



**TEACHER  
HOME VISIT PROGRAM**

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**2009-2010 EVALUATION REPORT**

**MAPLEWOOD RICHMOND HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
VALLEY PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**PREPARED FOR:**

*The Greater St. Louis Community Foundation*

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# Teacher Home Visit Program (THVP)

## Executive Summary

The Teacher Home Visit Program (THVP) is founded on the premise that student academic success and personal growth grow out of a trusting partnership between home and school. A stronger relationship between teachers and their students' families will lead to increased parental involvement in the academic success of their children at home, greater family participation in school activities, improved communication between teachers and parents/guardians, fewer student discipline referrals and absences and improved student academic performance.

To establish and solidify this partnership, pairs of teachers visit students' homes twice each academic year. The first visit focuses on relationship building and is a time when teachers can learn more about the students, the family, and the parents/guardians' dreams and expectations for their children. The parents/guardians in turn also have an opportunity to get to know the teachers, become more comfortable communicating with them, and to learn what to expect from the school. In the second visit, the teachers focus on the academic performance of the students—areas in which the students excel and areas that require attention. In addition, two "family events" are held each year at school with participating THVP families designed to foster the continued development of the school-home partnership.

In 2009-2010, the Teacher Home Visit Program was implemented in three school districts in the St. Louis metropolitan area including the Early Childhood Center and elementary, middle and high schools in the Maplewood/Richmond Heights School District (MRH), three elementary schools and one early childhood center in the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS), and the Valley Park School District (VP) Elementary School (See Table 1). In SLPS and MRH, all students in the early childhood centers and elementary schools were the focus of the visits. In MRH middle and high schools, only selected students considered to be at-risk were included in the program; and in VP, the only students who were visited were students from the City of St. Louis who came to VP through the largest and oldest voluntary desegregation program in the U.S.

**A total of 1,276 teacher home visits were completed by teachers in all of the participating schools.**

During the 2009-2010 school year, evaluators at the University of Missouri conducted surveys of teachers, parents/guardians and students, held teacher and student focus groups, analyzed school performance data and observed THVP-sponsored family events. Findings from each of the participating districts are described below.

**Table 1: Schools Participating in the THVP in 2009-2010**

District	Early Childhood	Elementary	Middle School	High School
Valley Park		VP Elementary (grades K-5, students in voluntary desegregation program)		
Maplewood Richmond Heights	MRH Early Childhood Center (preK-1)	MRH Elementary (grades 2-5)	MRH Middle (grades 6-8)	MRH High (grades 9-12)
St. Louis Public Schools	Stix Early Childhood Center PreK-2)	Buder Elementary (grades K-5) Dunbar Elementary (grades K-6) Henry Elementary (grades K-5)		

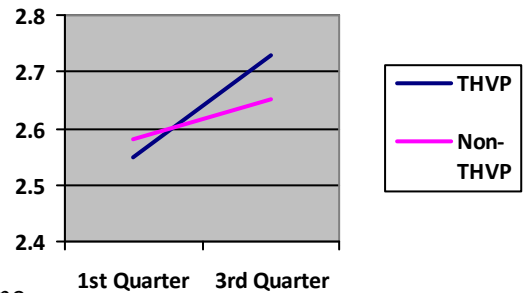
**Home Visit Participation**

- During the 2009-2010 school year, 421 families from MRH (about 60% of the families targeted) received visits from participating teachers. This is more than twice the number of families visited in the previous school year.
- Original projections were that 70 first visits and 70 second visits would be made by pairs of teachers from each participating school in the St. Louis Public Schools (a total of 560 home visits), but this number was exceeded by about 36% (759 total visits).
- The number of home visits in Valley Park Elementary School decreased from 76 visits in 2008-2009 to 34 visits in 2009-2010 because of a change in administration and the need for the new principal to focus on her new responsibilities.

## Academic Impact

- At SLPS, THVP student grades in math improved significantly more than the grades of non-THVP students. There were no other significant differences between the two groups of students on other measures of success, including reading grades, and Acuity benchmark scores, a test measuring reading and math progress.
- Most (85%) SLPS students who responded to the student survey said they tried harder in school after the home visits and 75% said they were trying harder on homework. A high percentage (69%) of students also believed they were doing better in school after the home visit.
- In general, SLPS parents/guardians who received home visits reported more contact with the schools and more frequent attendance at school events after their visits. They also felt there had been positive changes at home including establishment of rules about homework and limits on television viewing.
- A majority (51%) of SLPS teachers reported improvement in academic performance and behavior with at least some of their students.
- At MRH, analysis of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade student performance between Winter 2009 and Spring 2010 was measured with the Fountas and Pinnell standardized assessment. Data showed significant improvement among both THVP and non-THVP students with greater improvement among 5<sup>th</sup> grade THVP students compared to non-THVP 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

1st and 3rd Quarter Math Grades



*"The teacher home visit program helped me to become a better teacher."*  
- MRH elementary school teacher

- Analysis of student performance measured by the AIMSweb (also a standardized test for grades 2-5) assessment of MRH elementary students showed that 2<sup>nd</sup> grade THVP students improved significantly more than non-THVP students.

## Attendance

- There was significant improvement in attendance among MRH students on free or reduced lunch, with increased attendance among THVP students and decreased attendance among non-THVP students. Among African American students on free or reduced lunch, slightly more THVP students improved their attendance compared to non-THVP students.

- When MRH students with poor attendance (defined as less than 90%) were examined, attendance among both THVP and non-THVP students improved, but there was greater improvement among THVP students. The strongest findings were found for those youth on free or reduced lunch. Among THVP students, average attendance increased by 5.4% while average attendance increased by only 1.9% among other students. This pattern was also present among African American students where there was a 5.7% increase among THVP students compared to 3.9% among non-THVP students.

### Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

- Among VP students who participated in focus groups, all liked the program and would like to have another visit. They also were very enthusiastic about the family event held at their school.
- All teachers from VP who responded to the survey reported that visits had helped their relationship with the students. Almost all (98%) said that the program was valuable. A high percentage (84%) said that THVP helped their communication with the parents/guardians and around half believed that there was some academic improvement among the students after the visits. (51%).
- SLPS teachers were more likely to report improvement in communication with both the parents/guardians and the students after the home visits.
- Around three-fourths (74%) of parents at SLPS felt “very connected” to their child’s school after their home visit compared to only 48% before the home visit.
- Most THVP families from MRH reported that they were much more comfortable contacting their children’s’ teachers after the home visit, they appreciated the opportunity to meet with the teachers, and they believed that the visits helped their children to feel less anxious about the start of school.
- MRH teachers reported in focus groups that the home visits helped them to understand their students better and to communicate more effectively with them. They also stated that communication with the families improved because of the visits. Teachers who took part in the focus groups were very committed to participating in the program.

*“I liked her going to my house because she made me do better on learning subtraction and addition.”*  
- Elementary school student

*“I am a working mom so I frequently feel disconnected from my child's school experience. The home visit provided me with the opportunity to ask questions of the teachers in an uninterrupted setting.”*  
- SLPS elementary school parent

## Recommendations:

### ***School Program Participation***

- Mid-year review of THVP implementation at participating schools is recommended to determine whether the program should continue the following year. Criteria for this assessment should include teacher participation in THVP, home visit completion, adherence to the program model and participation in the third-party evaluation.
- Schools must follow design of the program and schedule family events *after* home visits have been completed in order to build upon the impact of the visits.
- It is important to help parents/guardians to know how they can help their children academically. Second visits are designed to focus on academics and thus it is recommended that the after the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training has been strengthened, teachers be encouraged to complete 2<sup>nd</sup> visits.

### ***1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Visit Recommendations***

- Some teachers from each district indicated that most parents/guardians appreciated having the visits prior to the start of school. Likewise, many parents/guardians commented that summer visits helped to diminish their apprehensions as well as those of their children. This increased their comfort level and reportedly that of their children. A difficulty with summer visits in SLPS is the fact that many students are not enrolled until the first day of school. Nevertheless, it is recommended that teachers continue to make as many visits as possible prior to the beginning of the school year.
- Because students participating in the THVP at VP live in the City of St. Louis (about 15-20 miles from VP) and thus travel for teachers to student homes is lengthy and challenging, teachers and administrators from VP stated that they would prefer to have the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit at school. This program change may achieve the goals of the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit provided that the teachers have one-on-one time with parents/guardians, but it would need to be explored further.

### ***Overall Home Visit Training Recommendations***

- There were some concerns about the trainings expressed by the teachers, particularly the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training. To enhance these trainings, it is recommended that the use of staff development days or Saturdays for training be explored along with the possibility of conducting the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> visit trainings on the same day.

- Many teachers expressed the desire that trainings be held during the summer so that they could begin visits during the summer or as soon as the school year begins. It is recommended that trainings be scheduled earlier in the summer to accommodate the teachers and ensure the 1<sup>st</sup> home visits start at the beginning of the school year.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> visit trainings should strongly emphasize the importance of frequent communication by teachers with *all* parents/guardians regarding students' academic achievement. About 40% of parents/guardians at SLPS "strongly agreed" that teachers contacted them more frequently about this matter after the home visits, but student achievement in the participating schools is still low.
- It is recommended that both trainings stress the need for teachers to increase communication with families about *positive behavior*. At MRH, only 17% of parents/guardians strongly agreed that the school contacted them when their child had done something well, while almost twice as many (30%) strongly agreed that the school contacted them when there were concerns about their child's behavior.
- The fact that transportation is available for parents/guardians to visit the schools should be emphasized during the trainings so that teachers in all districts will encourage parents/guardians to utilize this service if it is needed in order to spend some time seeing the school and the work that their child is doing.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Visit Training Recommendations**

- Many teachers reported lower satisfaction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training. As compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> visit training, twice as many teachers at SLPS (23%) rated the 2<sup>nd</sup> training as either fair or poor. A total of 10% of SLPS teachers felt unprepared to make the 2<sup>nd</sup> visits after the training. MRH teachers who had participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training agreed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> training was not as effective as the 1<sup>st</sup>. This training needs to be strengthened.
- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training, it is important to stress the need for teachers to keep parents/guardians informed of the curriculum so that they might be able to reinforce the lessons and assist their children. Only 13% of middle school and 20% of elementary parents/guardians at MRH reported that the school communicated with them about the current subjects being taught in their child's classes.

