relationships with parents and families.
- Sixty percent said it was ‘true’ or ‘very true’ that home visits helped parents develop practical skills and strategies to use to support learning at home.
- Fifty-nine percent said it was ‘true’ or ‘very true’ that visits had improved parents’ attitudes toward school.

- Fifty-two percent of home visitors said it was ‘true’ or ‘very true’ that home visits had increased parent engagement in their children’s learning.

79%

of teachers believed that teacher home visits strengthened their relationships with families

Teacher Perceptions of Student Improvement

Teacher surveys also asked about perceived improvements in student outcomes that could be attributable to home visits. More specifically, teachers were asked to rate how much improvement they had observed in students’ motivation/attitudes towards school, attendance, homework completion, academic performance, and behavior in the classroom. Teachers rated the degree of improvement using a ‘5’ point scale ranging from ‘1’ meaning ‘not at all’ improved to 5 meaning the student had improved ‘a lot’. Teachers were most likely to perceive that home visits impacted student’s motivation and attitudes toward school and behavior in the classroom (mean = 3.36). Teachers were slightly less likely to perceive that home visits impacted students’ school attendance (mean = 3.30), or their academic performance (mean = 3.25) or homework completion (mean = 3.16, although teachers still observed at least some improvement on average).

Strengthening HOME WORKS!

Finally, teachers and other staff who conducted home visits were asked if there was anything about the program that they felt could be strengthened (n=14). Suggestions for improvement included starting the program sooner, increasing awareness of the program within the school building to encourage more families to participate, assisting teachers with scheduling visits, and reducing the number of required visits.

“The second home visits weren’t significantly different from the first. We as a school didn’t do a good job clarifying what we wanted to achieve on the second home visit.”

Findings and Recommendations

For the 2017-18 school year HOME WORKS! contracted with an external evaluator who conducted a process evaluation of the HOME WORKS! parent engagement program as implemented in 27 participating schools, including 2 ECE centers, 18 elementary schools, 4 middle schools and 3 high schools. Sixteen schools implemented the standard 2 + 2 elementary school model or a model variation, five schools implemented the 2 + 2 secondary school model or a model variation, and 2 schools implemented Parent-Teacher Learning Teams (PTLT). The evaluation team also helped support organizational development efforts by providing technical consulting around program management and operations, with the goal of strengthening implementation and future replication in schools.

The intent of the evaluation was to describe how various HOME WORKS! models were being implemented and to assess the extent to which schools were achieving fidelity to the program design by successfully implementing core components that are theoretically linked to program outcomes. The evaluation was also used to document parent and teacher perceptions about the impact of the home visit experience on students, families, and schools, and the extent to which home visit implementation helped schools better engage parents and students in the learning process.

Key Accomplishments

This section highlights major accomplishments that were made in the 2017-18 school year:

The 2017-18 program year marked a period of expansion for the HOME WORKS! organization involving a rapid scale-up of operations relative to the previous school year. HOME WORKS! partnered with 27 K-12 public and charter schools and ECE centers in 2017-18, compared to 14 schools in 2016-17. Eighty percent of schools were new to the program this year. This expansion imposed a substantial work load on program staff and demanded a high level of coordination across schools. This included the delivery of 112 staff trainings for 595 new and returning lead and co-visitors, the coordination of 45 family dinners attended by more than 5,300 participants, and support for more than 2,500 teacher home visits with families within a single school year.

School administrators and school staff were generally successful in reaching students with demonstrated needs for support and intervention. Specifically, about 45% of all youth served were performing below grade level in reading. Schools were also successful in reaching high need student sub-groups within the school community, including English Language Learners (8%) and special education students (3%). About half of all schools active in the program were designated as Title 1 schools serving a high percentage of socio-economically disadvantaged students. This suggests that the program succeeded in allocating its resources to high need, harder-to-reach children and families who were likely to benefit from the intervention.

As in previous school years, the evaluation documented strong, positive perceptions of the program held by key stakeholders, including school personnel and parents and family members. Parents surveyed at family dinners consistently communicated that participation in HOME WORKS! made them feel more welcomed and connected to their child's school (97%) and helped them cultivate positive relationships with their children's teachers (91%). Secondary school staff (79%) and PTLT school staff (77%) also felt that the program had improved their relationships with parents and families.