- It is recommended that the 2<sup>nd</sup> training stress the importance of encouraging parents to closely monitor homework, especially with middle school parents/guardians. Only 62% of MRH middle school parents/guardians reported checking for homework assignments on a daily basis compared to 89% of elementary parents/guardians, and only 44% of middle school parents/guardians checked for completion in contrast to 91% of elementary school parents/guardians.
- One of the primary goals of the THVP is to increase student academic performance. Only 26% of parents/guardians from MRH “strongly agreed” the school contacted them when concerned about academic performance. It is recommended that the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training stress the importance of increasing contact with parents/guardians both when there are concerns about student academics and to report student successes.
- Only 62% of middle school parents/guardians reported checking for homework assignments on a daily basis compared to 89 % of elementary parents/guardians, and only 44% of middle school parents/guardians checked for completion in contrast to 91% of elementary school parents/guardians. It is recommended that the need for close monitoring of homework be stressed and reinforced with middle school parents/guardians.
- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training, teachers should be encouraged to keep parents/guardians informed of the curriculum so that they can reinforce the lessons and assist their children. At MRH, only 13% of middle school and 20% of elementary parents/guardians reported that the school communicates with them about the current subjects being taught in their children’s’ classes.

## **Teacher Home Visit Program Detailed Findings**

The Teacher Home Visit Program (THVP) is founded on the premise that student academic success and personal growth grow out of a trusting partnership between home and school. A stronger relationship between teachers and their students' families will lead to increased parental involvement in the academic success of their children at home, greater family participation in school activities, improved communication between teachers and parents/guardians, fewer student discipline referrals and absences and improved student academic performance.

To establish and solidify this partnership, pairs of teachers visit students' homes twice each academic year. The first visit focuses on relationship building and is a time when teachers can learn more about the students, the family, and the parents/guardians' dreams and expectations for their children. The parents/guardians in turn also have an opportunity to get to know the teachers, become more comfortable communicating with them, and to learn what to expect from the school. In the second visit, the teachers focus on the academic performance of the students—areas in which the students excel and areas that require attention. Tips are offered to the parents to provide concrete ways that they can support their child's academic success. Teachers also give a "learning bag" with useful school supplies and learning aids to each family. In addition, two "family events" are held each year at school with participating THVP families designed to foster the continued development of the school-home partnership.

Through relationships developed by the two teacher home visits and family events, the program aims to:

- improve academic achievement and test scores
- decrease discipline referrals
- increase student attendance
- increase parental involvement (including parent/teacher conferences)
- increase homework completion
- improve behavior and attitudes about school

All teachers participating in the THVP are required to attend two training sessions that familiarize them with the program goals and help to prepare them for effective home visits. Teachers go on the home visits in pairs and after the visit they record the most important things about the student and family that can help others in the school support the student's success. In addition to the home visits, a family event following each visit is offered at the schools. A critical part of the home visit is for the teacher to extend an invitation to the family events, to encourage family attendance, and to arrange transportation if needed to get the family to the school. These events:

- 1) reinforce the relationship that is being established between the teacher and the family
- 2) let the family know that their attendance at school events is important
- 3) give families the opportunity to enjoy an evening at the school, becoming familiar with the building, the principal and other staff members while continuing to forge a bond that will support their child's success

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the THVP was implemented in three school districts, targeting the students and families as follows:

- 1) Valley Park (VP), specifically with the elementary school voluntary desegregation program students, grades K-5
- 2) Maplewood Richmond Heights (MRH) with all early childhood (preK-1) and elementary students (2-5) and with selected middle and high school students
- 3) St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) at Buder (K-5), Dunbar (K-6), and Henry (K-5) elementary schools and Stix Early Childhood Center (preK-2) with all students

This was the fourth year of implementation in VP, the second year in MRH and the first in SLPS. Table 2 presents the number of visits and number of students visited at each participating school district.

**Table 2: Teacher Home Visits, SLPS, VP, MRH 2009-2010**

	1 <sup>st</sup> Visit	2 <sup>nd</sup> Visit	Total # Visits	Total # Students
<b>SLPS</b>				
Buder	193	42	235	193
Dunbar	93	51	144	93
Henry	112	49	161	112
Stix	133	86	219	133
<b>Total SLPS</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>759 visits</b>	<b>531 students</b>
<b>Valley Park</b>				
Elementary	21	13	34	21
<b>Total VP</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>34 visits</b>	<b>21 students</b>
<b>MRH</b>				
ECC	196	61	257	196
Elementary	169	0	169	169
Middle	25	0	25	25
High School	31	1	32	31
<b>Total MRH</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>483 visits</b>	<b>421 students</b>
<b>Combined</b>				
<b>All THVP Schools</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>1276 visits</b>	<b>973 students</b>

## Evaluation

A logic model was developed to visually demonstrate the evaluation of the program. The model highlights the goals of the program, identifies the indicators linked to achievement of each goal, and describes the method, the instruments used to measure the indicators, and the data to be collected for analysis. The outcomes to be assessed and the information sources are as follows:

- **Improve student achievement** (reading and math grades, standardized test scores; student, teacher and parent/guardian surveys)
- **Improve student attendance** (attendance records, parent/guardian surveys)
- **Improve student behavior** (discipline records, student survey, teacher survey, parent/guardian survey)
- **Increase student attachment to school** (student, teacher and parent/guardian surveys)

- **Improve school/home relationship** (teacher and parent/guardian surveys; interview with administrators)
- **Increase parent/guardian involvement in school** (parent/guardian and teacher surveys, documentation of parent attendance at family events, conferences)
- **Increase parent/guardian activities at home to support academic achievement** (parent/guardian surveys)

The evaluation included several data collection efforts to provide a comprehensive assessment of program effectiveness, however, availability of these data was not uniform across the districts. The data collection methods included surveys that were developed for all participants including parents/guardians, students and teachers; focus groups with students and teachers; and analysis of existing reports. Quantitative data were requested from SLPS and MRH including student attendance, grades, standardized test scores and discipline.

**Quantitative Data collection:** SLPS and MRH school districts were asked to provide specific data for each student that would allow measurement of the impact of the program on school performance and behavior. Indicators of performance include attendance, grades, standardized test scores, and discipline referrals. Analysis of 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter student data from MRH and SLPS is being used to determine the degree of change over the course of the school year that might be attributed to the home visits; collection of these data is still ongoing. Additionally, in SLPS these data are being collected for all students in each of the participating schools so that a comparison can be made between indicators for students who received home visits and who did not. These data were not collected from Valley Park, however, because the number of visits conducted was too small to make meaningful statements about the program's effectiveness.

**Surveys:** Surveys were developed for all stakeholders and were provided in hard copy as well as online.

*Teacher Surveys:* The teacher survey served two major functions: 1) to provide information about teacher attitudes toward the program, barriers to and incentives for their involvement, the effectiveness of the training sessions; and 2) to provide information about their experience with the visits and their perceptions of program impact on their relationship with the students and families, on the student's academic performance, behavior, attitudes and attendance and on parental involvement with the school. They were also asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program and to provide suggestions for improvement.

*Parent/Guardian Surveys:* Parents/guardians were asked to rate their experience with the visits and to state whether there had been positive, negative or no change in 1) their comfort level and communication with the teacher and the school; 2) the number of their contacts with the teacher and their involvement with school activities including parent-teacher conferences; and 3) their child's behavior, academic performance, and attitude toward school attendance after the home visit. Parents/guardians were also asked whether the school contacted them more frequently to let them know when their child had done well or when there were academic or behavioral concerns. Comments about the program and ways it could be improved were also requested.

*Student Surveys:* Students were asked how they felt about having the teacher come to their home to visit and whether that visit had changed their comfort with asking questions of the teacher and in general communication with the teacher and whether it had changed their behavior or their eagerness to attend school. They were also asked whether they tried harder to get their homework done or to do well in school after the teacher visit to their home.

***Focus groups:*** Focus groups were held with teachers in Maplewood Richmond Heights and with youth in Valley Park in order to obtain qualitative information from the teacher and student perspectives. These are described in detail in the sections pertaining to these districts.

The following sections present the detailed findings from each of the participating school districts.

## Maplewood Richmond Heights

### Summary of Implementation

The superintendent of the MRH school district is deeply committed to teacher home visits and believes that establishing a strong bond between parents/guardians and the schools is the key to success for the students. There is an expectation for all teachers in the early childhood center and the elementary schools to participate in the program if at all possible, and through both surveys and focus groups, teachers have overwhelmingly expressed their willingness to participate. Students in the ECC and elementary schools are “looped” and thus have the same teacher for two consecutive years, so rather than having the two visits made in the same year, the first home visit is generally made during the first year of a student’s experience with a teacher and the second visit is made the next year. In the middle and high schools, only selected students considered to be at high risk are included in the home visit program. A total of 60 teachers from the district participated in the program in 2009-2010. Each school held a family event in the Fall of 2009. These events were open to all students and their families, including those who had and had not received a home visit in the past. In addition to introducing families to the school staff and allowing families to tour the schools, the events were also used to encourage prospective parents/guardians to participate in the home visit program.

Teacher home visits have been conducted at all schools in the Maplewood-Richmond Heights (MRH) school district since 2008. In preparation for the home visits, all participating teachers are required to participate in THVP training. In 2009-2010, four THVP trainings were held in which thirty-five teachers were trained. In that same school year, the program intended to reach a total of approximately 700 families; about 60% of these families (421) received visits from participating teachers. This is more than twice the number of families visited in the previous school year. According to the data set provided by the MRH School District, a total of 483 visits were conducted in the district with some families receiving a second visit during the year. Many of the home visits were completed in the summer. See Table 3 for detailed home visits for each school.

***From the feedback I've received, the relationship is immediately enhanced between teachers and families."***  
*-- Superintendent of MRH School District*

**Table 3: Number of MRH Teacher Home Visits 2009-2010**

	Early Childhood Center	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Entire District
<b>Total student body</b>	296	399	167	379	1,241
Total number of families who received home visits	196	169	25	31	421
Number of African American students	94	151	73	197	515
Number of African American families who received home visits	53	51	12	7	123
<b>Total Number of Home Visits</b>	257	169	25	32	483

### **Challenges in Recruitment of African American Families**

The overall purpose of THVP is to increase the academic success, and thereby the future opportunities for students from low-performing schools with a high percentage of families qualifying for free and reduced lunch. In 2009, 52.9% of the MRH student body received free or reduced lunch. Forty-one percent (41%) of the student body was African American; however, of the 528 African American students enrolled in 2009-2010, only 123, or 23.8%, received home visits. In the 2010-2011 school year, MRH is attempting to learn more about the barriers that have existed in establishing home visits with many of the African American families and to provide opportunities for teachers to engage African American families before the actual home visit. The district will implement changes to the recruitment plans including:

- More flexibility with scheduling visits (e.g., weekends)
- A 50% increase in home visits to African American families
- Documentation of the reasons why home visits to more African American families were not completed during the 2009-2010 school year
- Development of a district-wide African American parent liaison group to assist with increasing receptivity to home visits among the disengaged African American parents/guardians

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of the MRH THVP in 2009-2010 included the following activities:

- 1) Quantitative data analysis of standardized test scores and student attendance
- 2) Parent/guardian surveys of program satisfaction
- 3) A focus group with teachers to learn their perceptions of and experience with the THVP

## **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The MRH school district provided the evaluators with data on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter attendance for all students including those who did and did not receive a home visit. Data were also provided for:

- 1) Elementary school student standardized test scores for Fall, Winter and Spring 2009-2010<sup>1</sup>
- 2) Math Level Indicators for middle school students for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years
- 3) Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) test scores (grades 3-9) for 2008-2009
- 4) Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) scores (grades 9 – 11) for 2009-2010
- 5) Terra Nova (add to glossary)

At of the time of this writing individual MAP test scores for 2009-2010 are not yet available. The next school year report will allow comparisons of MAP data from 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 and will assess DRP score differences between these school years.

## **Attendance**

Attendance for all MRH students for 2009-2010 was approximately 94% with no significant change from the prior year. Attendance among THVP students was slightly higher than attendance among non-THVP students both in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. While there was slight improvement in attendance among THVP students and a slight decrease in attendance among other students, these changes were not statistically significant. Attendance patterns were similar among African American students, with slight increases among THVP students and slight decreases among other students. However, there were significant differences among those on free/reduced lunch, with THVP students increasing and non-THVP students decreasing their attendance. Among African American students on free/reduced lunch, there was a close to significant change with more improvement among THVP students. See Table 4.

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<sup>1</sup> The two standardized assessments used for elementary school students are the AIMSWeb and the Fountas and Pinnell. AIMSWeb assesses students three times per year for universal screening (early identification), general education progress monitoring, and AYP accountability. Fountas and Pinnell is a leveled literacy Intervention that assesses reading competency three times a year. Scores for Winter and Spring administrations of the Fountas and Pinnell were available for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade MRH students for Winter and Spring 2010.

If only the students with low attendance (defined here as less than 90%) are examined, similar patterns emerge. Both THVP and non-THVP student attendance improved, but there was greater improvement among THVP students. Among African American students, there was a 5.7% increase among THVP students compared to 3.9% among non-THVP students. This pattern also holds true for students on free or reduced lunch, with a 5.4% increase among THVP students and only 1.9% among other students. See Table 4.

**Table 4: MRH Attendance Data 2008-2009 and 2009-2010: All Schools**

<b>Attendance</b>				
	2008-2009	2009-2010	Change	Sample Size
<i>All Students</i>	94.4%	94.3%	-.1%	951
THVP students	95.3%	95.5%	+.2%	319
non-THVP students	93.5%	93.1%	-.4%	632
<i>African American Students</i>				
African American THVP	94.4%	95.0%	+.6%	91
African American non-THVP	92.9%	92.8%	-.1%	279
<i>Free and Reduced Lunch students*</i>				
Free and Reduced Lunch THVP	94.4%	94.9%	+.5%	131
Free and Reduced Lunch non-THVP	93.5%	92.9%	-.6%	373
<i>African American Free and Reduced Lunch Students **</i>				
African American THVP free and reduced Lunch	94.2%	94.9%	+.7%	72
African American non-THVP free and reduced lunch	93.7%	93.1%	-.6%	223
<b>Students with Low Attendance (<i>less than 90% average attendance</i>)</b>				
<i>All Students</i>	83.5%	86.5%	+3.0%	137
THVP students	85.3%	90.3%	+5.0%	30
non-THVP students	82.9%	85.5%	+2.6%	107
<i>African American Students</i>				
African American THVP	85.4%	91.1%	+5.7%	15
African American non-THVP	80.8%	84.7%	+3.9%	50
<i>Free and Reduced Lunch Students ***</i>				
Free and Reduced Lunch THVP	84.8%	90.2%	+5.4%	23
Free and Reduced Lunch non-THVP	84.8%	86.7%	+1.9%	69

\*Difference is statistically significant (right direction) (p=.04)

\*\*Difference is close to statistical significance (right direction) (p=.087)

\*\*\*Difference is close to statistical significance (right direction) (p=.078)

**Academic Performance**

*Fountas and Pinnell Scores:* A total of 291 students in 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grades completed both the Winter 2009 and Spring 2010 Fountas and Pinnell assessments. Analysis of change showed improvement among both THVP and non-THVP students with a statistically significant difference between the 5<sup>th</sup> grade THVP and non-THVP scores<sup>2</sup>. Among African Americans, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade THVP students improved slightly more than non-THVP students except in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. None of these differences were statistically significant. Among students on free or reduced lunch, THVP students in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade did slightly better than non-THVP students; the 5<sup>th</sup> grade differences were close to significant.<sup>3</sup> See Table 5.

**Table 5: MRH Fountas and Pinnell Scores (Elementary School Students)  
Change from Winter 2009 to Spring 2010**

	All Students	African Americans	Free and Reduced Lunch
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade*</b>			
THVP	1.99	2.42	2.42
non-THVP	2.10	2.21	2.21
<b>3rd Grade</b>			
THVP	1.89	2.78	2.13
non-THVP	1.92	2.36	2.00
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>			
THVP	1.55	1.53	1.62
non-THVP	2.10	2.00	2.08
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>			
THVP	3.00	2.59	2.86
non-THVP	.63	1.75	1.43

*AIMSWeb Scores:* Analysis of change in AIMSWeb scores were conducted for each grade level (2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade). THVP students improved significantly more than non-THVP students in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; there were no significant differences between the two groups in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade. Among African American students, there were more patterns of positive change among THVP students, with 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders all improving at a greater rate than 5<sup>th</sup> graders. See Tables 6 and 7.

<sup>2</sup> P=.005. The p value indicates that one can be 96% certain that the differences in the grades of the THVP- and non-THVP students were not due to chance.

<sup>3</sup> P=.100

**Table 6: MRH Change in AIMSWeb Benchmark Scores**

**Fall 2009 – Spring 2010  
(Sample Size = 391)**

	Fall 2009	Winter 2010	Spring 2010	Change
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade*</b>				
THVP	66.53	94.77	113.37	+46.83
non-THVP	40.36	53.08	80.52	+40.16
<b>3rd Grade</b>				
THVP	97.81	117.73	132.04	+34.23
non-THVP	79.85	96.28	122.02	+42.17
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>				
THVP	103.36	124.97	139.12	+35.76
non-THVP	87.32	97.36	125.09	+37.77
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>				
THVP	133.15	153.65	163.50	+30.35
non-THVP	106.54	125.98	132.02	+25.47

**\*Statistically significant differences in positive direction (p=.045)**

**Table 7: MRH AIMSWeb Scores  
African American Students  
(2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade) (n=106)**

	Fall 2009	Winter 2010	Spring 2010	Change
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b>				
THVP	33.42	56.08	74.75	+41.33
non- THVP	42.44	50.14	79.06	+36.62
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>				
THVP	80.91	103.47	118.65	+37.74
non- THVP	76.82	79.30	102.35	+25.53
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>				
THVP	99.30	116.20	131.80	+32.50
non- THVP	78.09	89.80	113.73	+35.64
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>				
THVP	112.13	132.75	144.38	+32.25
non- THVP	76.29	103.40	98.20	+21.91

*Math Level Indicators:* MRH 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders took the math level indicator test in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. Among the total sample of youth, there were no significant differences between the two test administrations; among 7<sup>th</sup> graders, scores were slightly lower among THVP students; among 8<sup>th</sup> graders scores were considerably higher among THVP students, however only six THVP students had scores for both 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. The number of students who received home visits was too low to conduct analyses for African Americans and students on free or reduced lunch.