For the current 2018-19 school year, to further capture parent feedback and create a mechanism for parents to convey any concerns, the evaluation team introduced a brief electronic survey that parents will be invited to complete at the conclusion of each home visit. This additional survey tool should yield further feedback to help refine program implementation and ensure that family needs are being met.

The HOME WORKS! organization also made substantial investments in 2017-18 into efforts to strengthen internal management systems and organizational infrastructure to promote stronger school oversight, monitoring and accountability. These efforts included the development of new tools, processes, and procedures for (1) recruiting and vetting new schools, (2) facilitating school-based planning to maximize implementation success, and (3) actively monitoring school performance to systematically intervene once problems or barriers are identified. These investments also included continuing development of the Knack database and its user-interface and reporting capabilities. The purpose of this work was to provide HOME WORKS! staff and

school stakeholders with real-time access to programmatic information that could be used for data-driven planning and decision-making. This work is ongoing.

HOME WORKS! also continued to prioritize research and evaluation by supporting and facilitating implementation of the IES-funded RCT in St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS). The RCT will provide more rigorous measurement of school and participant outcomes associated with home visit participation.

Areas of Future Focus

Findings from the 2017-18 school year suggest that **supporting parent engagement through home visits can be challenging and resource-intensive** and requires a significant commitment to meet or exceed program expectations. Accordingly, the evaluation team identified a number of challenges to implementation across schools that should be a focus of future quality improvement efforts.

Notably, adoption of the HOME WORKS! parent engagement model(s) was uneven across school settings. More specifically, there was wide variation observed across active schools both in levels of staff participation, and in numbers of students and families reached. Project-wide, schools successfully completed visits with about three-quarters of students and families (79%) initially prioritized for participation, exceeding the 65% targeted benchmark. This figure positively compares to a much lower 55% level of attainment in the previous school year. However, one-third of schools (32%) revised their priority goals mid-stream when it became clear that original targets were unattainable. This suggests that **schools and the HW! organization may need to be more realistic when setting targets for the school year.** Further, because the process for setting targets was not well-documented, it was difficult to meaningfully compare performance across schools based on these school-defined goals. For example, schools that set relatively modest goals may have met or exceeded them with only a small number of visits relative to other school or relative to their school populations.

Moving forward, the evaluation team has recommended setting performance targets that are based on staff participation relative to number of staff members in the school building, and student and family participation relative to the potential pool of eligible families (i.e., families of students enrolled in a classroom where the teacher has opted to conduct home visits). This transition should help the HOME

WORKS! organization better interpret schools' commitment to and involvement with the program.

Ultimately, **school-level data on actual home visits uncovered significant differences in implementation success across schools.** At the building level 60% of all schools active in the program exceeded or far-exceeded their priority student goal, and 40% feel short. Nine schools reached more than 80 students, with one veteran school reaching more than 300, contributing to a school-wide culture of positive parent engagement. By contrast, 6 schools each visited fewer than 20 students. For schools implementing two visit models, less than half of all students with first visits received second visits (41%), further highlighting implementation challenges.

One factor influencing the number of visits completed and the ability of schools to meet performance targets was the timing of the program roll-out and implementation of key elements, including staff training and initiation of first visits. Only 60% of first visits and 78% of second visits fell within the planned visit window, meaning that **many visits were being implemented outside of an optimal time frame for the intervention (e.g., too late in the school year to impact student performance).** The data also showed a **relationship between program start date and total number of visits completed in each school, with schools starting visits later reporting fewer visits overall.** This speaks to the **need for HW! staff to work closely with schools in the early phases of implementation to ensure that visitors are trained and to remove any barriers to implementation, so that schools can begin immediately scheduling visits post-training.** This may prevent unnecessary delays and will allow schools to capitalize on the energy and momentum generated through training.

These findings collectively reinforce the need for stronger planning and management practices for assessing school readiness, and better mechanisms to support data-driven accountability and timely intervention with struggling schools. These strategies, as well as strategies granting schools more discretion in customizing program components, have been a major of focus of the organization's internal assessment and improvement efforts in 2017-18. It is hoped that these new strategies will continue to strengthen implementation quality and continue to advance the goals of positively engaging Missouri families in their children's education and positive futures.