**Table 8: MRH Math Level Indicators Raw Score 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
(Sample Size = 124)**

	Fall 2009	Winter 2010	Change
<b>7th Grade</b>			
THVP	37.16	36.33	-0.83
non-THVP	38.87	38.43	-0.44
<b>8th Grade</b>			
THVP	36.50	41.00	+4.5
non-THVP	32.00	32.96	+0.96

### Parent/Guardian Surveys

In October 2009, parents/guardians of students participating in the THVP completed a survey regarding their perceptions of program, family life and school connectedness. A total of 94 surveys were completed with an overall response rate of 24%. Twenty-seven percent of the parents/guardians at the ECC who completed a survey, 42% of the elementary parents/guardians and 63% of the middle school parents/guardians who completed a survey reported having more than one visit. Table 9 shows parent/guardian responses about contacts from the school to them regarding their children’s achievement, behavior and academics and Table 10 provides specific information about parent/guardian attitudes about the visits. In summary:

- Most parents/guardians (73%) felt the home visits were “excellent” and an additional 23% felt they were “very good.” Parents/guardians at the middle school were the most positive (81% excellent).
- When asked how comfortable they were contacting their child’s teacher prior to the home visit, 75% felt “very comfortable” and substantially more, 93%, felt “very comfortable” contacting the teachers after the home visit was conducted. All parents/guardians felt at least “somewhat comfortable” contacting the school.
- Parents/guardians of children in the ECC and elementary schools were asked how often someone read to their child at home and 82% responded “everyday.” Twenty-seven percent (27%) indicated that their child reads to someone in the family “everyday.”

- Almost all parents/guardians indicated that they had rules about doing homework. Most (83%) said an adult in the household checks everyday to see if their child has homework and 80% check everyday to see if the homework is completed. The percentage of middle school parents/guardians that checked “every day” to see whether their child had homework and whether it was complete was lower than the percentage of elementary students (62% vs. 89% and 44% vs. 91%).
- When asked if they set limits on the amount of time watching television, movies and/or playing video games, 75% said they did set limits. Parents/guardians (67%) indicated that their child was in bed by 9:00 pm on school nights. Many (70%) parents/guardians said their child participated in school activities on a regular basis.
- Virtually all parents/guardians at the elementary and middle schools had contacted the school at least once the previous year. Less than half (43%) of the parents/guardians “frequently” contacted their child’s teacher in the previous year.
- When asked how well the school communicated with them, 17% of parents/guardians “strongly agreed” that the school contacted them when their child had done something well , while 30% of parents/guardians “strongly agreed” the school contacted them when they had concerns about their child’s behavior and 26% “strongly agreed” the school contacted them when concerned about academic performance.
- Only 13% of middle school and 20% of elementary parents/guardians reported that the school communicated with them about the current subjects being taught in their child's classes.

Parents/guardians were asked to write comments about their experience with the home visits. A few of the parent comments are below, taken verbatim from the surveys:

- *“[My child] was so excited and felt special that [teacher] came for a visit. We enjoyed the one-on-one time.” (ECC parent/guardian)*
- *“It was a complete relief meeting our teacher. It most definitely eased ours and our child’s minds.” (ECC parent/guardian)*
- *“Nice to visit with the teachers in our home & have a chance to get to know them better and them us. Really appreciated the positive tone of the visit (i.e. what areas would you like them to grow in-strength).” (ECC parent/guardian)*
- *“Two teachers came and chatted with whole family. Awesome! Especially at the 4th grade age. Not too cool to be excited about home visit.” (Elementary parent/guardian)*

- *“My son is always excited to see his teacher "on his turf". The teacher asked questions to get to know our son better and he really liked being the focus of her attention.” (Elementary school parent/guardian)*
- *“I think it was good for my child to see that teachers are the same as they are. To connect with each other outside of school.” (Middle school parent/guardian)*
- *“We had a chance to express concerns and situations that there isn’t time to otherwise. It was easy, relaxed, and not pressured.” (Middle school parent/guardian)*
- *“It gave us a chance to put a face with a name of some at the school, makes a personal contact and allowed our children to share their interests and ask question in a relaxed setting.” (Middle school parent/guardian)*

**Table 9: MRH School Communication with Parents/Guardians**

	Strongly disagree			Disagree			Agree			Strongly agree		
	ECC	Elem	MS	ECC	Elem	MS	ECC	Elem	MS	ECC	Elem	MS
The school contacts me to let me know when my child has done something well.	7%	14%	13%	21%	6%	31%	57%	65%	31%	14%	15%	25%
The school contacts me to let me know when they have concerns about my child’s behavior.	0%	10%	7%	0%	6%	14%	62%	58%	43%	39%	25%	36%
The school contacts me to let me know when they have concerns about my child’s academic performance.	0%	9%	13%	0%	4%	27%	64%	60%	47%	36%	27%	13%
The school communicates with me about the current subjects being taught in my child’s classes.	n/a	11%	6%	n/a	4%	25%	n/a	64%	56%	n/a	21%	13%

**Table 10: MRH Parents/Guardians Responding “Excellent” or “Very Comfortable”**

	ECC	Elementary	Middle school
Generally, how did you feel about the home visit(s)?	68%	73%	81%
How comfortable did you feel contacting your child's teacher or other adults from the school before the home visit?	54%	84%	75%
How comfortable did you feel contacting your child's teachers or other adults from the school now that you have had a home visit?	86%	96%	94%

### **Teacher Focus Groups**

On November 9th, 2009, two focus groups were conducted with teachers at the Maplewood/Richmond Heights Early Childhood Center. There were nine teachers in each group, one supervisor and the school principal. All teachers had completed a first home visit training and some had completed the second training. Note takers from the evaluation team recorded responses from each of the groups. All teachers were very positive about THVP and wanted it to continue in the district. Importantly, they felt that the home visits had helped their relationships with their students and student families. Teachers’ comments included:

*“Home visits helped to break down barriers.”*

*“My relationship with the parents has improved [since the home visit].”*

*“The teacher home visit program helped me to become a better teacher.”*

*“The kids are still talking about the home visit, what they did while [the teacher] was at their home, and they want to know when [the teacher] is coming back.”*

When the teachers were asked about parent/guardian reactions to the home visits, they reported that the parents/guardians they had visited all seemed to be extremely satisfied with the visits and that there had been great improvement in their relationship. Preliminary data suggests that among those students with high rates of absenteeism at the beginning of the academic year, there was significant improvement in attendance by the end of the year.

- **Summary:** It appears that the THVP made a positive impact on the MRH community as evidenced by parent/guardian surveys and teacher focus group responses and comments. Communication between home and school reportedly improved for most participants. Analysis of 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade student performance between Winter 2009 and Spring 2010 showed significant improvement among both THVP and non-THVP students with greater improvement among 5<sup>th</sup> grade THVP students compared to non-THVP 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Analysis of student performance measured by the AIMSWeb assessment of MRH elementary students showed that 2<sup>nd</sup> grade THVP students improved significantly more than non-THVP students. There was also significant improvement in attendance among MRH students on free or reduced lunch, with increased attendance among THVP students and decreased attendance among non-THVP students. Among African American students on free or reduced lunch, slightly more THVP students improved their attendance compared to non-THVP students.

**Recommendations:**

- Teachers reported that most parents/guardians clearly appreciated having the visits prior to the start of school. This increased their comfort level and reportedly that of their children. The only difficulty with summer visits is the fact that many parents/guardians do not enroll their children until the first day of school. Nevertheless, it is recommended that teachers continue to make as many visits as possible prior to the beginning of the school year.
- Only 62% of middle school parents/guardians reported checking for homework assignments on a daily basis compared to 89 % of elementary parents/guardians, and only 44% of middle school parents/guardians checked for completion in contrast to 91% of elementary school parents/guardians. It is recommended that the need for close monitoring of homework be stressed and reinforced with middle school parents/guardians.
  - It is recommended that the trainings stress the need for teachers to increase communication with families about positive behavior and academic performance because 17% of parents/guardians “strongly agreed” that the school contacted them when their child had done something well, but when asked if the school contacted them when there were concerns about their child’s behavior, almost twice as many (30%) of parents/guardians “strongly agreed”.
- One of the primary goals of the THVP is to increase student academic performance. Only 26% of parents/guardians “strongly agreed” the school contacted them when concerned about academic performance. It is recommended that trainings stress the importance of increasing contact with parents/guardians both when there are concerns about student academics and to report student successes.

***“The teacher home visit program helped me to become a better teacher.”***  
 - MRH elementary school teacher

- It would also be important for the trainings to encourage teachers to keep parents/guardians informed of the curriculum to enable them to reinforce the lessons and assist their children. Only 13% of middle school and 20% of elementary parents/guardians reported that the school communicates with them about the current subjects being taught in their children's' classes.

## St. Louis Public School District (SLPS)

### Summary of Implementation

Three SLPS elementary schools (Buder, Dunbar, Henry) and one early childhood center (Stix Early Childhood Center) participated in the THVP during 2009-2010. Original projections were that 70 first visits and 70 second visits would be made by pairs of teachers from each school (a total of 560 home visits), but this number was exceeded by about 36% (759 total visits). Of the 90 teachers trained to conduct first home visits, 81 completed these visits.

Although family events are meant to follow the home visits in order to reinforce the effects of the visits, the fall events were held before most of the home visits had been made and thus teachers were not able to personally invite families or to arrange transportation if needed. Food was provided to encourage families to attend these events, but attendance was low at Dunbar and Henry for both events. See Table 11.

**Table 11: St. Louis Public Schools Trainings, Home Visits and Family Events**

School	Teacher Training		Home Visits		Family Event Attendance	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Home Visit Training	2 <sup>nd</sup> Home Visit Training	1 <sup>st</sup> Home Visit	2 <sup>nd</sup> Home Visit	1 <sup>st</sup> Family Event	2 <sup>nd</sup> Family Event
<b>Buder</b>	22	18	193	42	228	143
<b>Dunbar</b>	16	12	93	51	48	17 family (15 staff)
<b>Henry</b>	20	17	112	49	44	unavailable
<b>Stix</b>	32	25	133	86	91	40
<b>Total</b>	90	72	531	228	411	200 family

### Challenges

There are special challenges facing this urban district that impact the implementation of the THVP. Permanent teacher assignments to schools and classrooms are not complete when the school year begins, and final class lists are not available until some weeks after the beginning of school. This means that home visits generally cannot be made during the summer when it would be easiest for the teachers to arrange visits and when it would be most helpful to make students and families feel more comfortable and a part of the school. With the late start to first visits, many teachers found it difficult to arrange second visits.

## Evaluation

Evaluation of the St. Louis Public Schools THVP in 2009-2010 included the following activities:

- 1) Quantitative data analysis of standardized test scores, student attendance and disciplinary referrals
- 2) Parent/guardian surveys of program satisfaction
- 3) School staff survey of THVP involvement
- 4) Student surveys group of perceptions of the THVP

## Quantitative Data Analysis

### *Academic Performance Data*

The St. Louis Public Schools provided first and third quarter math and reading grades, Winter and Spring language arts and math benchmark Acuity assessment scores, and Terra Nova and MAP test scores for the 2009-2010 year. As of this writing, Acuity assessment scores from Dunbar Elementary School Winter and Spring administrations were not available. Because the Terra Nova and MAP test are administered only once a year, analysis of change in these indicators will be made in the 2010-2011 report.

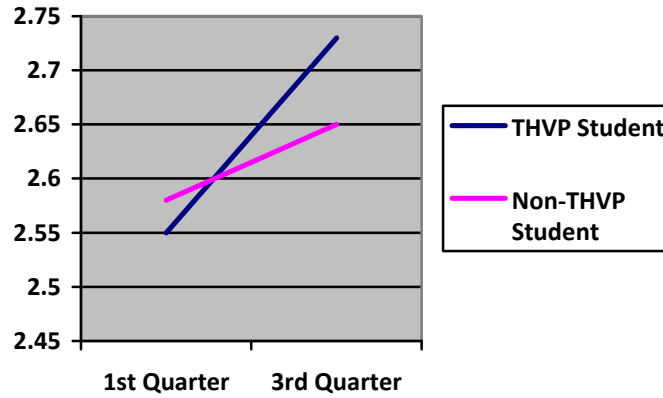
### *Math Grades*

Comparisons of THVP and non-THVP students revealed improvements for all students in math grades between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2009-2010. There was a greater increase in math grades among the THVP students and this change was statistically significant.<sup>4</sup> See Figure 1. At Buder and Henry Elementary Schools there was an increase in math grades among THVP students; grades at Dunbar decreased for both THVP and non-THVP students; math grades at Stix remained the same for both groups. See Table 12.

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<sup>4</sup> P = .04. The p value indicates that one can be 96% certain that the differences in the grades of the THVP- and non-THVP students were not due to chance. Grades are coded so that F=0; D=1; C=2; B=3; A=4.

**Figure 1 : THVP- and non-THVP Student 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Math Grades  
(Sample Size = 771)**



**Table 12: THVP- and non-THVP Student 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Math Grades:  
Total and Individual Schools**

		1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Change
<b>Total</b>	THVP	2.55	2.73	+0.18
	non-THVP	2.58	2.65	+0.07
<b>Buder</b>	THVP	2.48	2.85	+0.37
	non-THVP	2.54	2.78	+0.24
<b>Dunbar</b>	THVP	2.50	2.26	-0.24
	non-THVP	2.46	2.32	-0.14
<b>Henry</b>	THVP	2.17	2.52	+0.35
	non-THVP	2.34	2.36	+0.02
<b>Stix</b>	THVP	2.99	2.98	-0.01
	non-THVP	2.73	2.75	+0.02

\*Sample sizes: Total: 771; Buder: 256; Dunbar: 85; Henry: 154; Stix: 276

**Table 13: THVP- and non-THVP Student 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Math Grades All Schools:  
Total by Grade Level**

	THVP		Non-THVP	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
Kindergarten	2.91	3.03	2.90	2.91
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2.55	2.79	2.54	2.66
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	2.66	2.78	2.65	2.65
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	2.54	2.93	2.52	2.81
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2.45	2.68	2.44	2.55
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2.06	2.26	2.05	2.14
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2.36	2.26	2.35	2.13

*Communication Arts Grades*

While grades in Communication Arts increased at all schools, THVP student grades did not improve significantly more than those of non-THVP students. THVP student grades at both Buder and Henry did, however, increase slightly more than the grades of non-THVP students. See Tables 14 and 15.

**Table 14: THVP- and non-THVP Student 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Communication Arts Grades:  
Total and Individual Schools**

		1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Change
<b>Total</b>	THVP	2.51	2.66	+0.15
	non-THVP	2.51	2.68	+0.17
<b>Buder</b>	THVP	2.39	2.75	+0.36
	non-THVP	2.40	2.63	+0.23
<b>Dunbar</b>	THVP	2.31	2.37	+0.06
	non-THVP	2.25	2.34	+0.09
<b>Henry</b>	THVP	2.31	2.43	+0.12
	non-THVP	2.46	2.50	+0.04
<b>Stix</b>	THVP	2.87	2.99	+0.12
	non-THVP	2.72	2.83	+0.11

\*Sample sizes: Total: 771; Buder: 255; Dunbar: 85; Henry: 153; Stix: 278

**Table 15: THVP- and non-THVP Student 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Communication Arts Grades: Total by Grade Level**

	THVP		non-THVP	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter
<b>Kindergarten</b>	2.89	3.13	2.66	2.82
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>	2.58	2.75	2.46	2.55
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b>	2.25	2.64	2.64	2.87
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>	2.67	2.54	2.30	2.81
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	2.00	2.45	2.39	2.60
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	1.96	2.36	2.29	2.26
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	2.81	2.25	2.33	2.25

*Acuity Benchmark Scores*

The St. Louis Public Schools provided Acuity benchmark scores in language arts and math for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students attending Buder and Henry elementary schools. The Acuity benchmark system is designed to enable teachers to diagnose student strengths and areas of need. Data reported here reflect the percentage of questions that a student correctly answered. There were no significant differences between THVP- and non-THVP students in change between the Winter and Spring administrations.

**Table 16: THVP- and non-THVP Student Language and Communication Arts Acuity Benchmark Scores: Winter and Spring Administrations**

		Winter Admin.	Spring Admin.	Change
<b>Total</b>	THVP	53.8	54.9	+1.1
	non-THVP	62.5	60.6	-1.9
<b>Buder</b>	THVP	61.6	57.5	-4.1
	non-THVP	66.2	61.7	-4.5
<b>Dunbar</b>	THVP	NA	NA	NA
	non-THVP	NA	NA	NA
<b>Henry</b>	THVP	42.6	51.2	+8.6
	non-THVP	51.1	57.2	+6.1
<b>Stix</b>	THVP	NA	NA	NA
	non-THVP	NA	NA	NA

\*Sample sizes: Buder = 89; Henry=44; Total=133

**Table 17: THVP- and non-THVP Student Math Acuity Benchmark Scores: Winter and Spring Administrations**

		Winter Admin.	Spring Admin.	Change
<b>Total</b>	THVP	54.7	55.0	+0.3
	non-THVP	54.8	56.1	+1.3
<b>Buder</b>	THVP	57.7	57.4	-0.3
	non-THVP	57.9	60.2	+2.3
<b>Dunbar</b>	THVP	NA	NA	NA
	non-THVP	NA	NA	NA
<b>Henry</b>	THVP	47.0	49.0	+2.0
	non-THVP	50.1	50.0	-0.1
<b>Stix</b>	THVP	NA	NA	NA
	non-THVP	NA	NA	NA

\*Sample sizes: Buder = 137; Henry=70; Total=207

*Attendance*

The St. Louis Public Schools provided first and third quarter rates of attendance for all students at the four participating schools. Attendance rates for all students decreased slightly between first and third quarter with no significant differences between THVP and non-THVP students.

**Table 18: SLPS 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Attendance 2009-2010: All Schools (Sample Size = 1138)**

	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Attendance	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Attendance	Change
<b>THVP Students</b>	95.17	94.40	-.77
<b>non-THVP Students</b>	94.28	93.81	-.47

**Table 19: SLPS 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Attendance 2009-2010: Individual Schools\***

		1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Change
<b>Buder (n=313)</b>	THVP	94.35	94.05	-0.30
	non-THVP	94.22	92.90	-1.32
<b>Dunbar (n=186)</b>	THVP	94.57	92.78	-1.79
	non-THVP	91.75	90.02	-1.73
<b>Henry (n=201)</b>	THVP	97.31	97.14	-0.17
	non-THVP	96.46	97.14	+0.68
<b>Stix (n=438)</b>	THVP	95.08	94.10	-0.98
	non-THVP	94.41	94.33	-0.08

*\_Students with Poor Attendance*

When only students whose first quarter attendance rates were less than 90% are examined (10% of the total students), rates of attendance for all of these students increased, with no difference in the increases among THVP versus non-THVP students. There were no significant differences at any of the participating schools. There were too few students at Henry to be able to compare the two groups. See Tables 20 and 21.

**Table 20: SLPS 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Attendance 2009-2010:  
Low Attending Students Only (<90 %)  
(Sample Size = 199)**

	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Attendance	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Attendance	Change
THVP Students	83.85	90.31	+6.46
non-THVP Students	82.08	88.69	+6.61

**Table 21: SLPS 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Attendance 2009-2010:  
Low Attending Students Only (<90 %)  
(Sample Size = 199)**

	Sample Size		1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Change
<b>Buder</b>	61	THVP	83.99	89.31	+5.32
		non-THVP	83.73	85.51	+1.78
<b>Dunbar</b>	42	THVP	82.49	89.92	+7.43
		non-THVP	78.21	85.81	+7.60
<b>Henry</b>	20	THVP	Sample size too small to include		
		non-THVP			
<b>Stix</b>	76	THVP	85.76	92.18	+6.42
		non-THVP	85.02	91.04	+6.02

*Disciplinary Incidents*

According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data set dated November 2009 ([www.dese.mo.gov](http://www.dese.mo.gov)) reporting disciplinary actions across the four schools, there were no reported disciplinary incidents at Buder or Stix, 10 at Dunbar, and one at Henry. DESE data only includes reports of major incidents resulting in suspension for 10 days or more.

Given that information on minor disciplinary infractions is not available, it is not possible to make accurate statements regarding differences in the total number of disciplinary incidents between THVP and non-THVP students at this time. The district is currently moving to a uniform electronic data collection system that will fully document, by school, all disciplinary incidents (major and minor) by quarter. This will greatly improve the ability to analyze change both because the data reporting will be consistent across schools and because assessment of change in minor disciplinary actions will be possible.

### **Parent/Guardian Surveys**

A total of 189 parents/guardians out of the 531 who had received home visits (35% of total) completed surveys in Spring 2010. Overall, response to the program was very positive. Parents/guardians who received home visits reported more contact with the schools and more frequent attendance at school events after their visits. They also felt there had been positive changes at home including establishment of rules about homework and limits on television viewing. See Table 22.

- A majority of parents/guardians reported that there had been positive changes in rules about homework, limits on television viewing, contact with the school and their attendance at parent-teacher conferences after the home visits.
- Parent/guardian connectedness with school improved dramatically after the visits, with those feeling “very comfortable” increasing from 53% to 74%.
- Parents/guardians reported that their children’s eagerness to attend school increased after the home visits. Sixty-five percent (65%) of parents/guardians reported that their children were “very” eager to attend school before the visit and 78% reported children to be “very” eager after the visit.
- Almost all (90%) would like to have a teacher visit their home again.
- Almost 40% “strongly agreed” that their child’s teacher contacted them more often after the visits about academic and behavior concerns and when their child had done something well, but 20% “strongly disagreed” that there was additional contact after the visits.

When parents/guardians were asked for the best thing about the visits, comments included:

*“Being able to communicate with my child’s teacher after hours is a big step when it comes to having a bond with his teacher”.*

*“It was exceptional. I love knowing that staff and teachers care as much about my daughter’s education as I do.”*

*"Please keep the visits going; I think they help a ton in making the family more comfortable."*

*"Talking to the teacher regarding my child's progress and how I can help them."*

*"That the teacher was concerned enough to schedule a visit and show up."*

*"It shows that the teachers are willing to go beyond just teaching in the classroom."*

*"Getting to speak to teachers without being distracted or rushed."*

*"I am a working Mom so I frequently feel disconnected from my child's school experience. The home visit provided me with the opportunity to ask questions of the teachers in an uninterrupted setting. "*

When asked for additional comments, many expressed appreciation for the visits. There were a few negative comments that focused on the need to clean their homes before the visit, the belief that they could see the teachers at school, and the feeling that teachers were "checking up" on them.

*"I liked having the teachers visit the home. It gave them a sense of where the child lives & how the atmosphere is around them. My child, in particular, was very excited about her teacher coming to our home & talked about it for weeks. I enjoyed it."*

*"I want to take this moment and thank the teachers for visiting me. This means a lot to me and to the whole family. Thanks to them for their effort for helping my children with their education."*

*"I want ... them to bring more math books for my kids and talk with them about good behavior in the home not only in the school. Thank you very much!"*

*"I feel that the home visits are a great idea because it helps the children see that the teachers are concerned for their future just as much as the parents."*

*"My son's teachers have been a blessing from day one! My son was watched by my in-laws for the first three years of his life. So I had a lot of anxiety sending him to 'the hands of strangers' as I called it. His teachers really showed me the love that they have for everyone in his classroom. They took the time to understand my family and our needs. And even if they thought we were overprotective or too accommodating to our child, they always said it in a nice way. I always felt like I could trust them with the most precious gift ever given to me...my son. THANK YOU!"*

*"The home visit program had a positive impact on our family. I hope that you continue to do it. I think all teachers should participate. I would love for my child to know his teacher before school starts."*

**Table 22: St. Louis Public Schools Parent/Guardian Responses:  
Impact of Teacher Home Visit Program  
Number of Parents/Guardians Who Completed Survey =189**

<b>Have the home visits had an impact on any of the following?</b>				
	<b>Positive change</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>Negative change</b>	
Rules in your family about doing homework?	53%	46%	1%	
The number of times any adult in your household checks to see whether your child(ren) has homework?	61%	39%	0%	
The number of times any adult in your household checks to see whether homework is done?	58%	41%	1%	
Limits on the amount of time your child(ren) is allowed to watch TV programs, movies or play video games?	51%	47%	1%	
The time your child(ren) usually goes to bed on school nights?	42%	57%	1%	
The number of times you contacted your child(ren)'s teacher(s) or the school last year?	51%	48%	1%	
The number of times your child(ren)'s teacher(s) or the school contacted you last year?	54%	44%	2%	
The number of school events you attended?	51%	48%	1%	
The number of parent teacher conferences you attended?	51%	49%	0%	
<b>Parental sense of connection to school and student eagerness to attend school:</b>	<b>Very</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Not Very</b>	<b>Not at All</b>
How connected does parent/guardian feel to children's school <i>before</i> visit?	48%	30%	10%	1%
How connected does parent/guardian to children's school <i>after</i> visit?	74%	19%	6%	1%
How eager were their child(ren) to go to school <i>before</i> visit?	65%	27%	6%	2%
How eager were their child(ren) to go to school <i>after</i> visit?	78%	14%	6%	1%
<b>Since the home visit, my child's teacher contacts me more often...</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
About academic concerns.	40%	34%	7%	19%
About behavior concerns.	42%	32%	8%	18%
If my child has done something well.	39%	32%	9%	20%
<b>Future home visit?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>		
Parents would like another visit in the next year.	86%	14%		

## Teacher Surveys

In Spring 2010, 57 teachers out of the 81 who conducted home visits completed an on-line survey exploring their satisfaction with the trainings and home visits and the perceived impact of the program. See Table 23.

### *Program Impact*

- Generally speaking, the greatest improvement was reported in the areas of parent-teacher communication and the teacher's relationship with the students.
- Teachers reported that the majority (62%) of parents/guardians were very receptive and seemed comfortable with the home visits.
- Fewer teachers felt that the visits had significantly impacted parent contact with them, or student academic performance and behaviors, though more than half said that the program had helped either "a lot" or "a little" in these areas.
- Around half (46%) of teachers would definitely recommend THVP to other districts and the same percentage would "maybe" recommend it. Only 9% would not recommend it.
- Many (54%) felt the 1<sup>st</sup> visits were successful at developing a positive relationship between the teachers, parents/guardians and students, but many stated that parents/guardians were not as enthusiastic about the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit as they were with the 1<sup>st</sup>.

### *Training and Implementation*

- Around 60% of teachers rated the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> visit trainings as "good." A total of 27% rated the 1<sup>st</sup> visit training as "excellent"; only 16% rated the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training as "excellent" indicating that the 2<sup>nd</sup> training needs improvement.
- A majority felt that the 1<sup>st</sup> home visits were "very valuable"; fewer felt that the 2<sup>nd</sup> visits were "very valuable."
- Among those who did not participate in a 2<sup>nd</sup> visit, 22% reported that time was the major issue. Around 15% said they were not convinced of the additional benefit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit. Around 10% said that they did not feel that the training adequately prepared them to go on a 2<sup>nd</sup> visit further supporting the need for improvement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training.
- Only 16% of teachers felt that the visits were "very challenging" to set up and another 41% said they were "somewhat challenging."

Major challenges to the visits included:

- (1) Coordinating schedules with parents/guardians
- (2) Having correct phone numbers and email addresses
- (3) Parents/guardians keeping appointments

Comments from teachers were very positive. Comments included:

*"We were invited to stay for dinner at the home of one of our students whose behavior was an issue. It was a wonderful evening with this student's family and extended family. This student was so proud to see his teachers eating the types of foods he ate and enjoying being in his house, enjoying the company of his family. It was written all over his face! After that evening he became a model student! We never had another problem with his behavior and he began to work much harder, academically. It was one of best experiences of my long teaching career."*

*"There was a kindergartener who was in In-School Suspension (ISS) for hitting his teacher. This student had never been a disciplinary problem. His mom told me at the 2nd home visit that being in ISS really had a positive affect upon him... If I had not done home visits I would have never known what impact ISS had on him. His mom said his attitude and behavior really changed for the better. I appreciated her sharing that with me."*

*"I made a home visit to one of my students. As I was going home one day, I saw the daughter swinging the door open and close. The next day....I noticed a party going on....while the parent was at work. By building a relationship with the parent....I felt VERY comfortable in phoning in the antics. She was very appreciative.....She said, "You know it takes a village!"*

*"I learned more about the students when I went on home visits. The rapport with the families was better. Students were more responsive to me because they knew I could go to their houses. I found how different some of my students were at home and how to have higher expectations of them because of the information I gathered at these visits."*

**Table 23: St. Louis Public Schools Teacher Responses  
Impact of Teacher Home Visit Program  
Number of Teachers Who Completed Survey = 57**

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No not much	No, not at all
Did the home visits improve your communication with the parent/guardian?	47%	37%	14%	2%
Did parents/guardians contact them more frequently as a result of the visit?	13%	41%	39%	7%
Did you find that the home visits improved your communication with the children?	42%	35%	23%	0%
Did you find that the home visits improved your relationship with the children?	39%	53%	7%	2%
	Yes, most of them	Yes, some of them	Yes, a few of them	No, none of them
Have the children improved their academic performance as a result of the home visits?	11%	40%	35%	15%
Do the children behaved better as a result of the home visits?	16%	35%	33%	16%
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rating the quality of the trainings?				
1 <sup>st</sup> Visit Training	27%	63%	11%	0%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Visit Training	16%	61%	21%	2%
	Very valuable	Somewhat valuable	Not very valuable	Not at all valuable
How valuable were first home visits?	54%	45%	2%	0%
How valuable were second home visits?	38%	45%	17%	0%
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Recommend to other districts?	47%	45%	7%	

When teachers were asked to comment about the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> home visits, many said the 1st visits were successful at developing a positive relationship between the teachers, parents/guardians and students. A few felt families were more connected with the school after the home visit. Several suggested completing all the home visits in the first semester, having the first training in August and second training closer to second semester, but not close to parent-teacher conference day. Others mentioned that teachers and parents/guardians were not as enthusiastic about the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit as they were with the 1<sup>st</sup> home visit.

## Student Surveys

In Spring 2010, 2<sup>nd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Buder and Henry Elementary Schools and 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students at Dunbar whose families received teacher home visits completed either hard copy or an on-line survey exploring their perspectives on the effectiveness of THVP. A total of 211 students completed the survey out of 398 families of 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students who received home visits for a response rate of 53%. Almost half of the students surveyed (46%) were from Buder Elementary School; 26% from Dunbar and 24% from Henry. Around half (54%) were male and around half were female (46%).

- The majority of students (61%) liked having their teacher visit their home “a lot” and around the same percentage would like their teacher to visit their home next year. Student comments included:

*“I feel that my teacher visiting is very good because she gets to know me just a little better.”*

*“It was the best visit.”*

*“I liked her going to my house because she made me do better on learning subtraction and addition.”*

*“It was fun and good for my mom to know how good I am.”*

- Some students said that the visits made them nervous.

*“I was very nervous because I didn't know what he was going to say.”*

*“I liked my teacher coming to my home, but I was a little nervous because I didn't know if she would like my home, or my family.”*

- Twenty-five percent (25%) of the students said they did not want their teacher to visit them again. Some just stated that they did not want a visit next year, a few said preparing the home for a visit was problematic:

*“I didn't like it that much because my mom thought that the house had to be super clean and I couldn't go outside until the home visit was over.”*

- Around half of the students said that they liked coming to school more since their home visit.
- The program also helped around one-third of the students to talk more easily with their teacher to feel closer to their teachers.
- Almost all (85%) of students said they tried harder in school after the home visit. Almost as many (75%) said they were trying harder on homework after the visit.
- A large percentage (69%) felt they were doing better in school since the home visit.

**Table 24: St. Louis Public School Student Survey Findings  
Impact of Teacher Home Visit Program  
Number of Students Who Completed Surveys = 211**

	A lot	A little	Not much	Not at all
How much did you like your teachers coming to your home?	61%	25%	6%	8%
	Yes	No	Maybe	
Do you want your teacher to visit your home next year?	60%	25%	16%	
	Yes, I like it better	I like it the same	I like it less	
Has the way you feel about going to school changed since your teacher visit?	51%	40%	10%	
	It was already easy	It is easier	It is harder	It is about the same
Is it easier to talk to your teacher since your teacher's visit?	58%	33%	2%	7%
	I already felt close	I feel closer	I feel the same	I feel less close
Do you feel closer to your teachers since your teacher visited your home?	47%	33%	19%	1%
	Yes, I try harder	I try about the same	I try less hard	
Do you try harder to do well in school since the home visit?	85%	12%	3%	
	Yes, I'm doing better	I am doing about the same	No, I am not doing as well	
Are you doing better in school since your teacher's visit?	69%	25%	5%	
	Yes, I try harder	I try about the same	I try less hard	
Do you try harder to get your homework done since your teacher visited your home?	75%	23%	2%	

**Summary:** Analysis of academic performance data indicated that students participating in THVP improved their math grades more than those students not in THVP. There were no significant differences between these two groups on other indicators, including reading grades, Acuity scores, standardized assessment scores, or attendance. Minor disciplinary data were not available.

Despite the fact that home visits did not begin until after the beginning of the school year, teachers completed 36% more visits than had been projected for the year. Survey responses of parents/guardians, teachers and students indicated that the visits were highly successful in improving communication between home and school. Student self-reports of academic effort and achievement with over three-fourths of the students reporting greater effort and over two-thirds believing that their performance had improved demonstrates the power of the visits.

**Recommendations:**

- Many teachers expressed the desire that trainings be held during the summer so that they could begin visits during the summer or as soon as the school year begins. It is recommended that trainings be scheduled earlier in the summer to accommodate the teachers and ensure the 1<sup>st</sup> home visits start at the beginning of the school year. Use of staff development days or Saturdays for training should be explored along with the possibility of combining the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> visit trainings.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> visit trainings should strongly emphasize the importance of frequent communication by teachers with *all* parents/guardians regarding students' academic achievement. About 40% of parents/guardians at SLPS "strongly agreed" that teachers contacted them more frequently about this matter after the home visits, but student achievement in the participating schools is still low.
- It is recommended that the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training be strengthened as many teachers reported lower satisfaction with this training and 10% felt unprepared to make the 2<sup>nd</sup> visits after the training. The reasons for this will be explored further with the teachers in the 2010-2011 academic year.
- It is important to help parents/guardians to know how they can help their children academically. Second visits are designed to focus on academics and thus it is recommended that after the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit training has been strengthened, teachers be encouraged to complete 2<sup>nd</sup> visits.
- Frequent contact from the school to the parents/guardians and tips on curriculum areas being taught and ways to provide academic support are essential. The need for this frequent contact should be emphasized in the 2<sup>nd</sup> THVP training.

It is recommended to reinforce to the schools the importance of following the design of the program and scheduling family events *after* home visits have been completed in order to build upon the impact of the visits.

## Valley Park School District

### Summary of Implementation

The Valley Park School District has been conducting teacher home visits *for* the past four years with African American families whose children attend elementary school in Valley Park. Most of these students live in the City of St. Louis and as part of a region-wide voluntary desegregation plan are bused 45-80 minutes each way to and from Valley Park, an outlying community in St. Louis County. In the first three years of implementation, improvement in the relationship between teachers and families, increased participation in the school by parents/guardians and improvements in academic performance by students were all reported by the district. Although administrators stated that THVP alone could not account for all of these changes, they all strongly believe the visits were an important and integral part of the supports that contributed to these successes.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, 49 first visits and 27 second visits were conducted, for a total of 76 visits. However, during the 2009-2010 school year, implementation of THVP was reduced because of a change in administration at the elementary school and the need for the principal to focus on her new responsibilities. Only 34 first and second home visits combined were completed in 2009-2010 in contrast to the year before, most of which were 1<sup>st</sup> visits. However, overall attendance at family events has reportedly been steadily increasing over the years, with about 150 family members in attendance at both the first and second 2009-2010 family events. Many families do not receive home visits, so the family events serve as the most important way to connect with the school and the teachers. Though the academic content of the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit is discussed in a group setting at the Family Event, there is not an individual academic conversation with each family at that time, which is a central component of the THVP program.

### Challenges

One of the unique challenges facing the program in VP is the fact that students participating in the voluntary transfer program and living in the City of St. Louis are the focus of the intervention. This means that teachers must travel approximately 15 – 20 miles to make the home visits. Because of increased time constraints once school has begun, having time to travel into the city from Valley Park becomes increasingly difficult and is further complicated by the onset of daylight savings time. Furthermore, competing responsibilities within the school district also precluded many teachers from participating in the program this year.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of Valley Park THVP in 2009-2010 included the following activities:

- 1) School staff survey of THVP involvement
- 2) Interviews with the principal, assistant principal, site coordinator and assistant superintendent
- 3) Student focus group to learn perceptions of the THVP

## **Quantitative Data Collection**

Quantitative data were not collected. Although there were 34 visits made over the course of the year, most were made toward the end of the year. Therefore, the impact of these visits on student achievement, behavior, and attendance would probably not be realized during the current school year. For evaluation purposes, it was determined that the online survey of the teachers, interviews with the administrators and focus groups with youth would yield the most helpful information.

## **Survey of School Staff**

Because of the decline in home visits in 2009-2010, a unique survey of the teachers, different than the one used in the other districts, was developed to determine their interest and commitment to the program. Accordingly, in December 2009, all teachers were asked to complete an online survey that asked them about their involvement with THVP. If they had not been involved, the survey asked what barriers existed and what might provide an incentive for involvement. Teachers who had been involved with the program were asked questions that covered aspects of their preparation for the visits. Thirty-one teachers responded to the survey, including teachers in grades K-4 as well as administrators, counselors, PE teachers and specialists. Specific survey questions are listed below.

- Participation in and effectiveness of the training sessions for home visits
- Comfort level with the visits
- Impressions of family and student reactions to the visits
- Behavioral impacts on students as a result of the visit
- Benefits of the program to themselves as teachers
- Suggestions for improvements of the THVP
- Desire to do visits in the future; barriers to implementation

Overall, the respondents saw great value in the program, but time and other activities required by the district were given as major reasons for non-participation. A detailed summary of the survey findings is presented below.

## THVP Staff Participation

- Almost 16% answered that they had never participated in the THVP
- 24% indicated that they had gone on home visits during the 2009-2010 school year
- 56% did not go on home visits this year, but had in the past

Comments included:

*“The insight you gain from crossing the threshold of these families is priceless. The connection you make by going to their home is ‘chips in your bank’ when you have a difficult situation to talk to the parent about later in the year.”*

*“I think the visits help build a relationship between family and school. Many of these parents I may never see unless I go to them. When I go to their homes and show them that I want to work with them--not against them, I feel I am able to know more about their child and how they can be most successful at school.”*

*“It gives a chance to establish trust with the parents and communication the rest of the year is very easy.”*

*“Parents really saw how much we cared about their child.”*

*“The student saw that we cared beyond the school setting.”*

## Reasons for not participating in home visits in 2009-2010

There were a variety of reasons for non-participation in home visits, with the most common response related to the amount of time required for the visits.

- 50% did not have time
- 27% reported that other non-specified activities required by the district made it difficult
- 18% did not feel comfortable going to students’ homes
- 41% reported other reasons including “was not asked by other teachers;” “stipend too small;” “couldn’t visit every student and did not want to be selective”

Comments included:

*“Due to time constraints, I cannot afford to schedule and pay for care for my own children in order to visit.”*

*“As demands in the classroom get greater each year it is often hard to find the time which may seem hard to believe. I feel I have good communication with my city parents through other means.”*

### **Suggested changes to provide incentive for teacher participation**

- Most (82%) did not suggest any changes
- A suggestion that was offered: release time or professional development time allowed for teachers to make visits

### **Effectiveness of Home Visits**

While many teachers did not participate in the program this year, most felt that the program was very valuable and improved their communication with the families.

- 100% felt they improved communication and relationship with students
- 95% believed academics improved
- 92% felt that the 1<sup>st</sup> home visit was very or somewhat valuable
- 87% felt that the home visits helped communication with parents/guardians
- 80% felt that the 2<sup>nd</sup> home visit was very or somewhat valuable
- 80% felt that parents/guardians were “a lot” or “somewhat” more at ease contacting them

### **Student Focus Groups**

Two focus groups were held with students; one with 12 students in grades 2-3 and one with 7 students in grades 4-5. All students were present when their teacher(s) visited their home, and almost all attended the family event. The students responded enthusiastically to the visits and all would like to have another home visit. Several reported that the thought of having the teacher come to their home was frightening because they imagined they were in trouble. It was exciting to them to discover that the purpose was quite the opposite and they enjoyed relating details of the visits.

Comments about the teacher home visit included:

*"I felt really good that my teacher came to my house. I showed them everything that I have in my room. And I showed them my dog."*

*"I was surprised because I couldn't believe they traveled that far to my house."*

*"I was excited. I don't know why. Because I got to show them around and I got to show them my trophies."*

*"I was happy because I got to show them a lot of stuff. I showed them my Xbox and my football pictures that I took when I played sports."*

*"I learned that our teachers really want us to learn. They will keep trying to help us. They won't give up."*

Comments about the family event included:

*"My mom, she liked it because she didn't have to drive out to Valley Park and because she got to know my teachers better."*

*"I think it's special what the teachers set up."*

*"I go every time because I get to show my brothers the school because they're going to be coming there next year. I get to show my parents my new classrooms and show them around my school and show them the type of things that we do in class."*

**Summary:** Although the small number of visits this year precludes quantitative analysis to examine whether THVP was successful in Valley Park, the comments made by teachers, administrators and students as well as the number of family members attending the family events attest to its importance. Administrators felt that students participating in the voluntary desegregation program had shown improvement. There were a number of interventions introduced to support the students and thus it would not be possible to attribute the improvements solely to THVP; however the administrators stated that they believed the THVP was an essential part of the successes.

***Recommendations:***

- It is recommended that first home visits be completed prior to the beginning of the school year to accommodate the teacher schedules and to connect with the families prior to the first family event.
- Second visits are very important to increase student academic success. The distance between the school and student homes increases the difficulty of making these visits after the school year has begun, but the participation agreement includes adherence to the model. It is recommended that the THVP program administrators work with the school administrators at VP to resolve this situation.
- The requirements for participation in THVP include a commitment that at least 50% of the teachers will conduct home visits. It is recommended that the district explore ways to encourage greater teacher participation in the THVP in order to meet this requirement. Some comments from the teachers suggested that release time could help to make the visits possible.
- Transportation is available for parents/guardians to visit the school. It is recommended that trainings stress the importance of teachers letting parents/guardians know about this service so that they might utilize the transportation if it is needed. This would allow parents to spend some time seeing the school and the work that their child is doing.

## Conclusions

In 2009-2010, the Teacher Home Visit Program was implemented in three school districts in the St. Louis metropolitan area including the Early Childhood Center and elementary, middle and high schools in the Maplewood/Richmond Heights School District (MRH), three elementary schools and one early childhood center in the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS), and the Valley Park School District (VP) Elementary School.

### Program Participation

- THVP was successful in reaching a large number of families during the 2009-2010 academic year, with a total of 1,276 teacher home visits completed.
  - During the 2009-2010 school year, 421 families from MRH (about 60% of the families targeted) received visits from participating teachers. This is more than twice the number of families visited in the previous school year.
  - At SLPS, 759 home visits were conducted; 36% greater than the projected number. Original projections were that 70 first visits and 70 second visits would be made by pairs of teachers from each participating school in the St. Louis Public Schools (a total of 560 home visits).
  - Valley Park administrators committed to increasing the number of visits during the 2010-2011 school year by 50% given that the number of visits during the 2009-2010 was low.
  - While a large number of families received teacher home visits, the number of 2nd visits was small in all of the districts.
    - Across all districts, teachers found it difficult to spare the time to make visits once school was in session. They felt that they had too many other responsibilities and some parents/guardians were more resistant since they had already received one visit. Some parents/guardians did not want to prepare their home for a 2nd visit, even though they saw value to the 1st.
    - Because visits did not start until the first semester had begun in SLPS, teachers did not have the advantage of using summer for 1st visits. They were not eager to take time during the second semester to do the 2nd visits since they had already spent extra time during the first semester.
    - In VP, travel time to make the visits became a barrier once school had begun. Teachers suggested that having the parents/guardians come to school for the 2nd visit might be an alternative.

- The format of the program needs to be examined in light of these findings to determine whether alternate means can be used to achieve the goals of the 2nd visit.
- Most teachers in MRH and VP were very enthusiastic about THVP and thought it was having a positive impact on their relationships with families and students. A majority of SLPS teachers agreed that the program had improved their relationships with families and students, though implementation challenges prevented their enthusiasm from matching that expressed by teachers in the other districts.

### **Academic Performance and Attendance**

- At SLPS, THVP student grades in math improved significantly more than the grades of non-THVP students. There were no other significant differences between the two groups of students on other measures of success, including reading, Acuity benchmark scores, and attendance.
- There was significant improvement in attendance among MRH students on free or reduced lunch, with increased attendance among THVP students and decreased attendance among non-THVP students. Among African American students on free or reduced lunch, slightly more THVP students improved their attendance compared to non-THVP students.

### **School-Home Communication**

- Parent/guardian surveys and teacher focus group responses at SLPS and MRH indicate that the THVP made a positive impact on their school communities.
- The benefits of the THVP included reported improvement in communication between home and school for most participants. Many teachers reported that they felt that the home visits had helped their relationships with their students and student families.

### **Family Participation in School Events**

- Around 50% of parents/guardians surveyed at SLPS indicated that they participated in more school activities as a result of THVP, including parent-teacher conferences.
- There was variability in the success of family events depending on the district.
  - Family events were particularly successful in VP as many parents/guardians use this opportunity to visit the school.
  - In MRH, family events were reportedly well attended although home visits in the middle school were delayed and did not necessary precede the first event.

- During this first year of THVP at SLPS family events were less successful. Because family events were held before home visits were completed, teachers were not able to invite parents/guardians face to face and to offer them transportation if it was needed. Furthermore, they were not able to build on the relationships that were established during the 1<sup>st</sup> visit.

Research shows that strengthening the bond between families and school results in improved school success. The findings in this evaluation indicate that the program is increasing these bonds as is demonstrated by increased communication between home and school, improved relationships between students and teachers, and increased family participation in school activities. Encouragingly, students are also already beginning to demonstrate improvement in academics. As the program model is refined and adapted to meet the needs of varying districts, it is expected that program success will increase.

## GLOSSARY

### 1) AIMSWeb

AIMSWeb is a data management system that facilitates the organization of student, classroom, school, and district level benchmark and progress monitoring data. The system automatically graphs data against student, classroom, school, district or national norms or targets.

### 2) Fountas and Pinnell

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System was designed to place students appropriately into the Guided Reading program designed by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. It is a standardized, teacher-administered, one-on-one assessment that must be hand-scored by the teacher as well. The test consists primarily of running records, in which the teacher records such things as oral fluency, reading errors, self-correction ratios, and is followed by retelling and comprehension questions by the teacher. In addition, the teacher may choose to administer additional, separate assessments in vocabulary or phonics.

### 3) Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)

The MAP test is a state-aligned computerized adaptive assessment program that provides educators with information to improve both their teaching skill and student learning.

### 4) Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) scores

The DRP tests are group-administered measures to determine how well students understand the surface meaning of what they read. They measure the process of reading rather than products of reading such as main idea and author purpose. The tests are administered in the fall and spring to students in Grades 4-8.

### 5) Terra Nova

The Terra Nova is a national norm-referenced test that measures how well students score in comparison to their peers across the country. The Terra Nova is used to assess student achievement in elementary, middle and high school.

### 6) Acuity Benchmark System.

The Acuity benchmark system is designed to enable teachers to diagnose student strengths and areas of need. The assessment is given three times in each academic year beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in SLPS. Data was provided for students in 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.